CHANGE MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY AND COMPETITIVENESS OF PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract
This study looked at the connection between private hospitals' competitiveness and their ability to handle change in Rivers State, Nigeria. For the study, a cross-sectional research design was used. Our respondents were management staff (medical directors and doctors) of these organizations (a total number of fifty-eight management staff) constituting the population of our study. From the field survey, we retrieved and analyzed all fifty-eight (58) copies of the questionnaire from the participants; Kendall's tau_b correlation coefficient (tb) correlation coefficient statistical tool was used to determine the relationship existing between the variables while the p-value was used to test hypotheses developed for the study. The findings revealed that the dimensions of change management namely; leadership style, empowerment of change program, and reward and embedment of change exhibited a significant relationship with competitiveness. It was then concluded that change management capability will ultimately enhance the competitiveness of these organizations taking apt cognizance of the firm's organizational culture. This necessitated recommendations for the firms (private hospitals); leadership styles that will enable change programs should be adopted, resources needed to successfully embark on change programs should be made available, and successful change initiatives should be embedded and adequately rewarded so that favorable organizational outcomes are achieved.

Keywords: Change Management Capability, Leadership Style, Empowerment of Change Programs, Reward and Embedment of Change Programs and Competitiveness

Introduction
The modern business environment is clogged with increased levels of competitiveness as a result of recent issues on technological advancements, labor-related issues, increased cost of operations, market variations, and attendant realities of globalization, and as such business organizations are required to continually keep their strategies flexible to accommodate and adapt to changes posed by these current realities within the environment of business (Fendel & Frenkel, 2005). Therefore, private health institutions have a fair share of this competitive pressure even if such is prevalent within their designated industry; to survive and thrive, the current 21st-century organizations will have to make greater efforts to acquire or improve constantly its competitive positions as higher levels of growth and performance will be derived by such attempts (Guzmán, Gutiérrez, Cortes & Ramírez, 2021).

Every business organization as an open system operates and interacts with other constituent parts within a larger system which delineates the arena of business that is constantly in a state of flux and as such strategies and policies remain malleable to suit this ever-changing state (Cole, 2005). The inefficiencies associated with the service offerings of the Nigerian public health institutions have resulted in an influx of their private counterparts;

thus with private ownership and management, efficiency and effectiveness are enhanced however not without the attendant issues of competitiveness.

The Latin term "competer"-from which the English word "competitiveness" is derived is "participation in a business rivalry for markets" (Deniz et al., 2013). Competitiveness however becomes relevant in the face of competition; so competition precedes competitiveness. Scherer and Ross (1990) hold that competition in the business literature is regarded as a conscious striving against other business firms for patronage… for potentially incompatible positions. Similarly, a competition was described in 1987 as a rivalry between people (or groups of people) or nations that happens whenever two or more parties try to get something that neither of them can.

As a management or economics concept, competition is preferred to conventional economic measures like profitability, productivity, or market share, which are thought to be insufficient to support continual performance improvement (Lu, 2006). According to Buckley et al. (1988), the notion provides for the perception of potential and the enhancement of managerial procedures in addition to reflecting historical performance. Traditional indicators can only capture quantitative historical data.

To provide customers with greater value and satisfaction than their competitors, firms must be operationally efficient, cost-effective, and quality-conscious (Johnson, 1992; Hammer & Champy, 1993). Some studies define competitiveness using productivity, which is partially consistent with Porter's (1990) claim that productivity is the actual basis of competitive advantage. Porter defined organizational competitiveness as productivity growth that results in lower costs or differentiated goods that fetch higher prices.

The private hospitals in Nigeria are not left out of the organization change process, the health of the citizens of any country depends to a large extent on the quality of the health sector of such country, the public sector is established to provide social health service to the citizens by the government enhance competition is invisible but on the other hand the private sector are much and are more assessable to the people than the public hospitals and their existence is base on profit-making, and are owe by private persons who intent is not just to save lives but also to make money and to achieve this one has to be on top of the game in the industry through groaning ones organization to be able to blend with change that is the only constant thing globally.

Change management capability is that stage where organization members embrace change more readily and successfully, can adapt swiftly to market change, can welcome strategic initiatives, and adopt new technology quickly and with less productivity (Prosci, 2005). He sees change management capability as the third level of change management, and that the first level is the point at which the need for the change is noticed and implemented while the second stage which is organization change management has to do with the process, method which the change is design and implemented to achieve the desired result for implementing the change in the first place.

