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The correlation between management consultancy and organizational performance: A case of Lafarge Africa PLC, Calabar, Nigeria

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to examine the correlation between management consultancy and organizational performance: a case of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar. The specific objectives were as follows; to examine the relationship between human resource consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar, to examine the correlation between business strategy consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar, and to ascertain the relationship between information technology consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar. The study used cross sectional survey design and a population of 243 employees of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar. The study used purposive sampling technique to select a sample size of 145. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents and the data was tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique. The findings showed that human resources consulting, business strategy consulting and information technology consulting have significant relationship with the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that management should use information technology consultancy more frequently due to the rapid changes in technology

Keywords: Management consultancy, human resource consulting, business strategy consulting, information technology consulting, performance, organizational

1. Introduction

Consulting is a strategic approach used in the domains of risk analysis, consensus building, and arbitration. Management consultants collaborate with organizations to provide a comprehensive comprehension of their responsibilities and bolster their ability to implement management methodologies that are both efficacious and pertinent (Kuhr, 2022) ^[32]. There are several methodologies for engaging in consulting activities. Functional consulting encompasses a range of disciplines, such as human resources, finance, marketing, sales, and productivity improvement, with organizational consultation. The consulting service offered has a wide scope, including the installation of an advanced operational system in any of the listed domains (Melo, 2021) ^[20].

Consultancy encompasses a series of interrelated measures that are contingent upon the investment potential and environmental benefits offered by a certain organization. Proposals put out by consulting firms are designed to address the specific demands and requirements of the market in need of consultant services. Kuhr (2022) ^[32], said that the consulting firm's human potential is a necessary condition for considering the offer. The consultants' expertise and competence play a pivotal role in their ability to meet the requirements of their clients. Given the empirical evidence that acquiring a new client incurs a financial expenditure that is five times more than retaining an existing one, and that the process of establishing a favourable reputation requires a substantial time investment spanning two decades, while its destruction may occur within a mere five minutes, it becomes evident that this matter has significant significance. Management consultancy is a fast-growing profession that is continuously becoming more international and diverse (Thorpmann & Lindmark, 2022) ^[28]. Management consultancy has for long been acknowledged as an important professional service that aids managers to analyses and address the real challenges their organizations

face, to enhance organizational performance, to learn from other executives, and to take advantage of new opportunities (Kuhr, 2022) ^[32]. As business operations become more complex, businesses are constantly facing new challenges; they increasingly rely on management consultants to aid them to remain competitive in the midst of environmental changes (Sinha & Sinha, 2020) ^[27].

Theoretically, the theory of constraints contends that for a business to achieve improvement it should focus on the constrictions that inhibit the system from attaining higher performance levels. Therefore, managers should engage management consultants to find out what is inhibiting them from reaching their objectives and propose solutions to deal with any limitations (Ajmal, Nordstrom & Helo, 2019) ^[1]. The industrial networks theory contends that the process of economic exchange usually occurs within the existing organizational interrelationships framework. Thus, the links and ties between parties, such as business and management consultants, in addition to the cost of changing the network of relationships, and help create lasting connections (Melo, 2021) ^[20].

Manufacturing organizations are considered a key driving force of the modern economy because of their multidimensional benefits such as job creation, technological innovation and promotion of exports (Yusoff & Zainol, 2022) ^[30]. Manufacturing firms are recognized as significant contributors to economies of various countries; with novel opportunities introducing the entities in international and domestic markets. In the Africa context, manufacturing firms account for more than 90% of business entities and contribute more than 50% to GDP (Kithinji, 2020) ^[15]. However, in most cases specialists who have perfect knowledge in a particular field and having the appropriate technical competence form managers of various companies, however most of the managers lacks management experience and knowledge (Barisic & Bozicevic, 2019) ^[3].

1.2 Statement of the problem

Most of the available literature indicates that management consultancy enhances firms' performance. However, most studies on management consultancy are carried out in large firms in other sectors who have adequate resource compared to Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar. Additionally, the operation of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar is different to those of big firm hence the findings may not be applicable to Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar. This leads to the research question: What is the correlation between management consultancy and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar?

