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ABSTRACTS
This study examined the effects of benchmarking on performance of manufacturing firms (A Study of Nigerian Breweries plc. Enugu). The researcher distributed 109 copies of questionnaire to staff of Nigerian Breweries, Enugu. Descriptive survey approach was adopted and analyzed using SPSS regressions. The following findings were made. i) Benchmarking process had significant effect on the profitability of Nigerian Breweries, Enugu. ii) Critical benchmarking had significant effect organizational competitive advantage of Nigerian Breweries, Enugu. The study concluded that Benchmark as a standardized test or set of test used for comparing alternatives had components, a Motivating comparison, a Task Sample, and Performance Measures. It thus recommended that; i) Management of the Nigerian Breweries, Enugu should use the well-established mechanism of the benchmarking process that contributes to an improvement in the organizational performance by using the best industrial practices backed by a workable policy.

Keywords: Benchmarking, Efficiency, Organizational Effectiveness and productivity.

1.1 INTRODUCTION
Measuring performance against a recognized business excellence or quality framework can deliver a range of benefits for firms. It is pivotal to a firm to know one’s own standard and compare it against others in today's complex and competitive corporate environment. Benchmarking is a technique for assessing a firm’s performance against the performance of other firms. It is used to find the best practice and to take necessary actions to improve the firm’s own performance so that it meets or exceeds that of its competitors (Cross, 2014). It is usually a process of reengineering or quality improvement initiative, and focuses on the ongoing quality management efforts of strategic business units. This has resulted in the establishment of a conceptual framework for evaluating users’ needs identified in market opportunity analysis, a new service concept, the user’s ombudsman, relationship marketing and a citizen charter (Zair, 2013).

Benchmarking is a product of the last decade of the twenty first century. This management approach to identify who is best and what makes them so successful has experienced increased popularity, both by manufacturing and services companies. In management science, benchmarking is usually positioned as being and extension of an existing total quality programme, and as being a way in which to establish new more relevant and efficient standard performance. The increased interest in benchmarking has been
stimulated with the publication of Xerox’s Manager, Robert Camp’s book on benchmarking (Camp, 2008). Since then, the phenomenon of benchmarking has been discussed by many authors primarily, in the form of management guide books (Spendolini, 2009).

1.2 Statement of the Problem
Study and explanation of business competitiveness is a recurrent theme studied by academics, consultants and practitioners. The internalization of economy, dynamic nature of the environment, greater competitive firms, the need for continuous innovation, product customization and growing use of Information and Communication Technology forces firms to face challenges of improving their competitiveness. These difficulties are greater for small and medium enterprises because their economy of scale and their resources are less than those of large firms. Research has documented that 70% of Small and Medium scale Enterprises fail in their first three years of operations in Nigeria.

The highly competitive environment for Nigerian breweries plc in Nigeria has necessitated the need for organizations to develop strategic means of survival. Thus, it becomes imperative to find out whether generating new product features, will increase their scale of productivity and reflect also on their customer base. Ability of top management to properly analyze the market is one of the crucial aspects of marketing rules. It is when a unique selling proposition is created with the aim of increasing the scale of product.

Design and implementation of competitive benchmarking Strategy must be perceived as important components in the firm's management process. This is because the benchmarking strategy gives the direction that business managers have in mind and which way they want to achieve their goals. However due to globalization, competition amongst organizations are on the rise and Nigerian Breweries Plc in Nigeria are struggling under this intense competitive environment both at the domestic and international terrain. Despite the economic significance of Nigerian Breweries Plc in Nigeria, it had not played the expected vital and vibrant role in the economic growth and development of the country. These challenges may result from perceived ineffective competitive benchmarking strategy which is having a negative effect on performance in terms of customer base, sales growth, returns on investment and revenue.

Lack of better product/service quality and delivery, inadequate product customization and poor personnel management has hindered banks and their performance. This is as a result of narrow out-look to issues regarding competitive benchmarking strategy, planning, formulation, implementation and evaluation, research and development on product quality and service delivery. This motivated the researcher to embark on this study. Therefore, there is need to critically examine the effect of benchmarking on performance of manufacturing firms with respect Nigerian Breweries Plc. Enugu.

1.3 Objectives of the Study
The main objective of this study is to examine the effects of benchmarking on performance of manufacturing firms (A Study of Nigerian Breweries Plc. Enugu, Enugu State). Other specific objective was to;

- determine if benchmarking process increases the profitability of Nigerian Breweries plc. Enugu.

1.4 Research Question
The following questions were formulated for the study:

- To what extent do benchmarking increases the profitability of Nigerian Breweries plc Enugu?