For many organizations, developing organizational change management capability and capacity can be a 5 to 10-year journey. It necessitates work, commitment, goal-setting, and preparation. Due to our expertise in change management, CMC regularly interacts with organizations that are excited by the idea of building change capabilities but soon discover that they do not yet have the infrastructure in place to make it happen. As organizational leaders rather than external specialists have assumed increasingly active roles in bringing about change, managers have, in general, grown more at ease with planned change (Aiken & Keller, 2021; Kotter & Cohen, 2019; Nadler, 1988). A growing number of managers are adept at responding to outside factors, imagining a desired future state, and carrying out the ensuing "plan" to accomplish that clearly stated goal. However, in this setting, change is primarily seen as linear and mechanistic, as a succession of distinct and occasionally traumatic events that must be managed for the organization to achieve its objectives. Given the flood of changes that an increasing number of enterprises are currently facing, change is typically seen as sequential and mechanistic, as a series of distinct and occasionally traumatic events that must be managed if the organization is to succeed. To succeed in environments that are changing quickly, however, requires experimentation, improvisation, and the capacity to deal with unforeseen events and unintended consequences (Wheatley, 1992; Gersick, 1991). Given the onslaught of changes that an increasing number of organizations are now facing, this carefully planned approach is quickly becoming insufficient. Companies must essentially maintain constant mobility, sometimes quick and sometimes slow, with little moments of consistency in between (Leana & Barry, 2020) – toward a largely unknown, emergent future state.

Statement of the Problem

Issues surrounding competitiveness of Private hospitals in Rivers State arise from pressures exerted by the spate of technological advancements, labor (skilled labor) translated into human capital as rare and valuable resources and assets for the organization which are not readily available, huge financial base required for establishment of standardized health facility; this partly because of the unavailability of public infrastructural facilities provided, acquisition of highly qualified health practitioners with the requisite skills and licenses to operate, poor management as a result ineffectiveness of human resources within the organization; all these are required for any given institution to have a good competitive position on which to stand and thrive, hence reforms that are targeted at reorganizing the private health sector, with a view to enhancing efficiency in the supply of services are urgently required if costs are to be controlled and consumers assured of good value for money spent (Ogunbekun, Ogunbekun, & Orobaton, 1999). Howbeit authors and practitioners have suggested that the private sector may be more efficient and responsive to patient needs because of market competition, which they indicate should overcome government inefficiency and corruption (Rosenthal & Newbrander, 1996).

However, these attempts in reforms and regulatory efforts directed towards the operations of private hospitals; advances in expensive medical technology, including new drug therapies, and increasing use of high-cost services and procedures are estimated to emanate which would consequently put to test the competitive position of these firms (Awa & Eze, 2013). Accordingly, Herzlinger (2004) opines that free market competition, consumer choice, and innovative management would determine success in the industry. To this end, this study seeks to examine the effect of change management capability on the competitiveness of private hospitals in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

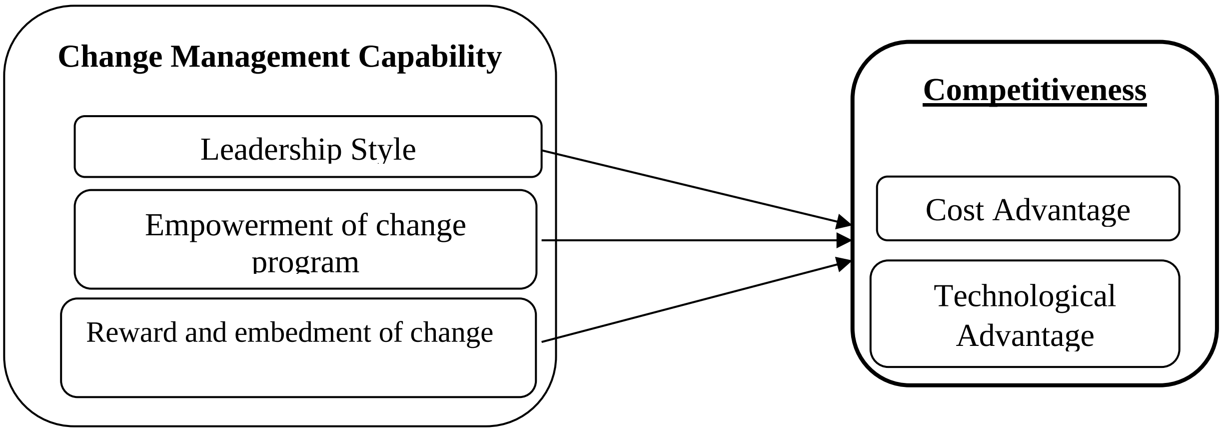

Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework as adapted from McGuinness, Morgan, and Oxtoby (2019), Guzmán, Gutiérrez, Cortes, and Ramírez (2021) for the predictor and criterion variables respectively.

Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the research work is to examine the relationship between change management capability and competitiveness of private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers state. Other specific objectives are to;

i. Examine if there is a relationship between leadership style and competitiveness of private hospitals in Rivers State.
ii. Examine if there is a relationship between the empowerment of change programs

and the competitiveness of private hospitals in Rivers State.

iii. Find if there is a relationship between reward and embedment of change and competitiveness of private hospitals in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The aforementioned objectives give rise to the following research questions;

i. What is the connection between the competitiveness of Rivers State's private hospitals and their leadership style?

ii. How do Rivers State's private hospitals' competitiveness and the empowerment of change programs relate to one another?

iii. How do rewards, the integration of change, and the competitiveness of private hospitals in Rivers State relate to one another?

Research Hypotheses

To provide tentative answers to the research questions above, this research work is guided by the following propositions stated in the null form;

H01: In Rivers State, there is no connection between leadership style and the competitiveness of private hospitals.

H02: In Rivers State, there is no demonstrable link between the competitiveness of private hospitals and the empowerment of change programs.

H03: In Rivers State, there is no correlating relationship between compensation, embedding of change, and competitiveness of private hospitals.

Literature Review

This section presents the theoretical structure from which the concepts emanate as well as empirical reviews of extant literature on change management capability and competitiveness.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework presents the baseline theories of the research study and as such the following theories are considered relevant to the concepts under study;

Resource-Based View Theory

The resource-based view of the company (Barney, 1991) claims that firm performance is a function of resource mix as an addition to this line of investigation. Competitive advantage is attained when resources are diverse, unique, and difficult to duplicate and when a firm's offering generates greater value for its clients than its rival(s) (DeCastro & Chrisman, 1995; Ansoff, 1965). Thus, differences in performance across firms result from variances in resource portfolios. Resources are valuable when they provide organizations with the ability to implement strategies that enhance efficiency and effectiveness. Accordingly, the proposition of resource-based view theory asserts that competitive advantage is derived from effectively and efficiently utilizing organizational resources and capabilities which are directed at developing the competencies within the business organization for enhanced performance levels (Gibbert, 2021; Hunt, 2010).

The physical and intangible resources of the organization are both internal and external organizational resources that influence organizational strategy as well as achievement (Barney, 1991). Internal resources in business-to-business marketplaces may include engineering, finance, production interface, and cross-functional product development. The complete value chain, along with the different alliances that have been built, symbolizes resources unique to each organization and helps gauge success from the outside.

Theory of ‘Change through Balancing’

The theory postulated by Beer and Nohria (2020) was entitled ‘change through balancing’; they argued that a lack of focus on central change elements has failed in many change initiatives by business organizations. This lack of focus they asserted makes managers rush into change programs and end up in messy situations. They further hold that there are two available options, perspectives, or viewpoints when considering change programs for any given organization (Boonstra, 2018). These are – Theories E and O; where theory E is a change program with processes designed with the sole objective directed at core economic concerns of the organization for example in a profit-making enterprise; maximizing shareholders/stockholders' value is the primary concern and as such change programs from Theory E’ standpoint will be steered towards achieving this major aim through certain radical decisions which do not take into cognizance the opinion of organizational members as to how it may affect them; in example – downsizing, staff redundancies, cut downs on incentives, layoffs, restructuring, de-layering, etc.

Theory O's perspective was described as the 'soft' approach to organizational change problems as opposed to Theory E's, which looks through the perspectives of organizational members. There is a preference for member objectives to core economic objectives of the business unit; thus the opinion of these key internal stakeholders is sought, as well as feedback/report delineating support and contribution of an average member of the organization; thus the aim is to maintain a committed psychological contract with members. To this end, modern-day managers are suggested to strike a happy medium in the adoption of the two theories (Beer and Nohria, 2020) thus, balancing the change process and this is exactly what is meant by 'change through balancing'. However, this balancing becomes very effective with an attitude of the organization in learning; hence the proposition of Senge (1992) in the concept of 'Learning Organization'.

Change Management Capability (CMC)

The available literature provides some definitions of change management and change management capability. These definitions are relevant to this research study. Change management should focus on creating an enabling environment for implementing the change (Kemp & Low, 2018). This definition gives basics in understanding the concept and planning change management practices.

According to Moran and Humberman (1994), change management is also the process of continuously renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to meet the constantly changing needs of internal and external customers. They also claim that change management is a structured approach to change in people or organizations. It makes it possible to move from an undesirable present condition to a desired future state.

Kashand Rycroft (2019) argues that change management is important during system implementation, starting at the project phase and throughout the project's entire life cycle. Furthermore, change in the organization should be correctly managed. This includes people, organizational, and cultural change (Nadler, 1981).

Duck (1993) argued that from an individual perspective, the change may be a new behavior. From a business perspective, the change may be a new technology or a new business process. Duck (1993) further suggested that different types of change require different management approaches, methods, and strategies. In the business context, therefore, the scope of change management ranges from planned evolutions and reforms to business transformation. Top-down approaches, such as business transformation or crisis management, are characterized by a high degree of intervention; while bottom-up approaches, such as planned organizational development are characterized by less intervention and by harmonizing the goals of the corporation and those of the affected employees (Pagliarella, 2020).