It was observed that Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar have hired the services of human resources consultants in areas including training and development, payroll and recruitment process. However, it has been noted that most of the employees that come into the organization through the outsourced recruitment process exhibit some levels of incompetencies. The scenario makes one to wonder how effective the outsourced recruitment process is. Also, it has been noted that the training and development personnel that are often used by the HR consultant do not have the necessary experiential knowledge to support their teachings. This has led to half-backed trainings thus, making the impact of training and development consulting to be in doubt.

Also, Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar engages the services of

consultants in the area business strategy and information technology. However, due to the dynamic nature of technology and the random leakages of the organization's data, it has become necessary to examine whether consultants should be hired or the employees of the organization should be trained on how to the organization's information system.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to examine the correlation between management consultancy and organizational performance: a case of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar. The specific objectives were;

1. To examine the relationship between human resource consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar
2. To examine the correlation between business strategy consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar
3. To ascertain the relationship between information technology consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar

1.4 Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does human resource consulting relate to the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar?
2. To what extent does business strategy consulting correlate to the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar?
3. To what extent does information technology consulting relate to the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar?

1.5 Statement of hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between human resources consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar

Ho2: There is no significant correlation between business strategy consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between information technology consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual review

2.1.1 Concept of management consultancy

Management consultancy denotes the provision of professional and related services such as problem identification and resolution, needs assessment, consultation, provision of additional information sources, and ideas implementation (Ogbaekirigwe, 2022) ^[24]. International Council of Management Consultancy Institute (ICMI, 2019) posit that management consultancy is the provision of the independent advice and assistance about the process of management to clients with management responsibilities. Canback (2018) ^[7], said that consultants may be defined as those who provide guidance and advice in the realm of general management, operating within strategic, organizational, or operational contexts to assist

their customers. Canback (2018) ^[7] presents a number of noteworthy reasons; nonetheless, it may be argued that his definition of management consulting lacks comprehensiveness in capturing the whole of the phenomenon (Appelbaum & Steed, 2020) ^[2].

Incorporating alternative definitions of the phenomena may, therefore, prove to be advantageous. An alternative and comprehensive characterization of management consulting can be stated as follows: "Management consulting refers to a professional advisory service that is engaged and delivered to organizations by individuals with specialized training and qualifications. These consultants offer objective and independent assistance to client organizations in identifying management challenges, conducting thorough analyses of these challenges, and, upon request, aiding in the implementation of effective solutions" (Greiner & Metzger, 2018) ^[11]. The definition presented by Greiner and Metzger (2018) ^[11] offers a more comprehensive account of the profession of management consulting compared to the one put out by Canbacks (2018) ^[7]. According to the scholarly work of Greiner and Metzger (2018) ^[11], it is advisable to see management consultants as an external asset for enterprises. Consultants are seen as external contractors who are engaged for certain assignments, rather than being regarded as employees of the organization. However, the consultant's activities are motivated by their own goal.

Management consultancy is categorized into three major types that include strategy consultancy, change, and organizational consultancy (Nuorkivi, 2019) ^[22]. Strategy consulting is seen as a participatory top-down approach involving senior management, whose aim is to mold the organization strategy and to communicate it. Organizational consulting often begins with the dynamics of small groups and then looks up the organization. Change consultancy covers a wide array of changes and its execution requires special attention to individual change dynamics (Nuorkivi, 2019) ^[22]. Management consultancy is further divided into expert and support approaches. In the expert approach, the consultant assumes the role of a specialist and provides the client with professional advice or assistance. In the support approach, the professional concentrates less on technical or specific expertise and much on the consultation process itself (Sinha & Sinha, 2020) ^[27].

Management consultancy aimed at business owners and entrepreneurs entails a full combination of individual, functional, and professional consultative services. However, small businesses currently do not use consultants to solve operational problems (Kubr, 2022) ^[17]. The management-consulting problem for most businesses arises from the characteristics of these businesses and the challenges they face during development and expansion, in addition to the transformation process under which routine solutions cannot be applied (Barisic & Bozicevic, 2019) ^[3].