While others saw change management capability as a process that must be followed for an organization to be able to sustain change for a long period. Prosci (2021) defined change management capability as the third level of his three levels of change management, according to him change management capability means that effective change management is embedded in the organization's roles, structure, process, and leadership competence which enables the organization to respond quickly to things happening in the industry which include market change, embrace strategic initiative and adopt new technology quickly and effectively.

Leadership Style

Although leadership has been defined by many authors over the years there is no universally accepted definition. Moran and Humberman (1994) defined change management as the process of continuously updating an organization's strategy, organizational design, and operational capacity to respond to the ever-evolving needs of internal and external clients. They also assert that an organized approach to transformation in individuals or organizations is change management. It enables the transition from an unfavorable current state to a desired future state. "Leadership can be simply defined as the art of inspiring others to work voluntarily toward the accomplishment of group goals." Along with a willingness to work, leadership can also entail zeal and confidence.

According to Nwachukwu (1988), leadership is simply the act of persuading others to take action to achieve a goal. According to Ubeku (1975), leadership is the act of motivating others to carry out certain tasks to accomplish predetermined goals. Making things happen rather than letting them happen is what it means to be a leader. To accomplish this, the group's leader must exercise both intrinsic and extrinsic group influence. Because it involves dealing with people so much, leadership is the most apparent management job, the art of persuading people to work voluntarily toward the accomplishment of group objectives can be used to define leadership. Leadership can also be demonstrated through zeal, confidence, and a willingness to work hard.

According to Nwachukwu (1988), leadership is simply the act of persuading people to take actions that will advance a particular objective. Leadership is also described by Ubeku (1975) as the act of motivating others to carry out specific tasks to accomplish predetermined goals. Making things happen as opposed to letting them happen is what leadership is all about. This is accomplished by the group's leader showing both intrinsic and extrinsic influences. Although it involves people the most, leadership is the most visible of the management functions, and directed through the communication, towards the attainment of a specific goal or goals. (Adebakin & Gbadamosi, 1996) defined leadership as the process of influencing and directing the activities of an organized group toward the achievement of the group organization's set objectives. The aforementioned Lions demonstrate how leadership has been predicated on personality traits, behavioral categories, a leader's ability to achieve effective performance from others, interpersonal behavior, and the communications process.

The concept – of leadership styles has been studied extensively in management science in the past century, as a key factor in determining organizational success (Bass & Aviollo, 1993).

Every leader has a different behavior in leading his followers. It's known as a leadership style. According to Cuadrado et al.'s description of leadership style in 2021, there are two dimensions to a leader's behavior: structure initiation, which includes relation-oriented leaders, and consideration, which includes task-oriented leaders. According to Memon (2014), a leader's way of giving instructions, inspiring followers, and carrying out plans is referred to as their leadership style. According to Mehmood and Arif (2011), a leader's approach to leading a team, department, or organization is referred to as their leadership style. Because there is no one perfect leadership style, leaders who are looking for it may discover that a combination of styles works best (Darling & Leffel, 2010).

Empowerment of Change Programs

Many organizations today are confronted with the challenge of managing change; having that in its nature; it could be planned and or unplanned pressure exerted on the organization (Jick & Peiperl, 2003). Burke (2018) indicates that the increasing rate of change places the organization in a position to adapt to it or be phased out by its enormous pressures. Adaptive capacity to change as it emanates is what is needed by the organization as well as empowerment through the provision of resources – human and non-human resources for such change programs; this provides for the organization's ability to cope with the rapid change modern organizations are confronted with (Daft & Armstrong, 2009).

In the world of business today, empowerment is a concept trending, as a new managerial approach among business leaders (Bennis & Nanus, 2020; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Luthans, 1995; Kanter, 1983) Empowerment as understood by (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989) is a process of change. According to McClelland (1975), for people to take control, they must learn about themselves and their surroundings, be open to identifying with others, and collaborate with them to effect change. Similar to McClelland's (1975) definition, Whitmore (1988) describes empowerment as "an interactive process through which people experience personal and social change, enabling them to take action to achieve influence over the groups and organizations which affect their lives and the towns and cities in which they live."

Empowerment is a process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make effective choices, this entails making decisions and then converting those decisions into the intended activities and results (Alsop, Bertelsen, & Holland, 2006). Some people think that empowerment language can result in increased awareness (Rappaport, 1985), while others think it is just one of the effective ways to allow employees at all levels to use their innovative abilities to improve the performance of the organization they are in and the quality of their work. Regardless, more and more individuals are trying to figure out what empowerment is and how they may utilize it to alter their environments and lives.

According to Ugoro and Obeng (2004), empowerment is to give power to those who are weak in an organization. Kocel (2003) indicated empowerment as bringing employees to the position of owners of work evidenced in their active co-participation in the given change program; for any given organization to achieve the essence of its existence, it must identify ways through which the employees can be actively involved in the affairs of the organization (Kocel, 2003).