2.1.2 Management consultancy services

Management consultancy services are organized based on the prevailing management structure, process and the entity functions, some of the consulting services provided include managerial development and training, staff training, financial management, office organization, accounting procedures (Kuhr, 2022) ^[32]. The main tasks of a management consultant include identifying problems, proposing solutions, and helping clients implement the solutions (Thorpmann & Lindmark, 2022) ^[28].

Management consulting entails a particular activity of advising and entity's management to solve business problems for which they lack expertise, knowledge and experience (Barisic & Bozicevic, 2019) ^[3]. A number of public and private organizations across the globe use management consulting and advisory services in amalgamation with project management, training, financial consulting, technological consultancy, auditing, legal assistance and other expert services (Kuhr, 2022) ^[32].

The main categories of management advisory services have traditionally been divided into four groups, including strategy, human resources, operations and information technology (Barisic & Bozicevic, 2019) ^[3]. Butler (2018) ^[6], said that management consulting services take place in many different areas of activity such as business strategy, human resources, production, marketing and finance. Ogbae kirigwe (2022) ^[24] states that consulting firms provide services in all business areas from human resources and marketing to information technology and finance.

Organizations hire management consultants for a number of reasons, including getting outside advice and accessing the consultant's expertise (Sinha & Sinha, 2020) ^[27]. Business problems can be general or specific. Common problems include legal components of running business activities, raw materials and credit accessibility, inadequate technical support, ease of access of markets and proper management, and limitations in detecting or capturing novel commercial opportunities (Kubr, 2022) ^[17]. Consultants therefore take into consideration various factors that often differentiate smaller business entities from the large corporate entities (Barisic & Bozicevic, 2019) ^[3]. Consulting encompasses a diverse range of circumstances, whereby its primary objective is to function as a reliable and knowledgeable counsellor to firms. There exists a wide array of alternatives accessible to both customers and consultants, rendering it impractical to provide an exhaustive and thorough overview of all possibilities within this context (Block & Markowitz, 2020) ^[4].

2.1.3 The roles of management consultants

Researchers have created many typologies to categories different functions of consultants (Turner, 2022) ^[29]. There are two significant categories among these studies. There exists a continuum that ranges from being directorial to not being directive, as well as another continuum that ranges from the resource or content role to the process role. Consultants operating within the realm of resource allocation are remunerated for using their expertise in order to address and resolve a specific issue on behalf of a client. Massey and Walker (2019) ^[19], posit that consultants in the content role are required to provide assistance and guidance to clients in order to facilitate their understanding of their own organization and its operational processes.

Kubr (2022) ^[17] provides a comprehensive classification of consultants' functions, which may be categorized along a continuum of directive and non-directive approaches. This typology is founded on the recognition that these two types of functions represent the fundamental roles of management consulting, considering the intricate nature of its practical activities.

The first individual in question is the coach. The aforementioned function was thoroughly examined and analysed via a series of interviews conducted with managers and consultants. Consultants may be seen as instructors to

managers, as they assist in acquiring diverse information and experience in the field, hence enhancing their understanding and implementation of lean principles. The consultants saw their role as one of imparting knowledge to the management and personnel about the principles and implementation of lean methodology, as well as providing insights into the anticipated outcomes.

The second acknowledged role is advocacy, posit that the adoption of lean practices by managers is significantly influenced by the advice provided by consultants. After the management detailed the issues and problems confronting the company, the consultants highlighted the advantages of applying lean, including cost savings, quality improvement, staff quality enhancement, and successful instances of lean implementation. The consultants in this particular case effectively persuaded their client, the firm involved in the case, to choose and execute a specific solution, namely lean, by elucidating its advantages and presenting instances of other organizations that have achieved favourable outcomes via its adoption (Kihn, 2015) ^[14]. Consultants were responsible for the development and recommendation of a complete strategy and a set of regulations pertaining to the implementation of lean practices. It is important to differentiate between the role of an advocate and that of a problem-solver or an option-finder. Rather of presenting other choices, an advocate attempts to persuade management to embrace the specific option they are advocating for (Kuhr, 2022) ^[32]. In this project, instead of offering many alternatives, the consultants proposed a one, comprehensive plan that they believed included all aspects and would provide optimal outcomes at all levels, including organizational, operational, and technology. Furthermore, the consultants provided a comprehensive implementation and assessment process for 6S (sort, set in order, shine, standardize, sustain and safety), which clearly outlined the objectives, rationale, scope, and methodology for effecting changes in the existing state of affairs via the use of 6S, alongside lean technologies such as 6S and visual management.