Reward and Embedment of Change

Change programs within organizations demand that after managers and leaders have harnessed resources to ensure such change efforts are implemented to achieve favorable outcomes; effort must be made to reward such efforts as well as reinforce such favorable processes and outcomes. McGuinness et al. (2019) advocate that an organization's formal appraisal and reward systems are well aligned with change objectives but also extend to informal systems that provide socially mediated rewards to personnel of the organization. A powerful contributor to motivating and reinforcing change is the visibility with which measured progress is displayed, communicated, and celebrated both within the organization and other communities (professional associations; local neighborhoods) of which members are a part. Also, such change programs should be recorded to be referred to repeat such behaviors to achieve successful organizational outcomes; in other words, best practices emanating from the change process are recorded; such behaviors are transferred to other parts of the organization(McGuinness *et al.*, 2019).In a study carried out by Murphy (2009), the failure of change programs was attributed to the failure of CEOs in motivating managers and employees on the need for change, as well as skills in sustaining change programs directed at improving organizational performance.

All changes in behavior among organizational members must be captured to reflect in systems, structures, and routines as well as norms and values; all these would determine whether effective changes are sustained and whether the organization will be willing to embark on subsequent changes as they present themselves.

Competitiveness

The idea of competition has several facets. The three levels of analysis are at the national, industry, and firm levels. The Latin term "competer," which denotes participation in a corporate battle for markets, is where the word "competitiveness" first appeared. In the global market economy, where commodities, services, people, talents, and ideas may move freely across borders, it has become usual to compare an entity's economic strength to that of its rivals (Murths, 1998). According to D'Cruz (1992), the ability of a firm to design, produce, and/or market products that are superior to those provided by competitors can be referred to as firm-level competitiveness. Competitiveness processes are those that assist in assessing the significance and present effectiveness of fundamental procedures including strategic management procedures, human resource procedures, operational procedures, and technological procedures. The process of competitiveness can be seen as a balancing act that supports more established functional processes like operations management and human resource management. It improves an organization's capacity to compete more successfully.

Profitability, productivity, and market share are examples of conventional economic metrics that are thought to be insufficient for enabling continual performance improvement (Lu, 2006). According to Buckley et al. (1988), the notion provides for the perception of potential and the enhancement of managerial procedures in addition to reflecting historical performance. Traditional indicators can only capture quantitative historical data. Being competitive is a capability that must be utilized in a firm's daily activities. Macroeconomic, political, legal, and social reforms won't be fully successful until there is suitable progress at the microeconomic level, according to Porter (2004). Therefore, both macroeconomic factors and the microeconomic (enterprise) environment are influenced. Furthermore, while being in the same macroenvironment, there are several examples of enterprises that exhibit different levels of competitiveness (both favorably and negatively). As a result, understanding competition requires an understanding of enterprise competition.

The goal of the idea of competitiveness is to be useful in identifying and understanding the fundamental factors that influence levels of prosperity, it suggests that the focus on productivity has to be paramount. Productivity is the key driver of long-term prosperity levels and is thus an appropriate and critical target for policy.

Measures of Competitiveness

Measures of competitiveness as adapted for this study are from the study conducted by Guzmán *et al.* (2021) to include financial performance, reduced cost of operation, and technology use; thus they are discussed as follows;

Cost Advantage

Guzmán *et al.* (2021) found that reducing costs also has significant effects on business competitiveness. Buckley, Pass, and Prescott (1988) in a scale provided validity and reliability for the measures of competitiveness used; thus business organizations who want to acquire, maintain, or increase their level of competitiveness, first they will significantly improve their financial performance, reduce their costs as much as possible and make more efficient use of technology that have. Also, companies will have to align, and incorporate these three variables within their business strategies, so that these variables have a similar impact on the measurement of the level of competitiveness, i.e., cannot give preference to any of them or simply to discard them because the results may not be expected or be distorted (Jutla, Bodorik & Dhaliqal, 2019).

On the other hand, given the uncertainty that is currently in business and the growing pressure of the market that enterprises, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, acquire or improve significantly their level of competitiveness, and be able to maintain their market position, competitive advantages or even survive in a highly globalized economy, it is necessary that companies rethink their business strategies and implement focused strategies to make or strengthen collaboration with its suppliers and customers, as this can significantly improve your return on investment, increase sales and increase their profits, which can be translated as one both significant increase in the market share as in the financial performance of the organization (Jutla *et al.*, 2019; Lau, 2019).

Thus, reducing costs of organizations be achieved faster if companies implement strategies of collaboration with their suppliers, efficient and effective coordination with suppliers can reduce the lifting of orders and the delivery of both organizations' providers of these customers and distributors, thereby reducing procurement costs and logistics of commodities costs. Therefore, the reduction of the costs of purchases is an essential variable that can have a significant positive impact on both the performance and the competitive potential of enterprises.

Technological Advantage

Technology is a concept that has been given a lot of consideration in research work these days, the reason is not far from the obvious as the world is evolving into a global village as a result of technology and thus to be able to compete well with other firms, managers seek to improve their technology in use to outsmart their competitors (Buckley 1988). Technology has been defined by various authors according to their fields of study. Technology, in the words of Rousseau and Cooke (1984), included knowledge and capabilities (such as those present in organizational members and machines), techniques and procedures for converting inputs into outputs, and processes or activities related to the application of these technologies. Technology is described by Robbins (1996) as the process by which an organization converts its inputs (such as materials and information) into outputs (such as products and services), and it is one of the internal contingency variables that also influences an organization's structure. An earlier study by Woodward (1965) revealed specific connections between the three fundamental types of technology (unit production or batch technology, mass production or big batch technology, and process production or continuous process technology) and the ensuing structure of manufacturing enterprises.

Technology is the total of knowledge and the ways we do things which include inventions, techniques, and a vast store of organized knowledge about everything Knootz *et al.* (2020). Technology can be seen as information, hardware, activities the effect of knowledge and the variability of materials, and the nature of search processes.

In the same way, the appropriate use of the technology on which it counts the organization or the acquisition of new technology the same is an essential condition to ensure that companies can acquire or increase their level of competitiveness because it is precisely through technology companies can reduce costs of production and improve the Organization's processes, generating new products and make its distribution system. Therefore, the use of technology has become the current literature in the field of business sciences, as a key indicator of the measurement of the level of business competitiveness. In this sense, if companies want to improve their current level of competitiveness, in addition, and invariably to the above, not only do they make more efficient technology use with the Organization, but also acquire, improve, or develop an equal or better technology as its main competitors.

Empirical Literature Review

Thomas (2014) carried out a study on change management to determine its effect on organizational performance in the Nigerian telecommunication industry, in the study, three hundred (300) members of staff from Airtel Nigeria were selected randomly from a population of 1000 staff were engaged for the study as to elicit their responses on the subject matter; the data collected for the study was analyzed using One-way Analysis of Variance. Findings revealed that changes in technology significantly affect performance and that changes in customer taste have a significant effect on customer patronage, also changes in management via leadership have a significant effect on employee performance.

Mueni (2010) in a qualitative research undertaking, a case study was carried out on the Kenyan police staff savings and credit society, he examined the relationship between change management and competitive advantage and factors that influenced change management at the Sacco. Data were collected through in-depth personal interviews with some members of the central management committee and departmental heads who are charged with the implementation of strategies at the society. The study findings showed that change at Kenya police Sacco has been both planned and emergent. It also indicated that in most cases the board members proactively planned for change and in other instances whereby new policies were introduced by the government in such instances, Sacco has been able to successfully adopt and manage change through change agents.

A critical analysis of the impact of change management on employee performance was conducted in 2016 by Njuguna and Muathe. The study examined the history of change management, from academic and management perspectives; factors influencing the growth and adoption of change management on employees' performance concept, the theoretical framework of change management on employees' performance, and the empirical studies on change management on employees' performance. Participatory leadership, motivating commitment, training, and communication are examples of change management indicators that have a strong correlation to the performance of the employees who make up the dependent variable.

Ferreira and Kittsteinery (2021) in their work 'Competition and organization change'; competitive pressure was described as a catalyst for organizational change; because employees must work together to develop a strategy-specific skill, commitment to a focused corporate plan was deemed valuable. According to the findings, monopolist businesses might not be able to commit to a specific business plan. However, the introduction of competition can increase the credibility of commitment, resulting in organizational change and higher operational efficiency, as well as the importance of leadership styles, and the interactions between strategic positioning and organizational capabilities in instituting change initiatives.

Markovic (2018) carried out a study on effective organization management and examined several factors which include; the reason change programs fail, how change programs affect practicing managers, how organizational managers react to change, how they deal with change programs, and how successful such attempts are, how are problems identified and solutions proffered, relative to the theories and researches on organizational change, what kind of organizations are the most adaptive to changes, Findings indicated that the operational strategies and structures of the majority of businesses replicate previous business realities, making organizational inertia one of the biggest barriers to change. However, it is acknowledged that critical elements of any successful change endeavor include leadership and management abilities, such as visioning, setting priorities, planning, giving feedback, and rewarding success.

In their 2005 article, "Change Management Capability: The Missing Link in Marketing Education," Mcmullen and Siemionow look at the difficulties that marketing education faces, due to the changing boundaries of the marketing discipline and the marginalizing of market functions within organizations. They noticed that within an organization there is always a gap in knowledge of change management, especially postgraduates and the study finds that if change management is well embedded in the curriculum of the marketing department it will prepare the professionals in marketing to be fit and able to stand the ever-changing and complex business environment which they operate in.