The investigator has the third rank. During the preparatory phase, the consultants conducted interviews with managers and workers, as well as inspected the management, production processes, and shop floor of the case firm. These activities were carried out with the aim of identifying the project's challenges, prospective areas for development, and primary focal points (Mohe, 2021) ^[21].

The position of technical expert has been selected as the last role to be filled. Melo (2021) ^[20], posit that the primary reason for organizations engaging consultants was the managers' perceived deficiency in their understanding of lean principles. This was closely followed by their intention to use the problem-solving capabilities possessed by consultants. In other words, the consultants possess the ability to provide proficient support. The consultants demonstrated a clear acquisition of their knowledge in lean principles via a combination of direct and indirect experience.

The individuals actively pursued the expertise of scholars and consultants who had prior experience in executing lean implementation projects. They engaged in training programmes focused on lean methodology, with the intention of acquiring an indirect form of education in the field. The consulting business has made investments in databases that provide access to a diverse range of specialist

publications and academic journals. These resources are used for the purpose of conducting case study analyses (Kuhr, 2022) ^[32].

2.1.4 Organizational performance

Performance denotes a business's attainment of the desired goals and objectives. It consist of the results achieved through individual or collective contributions to the strategic goals of the organization. According to Krop (2020) ^[16], performance denotes the realization of organizational capabilities through transformation of resources within the company efficiently and effectively to attain the organizational objectives. In the financial performance perspective, performance is an indicator of financial results derived from decisions by executives and the execution of the undertaken decisions (Carton, 2020) ^[8]. Performance further indicates the metrics related to how a specific task is successfully executed using knowledge and organizational resources to attain it objectives (Nyarik, 2019).

Organizational performance is an absolute term that generally refers to a corporation's ability to produce results in the future. Organizational performance arises from the notion that a business entity is a collection of productive resources, comprising physical, human, and investment resources that are effectively managed to achieve a common goal (Carton, 2020) ^[8]. Organizational performance includes iterative activities that aid in establishing organizational objectives, making adjustments to consistently attain those goals and monitor progress toward attainment of the goals. Organizational performance always has a significant impact on corporate actions (Jenatabadi, 2015) ^[13].

2.1.5 Management consultancy and organizational performance

Management consultants always analyses and recommend ways to improve organizational structure, profitability or efficiency. Management consultants also help organizations to enhance productivity and efficiency predominantly by evaluating the organization's existing challenges and development of improvement strategies (Sinha & Sinha, 2020) ^[27].

Consultants also assist companies to improve their efficiency, productivity and progress through proving solutions and developing better and new ways to undertake activities (Ogbaekirigwe, 2022) ^[24]. Consultants are considered to be key players in disseminating business knowledge due to their relative expertise and understanding of management practices. Research by Barisic and Bozicevic (2019) ^[3] examined whether SMEs, which use consulting and advisory services perform better and smoothly transit from the business stage from growth to maturity. The findings suggest that management consulting improves the technical skills of managers, which can lead to improved performance.

The effect of management consultancy has been studied in different contexts and perspectives. In their study, Bruhn, Schaar and Karlan (2022) ^[5] studied whether consulting and advisory services affect productivity and documented that consulting services largely affected the sampled firms performance. Another paper by Zainola *et al.* (2015) ^[31] on business consulting and advisory services by a public university among Malaysian SMEs documented that consulting and advisory services help them with strategic direction, planning business, marketing strategy, human

resource management.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This study was anchored on the theory of constraints and Industrial Networks theory.