Lawrence (2021) conducted a descriptive study of United Bank for Africa (UBA) station Road, Enugu to examine the effects of change management in the Nigerian banking sector. Primary and secondary data were used in conducting the study (questionnaire and oral interview, textbooks, journals, and magazines) Seventy-seven (77) employees were engaged in the study and findings revealed among others that change management results to quality services.

Zehir and Acar (2015) examined the impact of organizational capabilities on business performance and described such capabilities as collective skills, abilities, and expertise of an organization thus identifying eight dimensions of organizational capabilities and their impacts on business performance. Using regression analysis, data gathered from 456 owners and senior managers of 121 businesses were examined to assess the hypotheses. As a result, the study found that the more organizational capabilities a firm possesses the better it becomes as evidenced in enhanced business performance.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design in studying twelve (12) selected private hospitals which constitute our accessible population, however, our study units include the managerial employees of the firms having that our unit of analysis is at the organizational level of the organization. The human resource department provided us with data on functional departments within the organization. From the population, fifty-eight (58) copies were retrieved and analyzed; the instrument with which we elicited data from the respondents is the questionnaire data generated for this research work was analyzed using the following techniques; Kendall' tau_b (τ_b) correlation coefficient statistical tool from (Statistical Package for Social Sciences – (SPSS) version 20) again is used for the bivariate analysis in examining associations between the dimensions and measures of the variables studied for triangulation, and the formula is given as;

$$\tau_B = \frac{n_c - n_d}{\sqrt{(n_0 - n_1)(n_0 - n_2)}}$$

where

$$n_0 = n(n-1)/2$$
$$n_1 = \sum_i t_i(t_i - 1)/2$$
$$n_2 = \sum_j u_j(u_j - 1)/2$$
$n_c =$ Number of concordant pairs
$n_d =$ Number of discordant pairs
$t_i =$ Number of tied values in the i^{th} group of ties for the first quantity
$u_j =$ Number of tied values in the j^{th} group of ties for the second quantity

Results and Discussion

This section is concerned with testing hypotheses using Kendall' tau_b (τ_b) correlation coefficient statistical tool and the p-values obtained; hence the decision rule; reject the null hypothesis if the p-value obtained is less than the alpha value of 0.05 and accept the null hypothesis when the p-value is greater than the alpha value (0.05).

$H0_{1\text{-}3}$: The competitiveness of private hospitals in Rivers State and the dimensions of change management skills do not significantly correlate.

Table 1.1 Correlation between the dimensions of change management capability and competitiveness of private hospitals in Rivers State

Correlations

			Leadership Style	Empowerment change program	R&E of change programs	Competitiveness
Spearman's rho	Leadership Style	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.790**	.883**	.913**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	58	58	58	58
	Empowerment ofChange program	Correlation Coefficient	.613**	1.000	.769**	.814**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	58	58	58	58
	R&E of change programs	Correlation Coefficient	.883**	.769**	1.000	.834**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	58	58	58	58
	Competitiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.913**	.814**	.834**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	58	58	59	58

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey, 2023

Table 1.1 presents Spearman's rank order correlation run to ascertain the relationship between leadership style as a dimension of change management capability and competitiveness as reported by fifty-nine (59) respondents. A strong positive correlation coefficient value was reported between statistically significant variables (rho = .913**, p = .000 < 0.05 (alpha value) this suggests that there is a significant relationship between leadership style and the criterion variable; also empowerment of change programs and competitiveness reported significant values of correlation (rho = .814**, p = .000 < 0.05); accordingly, reward and embedment of change programs and the criterion variable (competitiveness) reported significant values of correlation (rho = .834**, n = 59, p = .000 < 0.05).

Decision: The null hypotheses stated are rejected and we state that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of change management capability and competitiveness of selected private hospitals in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the relationship between change management capability and competitiveness of private hospitals in Rivers State; three (3) hypotheses were formulated as tentative answers to research questions raised and were tested to find support for the propositions, thus;

The result of the tested $H0_1$ reported the existence of a significant relationship between leadership style and the criterion variable (competitiveness); (rho = .913**, p = .000 < 0.05); this empirical finding is supported by (Mehmood & Arif, 2011); thus leadership style adopted in the organization contributes to firm's competitiveness in the given market; hence the study by Memon (2014) describes leadership as providing direction, motivating people and implementing plans. Leadership styles are seen as approaches that leaders use when leading organizations, departments, or groups (Mehmood & Arif, 2011) Because there is no one perfect leadership style, leaders who are looking for it may discover that a combination of styles works best (Darling & Leffel, 2010).