2.2.1 Industrial networks theory

The industrial network approach is associated with Hammarkvist, Hakansson and Mattsson (1982). Industrial networks entail the structures under which various actors, resources and activities interrelating and are constantly shifting, not only due to the changing economic aspects and due to processes, but also due to the movement of different players seeking to influence the control of resources and activities of the other actors (Melo, 2021)^[20].

This theory explains that the business market can be viewed as a network by which all actors, activities and resources are directly or indirectly connected (Easton, 2019)^[9]. This theory provides techniques for structural analysis in a system of interacting agents. The industrial network theory states that firms are not independent entities operating independently in the market. Therefore, to expand their businesses activities, they need to work with other corporations and groups, such as management consultants, government agencies, regulatory bodies and associations (Melo, 2021)^[20]. Therefore, theory is concerned with interrelationships between businesses engaged in distribution, production, and the usage of services and goods in the best way that can be described as a public industrial system (Easton, 2019)^[9].

According to the industrial network theory, the nature of business is closely related to interaction and trade exchange (Herbec & Ratajczak-Mrozek, 2020)^[12]. The industrial network structure theory supports relationships; structure; steps; locations and actors, resources and activities. The industrial network model offers a valuable conceptual tool for further examining the emerging characteristics of the establishment, development and transformation of businesses.

2.2.2 Theory of constraints

Goldratt (1980)^[10] propounded the theory of constraints that asserts that each system contains at any rate one constraint. Constraints can be a physical constraint in the logistics process-a real bottleneck. In addition, there may be other sales or marketing or non-logistics restrictions; in these cases, politics is a constraint, and the best way to identify it is to use the thought process to find a major problem or major conflict (Ajmal, Nordstrom & Helo, 2019)^[1]. Constraint theory concentration on reducing the system constraints and enhance the overall organization performance (Simsit, Gunay & Vayvay, 2020)^[26].

The general assumption of constraints theory is that constraints are obstacles to achieving the firm's goals and their affects the organization profitability (Ajmal, Nordstrom & Helo, 2019)^[1]. The theory concentrates on the fragile points that are bottlenecks for the organization as a whole and seeks to identify the interrelationships between the bottlenecks (Thorpmann & Lindmark, 2022)^[28]. Constraints theory suggests that organizations should analyses their systems, identify, and remove any constraints that act as barriers to society realizing its objectives (Simsit, Gunay & Vayvay, 2020)^[26].

According to theory of constraints, organizations require a

change process to ensure that they move from where they are now to where they want to be in the future (Ajmal, Nordstrom & Helo, 2019)^[1]. The theory supports that defining constraints allows management to take action to mitigate future constraints. Thus, management consultants can help organizations understand, perceive and develop solutions on the constraints that exist in a specific business environment to deliver solutions.

2.3 Empirical review

Makumi (2022)^[18] examined management consultancy and performance of the top 100 Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Kenya. The study sought to examine how the use of management consultancy affects the performance of SMEs with a specific focus on top 100 SMEs. The study's specific objectives were to establish the management consultancy services used by SMEs in Kenya and to determine the impact of management consultancy services on SMEs performance. The study targeted firms in KPMG and NMG list of top 100 Kenyan SMEs in 2020. Data was corrected through questionnaires. Results indicate that management consultancy services are not widely utilized by SMEs in Kenya. Regarding the impact of management consultancy on performance, results of the ANOVA showed that when considered in general, management consultancy services have a significant effect on SMEs performance. The model comprising of four consulting services (Business strategy, HR, operations, and IT consulting) explained 30.8% of the variances in the SMEs performance. However, when the consultancy services were considered individually, none was documented to have a significant effect on the SMEs performance. The study therefore concludes that the use of management consultancy is not an established practice within the Kenyan SME sector.

Amin (2022) conducted a study examining the role of management consulting in generating sustainable (Triple Bottom Line) benefits, and arrived at a similar conclusion. This article investigates the impact of interventions conducted by the authors on the long-term sustainability and growth of their clients' companies, as seen via their performance improvement efforts. This article presents the findings of a questionnaire-based study conducted with a sample size of 440 respondents from 206 nations. Among the participants, 197 were affiliated with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), while 243 were associated with large corporations. The level of integration of long-term sustainable practices in consulting interventions for small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) and big multinational organizations (MNCs) is a topic of particular importance in terms of both urgency and impact.

In their study, Reid, Matthias, and Bamford (2019)^[25] conducted an analysis on the role of management consulting in generating long-term return on investment (ROI). This article investigates the impact of interventions conducted by the authors on the long-term sustainability and growth of their clients' companies, as seen via their performance improvement efforts. A total of 440 individuals from 206 countries were polled for the purpose of this study. Out of these respondents, 197 were employed by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), while the remaining 243 were employed by large organizations. This study examines the implementation of consulting interventions in small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) and big multinational organizations (MNCs) to assess the extent to which they

effectively incorporate long-term sustainable practices. Specifically, the focus is on evaluating the urgency and impact of knowledge transfer within these organizations. The research conducted by Nylund and Zerat (2019) [23] examined the perceptions of consumers towards management consulting businesses. The present inquiry is grounded on an inductive approach to qualitative research. Data was collected via comprehensive interviews conducted with individuals from both the public and private sectors who have prior experience in procuring management consultants. In order to facilitate the coding and classification of our empirical data, a qualitative content analysis was done. According to our study findings, there exists a disparity in the perceptions and expectations of management consulting between the public and private sectors. The study of empirical data and materials has shown that the incentives for engaging in management consulting services differ dependent on whether the organization is operating in the commercial or public sector.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

The present study used a cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional studies include the categorization of individuals into groups based on variations in the dependent variable, while also considering shared characteristics such as age, income, education level, and race.

3.2 Population of the study

The success of any research endeavour is contingent upon the appropriateness of the population under investigation, since an excessively wide or too limited group might impede the project's efficacy. The major participants in this study are the 243 workers of Lafarge Africa Plc located in Calabar.

3.3 Sample and sampling techniques

Sampling refers to the systematic procedure of choosing a smaller subset from a larger population in order to conduct a more detailed analysis. The researcher may facilitate the determination of the size and makeup of the sample by conceptualizing it as a subset of the whole population. The researcher used purposive sampling as a method for selecting participants from the targeted demographic of interest in the study. 145 respondents (consisting head of departments, supervisors and management staff) were purposively selected by the researcher to constitute the sample size. The criteria for selection was based on the specificity of the information that the researcher sought and the knowledge of the respondent on role of management

consultants in the organization.

3.4 Methods of data collection

The researchers used a structured questionnaire to gather data from the selected participants in this study. The questionnaire consisted of two unique sections. During the first phase, we gathered fundamental demographic information from the selected people. The following section delved into the potential impact of management consulting on a company's financial performance. Due to its widespread applicability, ease of use, and ability to provide quantifiable outcomes, the use of the five-point Likert scale was deemed highly suitable for the purpose of data gathering and subsequent analysis in this survey.

3.5 Data analysis techniques

The data was analysed using descriptive statistics in order to have a better understanding of its characteristics. The collected data was organized into several categories and subjected to analysis in order to identify trends and get novel insights. In order to accomplish this task, it was necessary to do calculations involving percentages and other statistical variables. The findings were calculated and then presented. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to investigate the proposed hypotheses.

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{(n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2)(n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

Where;

N = Sample size

$\sum xy$ = Sum of product x and y

$\sum x$ = Sum of x

$\sum y$ = Sum of y

$\sum x^2$ = Sum of square of x

$(\sum x)^2$ = Squares of the sum of all xs

$\sum y^2$ = Sum of square of y

$(\sum y)^2$ = Squares of the sum of all ys

The Decision Rule

In the event that the correlation coefficient (r) is positive, it is appropriate to accept the alternative hypothesis (H₁) and reject the null hypothesis (H₀). Conversely, if the correlation coefficient (r) is negative, it is appropriate to accept the null hypothesis (H₀) and reject the alternative hypothesis (H₁).