The result of the tested $H0_2$ reported the existence of a significant relationship between empowerment of change programs and competitiveness; (rho = .814**, p = .000 < 0.05); this empirical finding aligns with a study by Burke (2018) who indicated that the increasing rate of change places the organization in a position to adapt to it or be phased out by its enormous pressures. Adaptive capacity to change as it emanates is what is needed by the organization as well as empowerment through the provision of resources – human and non-human resources for such change programs; this provides for the organization's ability to cope with the rapid change modern organizations are confronted with (Daft & Armstrong, 2009); this theoretical position also supports our empirical findings.

The result of the tested $H0_3$ reported the existence of a significant relationship between the management of vulnerability and innovativeness; (rho = .834**, p = .000 < 0.05); this empirical finding aligns with McGuinness et al. (2019) advocates that an organization's formal appraisal and reward systems are well aligned with change objectives, but also extends to informal systems that provide socially mediated rewards to personnel of the organization; to this end successful change programs when rewarded and embedded ultimately engenders competitiveness for the firm in turn. A powerful contributor to motivating and reinforcing change is the visibility with which measured progress is displayed, communicated, and celebrated both within the organization and other communities (professional associations; local neighborhoods) of which members are a part.

Conclusions/Practical Implications

This study revealed that leadership styles adopted by managers and leaders ultimately explain how change programs are viewed and accepted; an autocratic leader will bar change initiatives from subordinates, and a transactional leader will like to maintain the status quo, routines, and traditions of the organization thereby discouraging change initiatives while their democratic and transformational counterparts will encourage and motivate change initiatives in the organization with the resultant outcome of competitiveness.

Recommendations

From our empirical findings and theoretical propositions, it remains unarguably true that change programs can only remain successful when the capability therewith is present with the given organization, several measures connote the capability, those formed our variables and as such we recommend;

Modern-day organizations should adopt leadership styles that will encourage change initiatives and support the organization to embark on change programs so that their practices and operations will remain up-to-date within the designated industry.

When change initiatives are instigated by subordinates or even superiors, there should be resources (human and material) to adequately correspond with the plans to avoid the abortion of such novel ideas, resources should be adequate to sustain the change process until a favorable output is derived.

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Appendix A: Copy of the Questionnaire

<u>Section A</u>

This study is embarked on to examine the relationship between change management capability and competitiveness of some selected private hospitals in Rivers State.

This section seeks to elicit information on the demographics of the respondent
Fill by ticking [ ]
Name of Hospital ………………………………………………
Sex: (a) Male [ ] (b) Female [ ]
Age: (a) 26-30 [ ] (b) 31-35 [ ] (c) 36-40 [ ] (d) 41 and above [ ]
Educational Qualification: (a) M.B.B.S [ ] (b) B.Sc. / R.N/ R.M [ ] (c) M.Sc. / MBA/ M.P.H.U [ ] (d) PhD [ ] (e) If others, please specify…………
How long have you worked with the hospital? (a) 1-5 [ ] (b) 6-10 [ ] (c) 11-15 [ ] (d) 16 and above [ ]
Your current position in the hospital……………………

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD)

S/N	**Leadership Style**	U	SD	D	A	SA
1	In our organization; our leaders don't just preach change, they practice it					
2	The leaders are committed to what the organization has set out to achieve					
3	The leaders are directed to understand when change is needed in the organization and to pursue it					
4	Organizational members fully participate in any given change program					
5	People are motivated to embark on change					
	Empowerment of Change Programs					
1	Support is usually derived from other organizational members toward change efforts					
2	Opinions of members are rightly sought and respected towards the implementation of change					
3	Every member of the organization is given the appropriate tools to cope with change upon its emergence					
4	Leaders/managers guide other organizational members through the change process					
5	Adequate resources are launched to support the implementation of change programs					
6	When changes are made in this business unit everyone involved is given plenty of time and opportunity to learn the new things they need to know					
	Reward and Embedment of Change					
1	In this business unit, people who can handle change get well-rewarded					
2	Opinions of members are rightly sought and respected towards the implementation of change					
3	Every member of the organization is given the appropriate tools to cope					

	with change upon its emergence					
4	Leaders/managers guide other organizational members through the change process					
5	Adequate resources are launched to support the implementation of change programs					
	Competitiveness					
	Cost advantage					
1	We render high-quality and affordable services					
2	With our experiences; we leverage them to provide affordable products and services					
3	The cost of our operations is remarkably cheap					
4	We enjoy increased patronage from our customers and the general public because of the cost of our services					
5	We derive the benefits from word-of-mouth services from our customers					
	Technological advantage					
1	There is an increased technological advancements made on our machines and equipment					
2	We have highly sophisticated processes for service offerings					
3	As a result of adopted technology, there is increased efficiency in operations					
4	Increased benefits from technology adoption include minimized time spent in service delivery					
5	Modern technology adopted enables us to have a wide reach to our potential and actual customers 24/7					