4. Data presentation and analysis

Table 1: Response Rate

Category	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires returned	Percentage of questionnaires returned
Personnel	51	51	36
Marketing	42	37	26
Administrative	18	18	13
Finance	19	19	14
Operations	15	15	11
Total	145	140	97

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 1 showed the response rate from the questionnaire distributed. From the table, a total of 145 copies questionnaires were distributed with personnel staff getting

51, marketing staff 42, Administrative staff 18, Finance staff 19 and Operations staff 15. Out of the copies of questionnaires distributed, personnel staff correctly filled

and returned 51 representing 36 percent, marketing staff 37 representing 26 percent, Administrative staff 18 representing 13 percent, Finance staff 19 representing 14 percent, and Operation staff 15 representing 11 percent. This data shows that 97 percent of the copies of questionnaire distributed were correctly filled and returned.

4.1.1 Test of hypotheses

4.1.2 Test of Hypotheses one

H₀: There is no significant relationship between human resources consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar

H₁: There is a significant relationship between human resources consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar

Table 2: Computation of the responses on the relationship between human resources consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar

X	Y	XY	X ²	Y ²
90	4	360	8,100	16
30	3	90	900	9
5	2	10	25	4
9	1	9	81	1
6	0	0	36	0
Σx = 140	Σy = 10	Σxy = 469	Σx ² = 9,142	Σy ² = 30

Source: Field survey (Questionnaire, 2023)

p < 0.05, DF = 118, t = 1.98

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{(n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2)(n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{5 * 469 - (140 * 10)}{\sqrt{(5 * 9,142 - (140)^2)(5 * 30 - (10)^2)}}$$

Table 3: Computation of the responses on the relationship between business strategy consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar

X	Y	XY	X ²	Y ²
85	4	340	7,225	16
28	3	84	784	9
10	2	20	100	4
9	1	9	81	1
8	0	0	64	0
Σx = 140	Σy = 10	Σxy = 453	Σx ² = 8,254	Σy ² = 30

Source: Field survey (Questionnaire, 2023)

p < 0.05, DF = 118, t = 1.98

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{(n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2)(n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{5 * 453 - 140 * 10}{\sqrt{(5 * 8,254 - (140)^2)(5 * 30 - (10)^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{2265 - 1,400}{\sqrt{(41270 - 19600)(150 - 100)}}$$

$$r = \frac{865}{\sqrt{21670 * 50}}$$

$$r = \frac{865}{\sqrt{1,083,500}}$$

$$r = \frac{2,345 - 1,400}{\sqrt{(45710 - 19600)(150 - 100)}}$$

$$r = \frac{945}{\sqrt{26110 * 50}}$$

$$r = \frac{945}{\sqrt{1,305,500}}$$

$$r = \frac{945}{1,142.59}$$

r = 0.82

As seen from the aforementioned analysis, the computed value of the correlation coefficient, denoted as r, is 0.82, indicating a strong positive correlation that is in close proximity to 1.

Hence, we refute the null hypothesis, which posits that there is no statistically significant correlation between human resources consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar. This decision is based on the prescribed criterion, which advises rejecting the null hypothesis (H₀) and embracing the alternative hypothesis (H₁) when the correlation coefficient (r) is positive.

4.1.3 Test of Hypotheses two

H₀: There is no significant correlation between business strategy consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar.

H₁: There is a significant correlation between business strategy consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar.

$$r = \frac{865}{1040.91}$$

r = 0.83

Based on the aforementioned outcome, the value of r is 0.83, which is close to 1. According to the decision rule, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H₁) is accepted when the correlation coefficient (r) is positive. Conversely, if the correlation coefficient is not positive, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, in this case, the null hypothesis, which suggests that there is no significant correlation between business strategy consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa

Plc, Calabar, is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

4.1.4 Test of Hypotheses three

H₀: There is no significant relationship between information technology consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar

H₁: There is a significant relationship between information technology consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar.

Table 4: Computation of the responses on the relationship between information technology consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar

X	Y	XY	X ²	Y ²
87	4	348	7569	16
32	3	96	1024	9
8	2	16	64	4
9	1	9	81	1
4	0	0	16	0
Σx = 140	Σy = 10	Σxy = 469	Σx ² = 8,754	Σy ² = 30

Source: Field survey (Questionnaire, 2023)

p < 0.05, DF = 118, t = 1.98

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{(n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2) (n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{5 * 469 - 140 * 10}{\sqrt{5 * 8,754 - (140)^2 (5 * 30 - (10)^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{2,345 - 1,400}{\sqrt{(43,770 - 19,600) (150 - 100)}}$$

$$r = \frac{945}{\sqrt{24,170 * 50}}$$

$$r = \frac{945}{\sqrt{1,208,500}}$$

$$r = \frac{945}{1,099.32}$$

r = 0.86

Based on the provided data, it can be inferred that the value of r is around 0.86, which is in close proximity to 1. According to the decision rule, the null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H₁) is accepted when the correlation coefficient (r) is positive. Conversely, if the correlation coefficient is negative, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, in this case, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant relationship between information technology consulting and the performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar.

4.2 Discussion of findings

The performance of Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar was shown

to be significantly influenced by the use of human resources consulting. The findings of this research provide support for the findings of Makumi (2022) [18], who conducted an analysis on the correlation between management consulting and the performance of the top 100 most prosperous small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kenya. The objective of this study was to examine the impact of management consulting on the performance of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) by analyzing a representative sample of the top one hundred SMEs. The primary objectives of this study were to ascertain the specific management consulting services that are used by small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in Kenya, and to evaluate the impact of these services on the financial performance of such SMEs. The analysis of variance revealed a statistically significant relationship between management consulting and the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The model that included consulting services in four specific areas (Business strategy, HR, operations, and IT) was shown to explain 38% of the variance seen in the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Nevertheless, when doing an analysis of each individual consulting service, it was determined that there was no statistically significant enhancement seen in the performance of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The study results suggest that the utilization of management consulting services by small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in Kenya is limited.

The empirical evidence demonstrates that the engagement of business strategy consultant has significantly influenced the performance outcomes of Lafarge Africa Plc, namely in the Calabar region. Amin (2022) conducted a study examining the role of management consulting in generating sustainable (Triple Bottom Line) benefits, and arrived at a similar conclusion. The level of integration of long-term sustainable practices in consulting interventions for small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) and big multinational organizations (MNCs) is a topic of particular importance in terms of both urgency and impact.

The results of the study also indicated that Lafarge Africa Plc, Calabar had significant advantages as a result of their use of IT consultant services. The findings presented in this study align with the research conducted by Makumi (2022) [18], which examined the correlation between management consultancy and the performance of Kenya's top 100 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The objective of this study was to examine the impact of management consulting on the performance of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) by analyzing a sample of the top one hundred SMEs. The primary objectives of this study were to ascertain the specific management consulting services that are used by small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in Kenya, and to evaluate the impact of these services on the financial performance of such SMEs. The model including consulting services in four domains (Business strategy, HR, operations, and IT) was shown to explain 38% of the variance in the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, when doing an analysis of each individual consulting service, it was determined that there was no statistically significant improvement seen in the performance of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The study results suggest that the utilization of management consulting services among small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in Kenya is limited.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The primary goal of this research was to analyse how management consulting affected Lafarge Africa Plc's (Lafarge) performance in Calabar, Nigeria. Management consultancy was proxied in this research via the use of human resources consulting, corporate strategy consulting, and information technology consulting. The results led the authors to draw the following conclusions: human resources consulting has a significant effect on Lafarge Africa Plc's performance in Calabar; business strategy consulting has a significant effect on Lafarge Africa Plc's performance in Calabar. Information technology consultancy was also shown to have a significant effect on Lafarge Africa Plc's (Calabar) performance.

5.2 Recommendations

It was recommended based on the findings that

1. The organization is encouraged to make use of different consultancy services that are available in the market. Increased use of consultancy services can be encouraged by creating awareness regarding the value of these services among the organizational managers.
2. The organization should ensure that the recommendations of consultants are aligned to its mission and vision before implementing them.
3. Management should use information technology consultancy more frequently due to the rapid changes in technology.

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