1.5 Research Hypothesis
\[ H_0: \text{Benchmarking process has no significant effect on the profitability of Nigerian Breweries} \]

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
2.1 Conceptual Framework
Benchmark is defined as a standardized test or set of test used for comparing alternatives. A benchmark has three components, a Motivating comparison, a Task Sample, and Performance Measures. This definition was developed by looking at existing definitions and case histories of benchmarks. A general definition is used to ensure wide applicability of the theory.
Gaining and maintaining a competitive edge is the key to success in all walks of life, both on the playing field and in the boardroom. In sports the scoreboard continually flashes information on the winners and losers of the contest. It is a clear signal of success or failure. For the business person of today, though, no readily available scoreboard exists; the regards go to the manager with the best intuition or “gut feel” of the vagaries of the customer and market place and how to capitalize on them. Yet tradition and intuition are really no replacement for objective external compassion and analysis or benchmarking. Benchmarking is emerging in leading edge companies as a tool for obtaining the information needed to support continuous improvement and gain competitive advantage. Initially employed by Xerox Corporation to meet the Japanese competitive challenge of the 1970s benchmarking embodies the pursuit of excellence the desires to be the best of the best.

2.1.1 Components of a benchmark
A benchmark has three components, a Motivating Comparison, a Task Sample, and Performance Measures, the development of a benchmark can begin with any of these components.

a. Motivating Comparison
This component encompasses two concepts, comparison and motivation. The purpose of a benchmark is to compare. So, the comparison that is at the heart of a benchmark must be clearly defined and accepted. The motivation pertains to the need for the research area, and in turn the benchmark itself and the work on it. Thus Motivating Comparison captures both the technical comparison to be made, as well as the research agenda that will be furthered by making this comparison. The research goals for a benchmark can be as simple as learning about different approaches or it can be as sophisticated as gathering evidence for technology transfer (John, 2000).

b. Task Sample
At its core, benchmark is a set of tests that have been standardized, so they can be applied uniformly. The tasks in the benchmark should be a representative sample of the tasks that a class of tools or techniques is expected to solve in actual practice. Since it is not possible to include the entire population of task from the problem domain, a selection of tasks acts as a surrogate. At a minimum, the standard will specify the tasks, the setting or environment for the tasks, procedural rules for running the tests, and a format for reporting the results. The tasks that form a benchmark are often controversial and “The most subjective and therefore weakest part of a benchmark test is the benchmark’s composition. Everything else, if properly documented, can be checked by the skeptic. Hence, benchmark composition is always hotly debated”.

c. Performance Measures
Performance is not an innate characteristic of the technology, but is a relationship between the technology and how it is used. As such, performance is a measure of fitness for purpose. These measurements can be made by a computer or by a human and can be qualitative. They can be on any measurement scale, nominal, ordinal, ratio, or absolute (John 2000).

2.2 Theoretical Framework
2.2.1 Theories of Organizational Performance
Performance occupies a key interface between organization behavior, strategy and international management. In organization behavior the position of performance in the structural contingency theories and research studies was marginal. Apart from the Handbook of Organization Design (Nystrom and Starbuck, 1981) many textbooks omit performance from the list of contents. Organization behavior is at the leading edge in developing a more substantial understanding of performance. The structural contingency theory requires extensive revision. There are two major areas of revision. First, to account for the hidden impacts on performance of the national context of the firm. The hidden aspects include the roles of actor endowments (for example, raw materials), the institutions and the market characteristics (for example, size, homogeneity and speed of saturation). These hidden aspects impact on the performance of firms by creating a zone of man oeuvre. Firms have to be aware of the zone, yet can enroll elements in the context which reshape the zone. Second, it is important to be aware of the
differences in approach between the practices of auditing performance within firms from the concepts and theories used in organization behavior. Within firms of all kinds – public and private, commercial and custodial – there are extensive arrays of performance data covering very diverse aspects. The financial dimensions of the array are highly influential in constituting the recipe knowledge about strategic directions. The influence of accountancy on the everyday understanding of performance is significant, but should be closely scrutinized.

3.0 METHODOLOGY
3.1 Research Design
The researcher used survey design for the study.

3.2 Population of the Study
The population of the study was 150 workers of Nigerian Breweries plc. Enugu

3.3 Source of data
Primary Data: Sample of 109 was obtained from the population using Taro Yameni’s formula. Primary data was obtained using data collected from questionnaire. The researcher distributed 109 copies of questionnaire to staff of Nigerian Breweries, Enugu.

Secondary Data: Secondary data are both published and unpublished.

3.4 Sample Size Determination
The sample size of 109 respondents was obtained using the Taro Yameni’s formula

Using \( n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \)

Where; 
- \( n \) = Samples Size
- \( N \) = Population
- \( e \) = level of significance

Therefore, \( n = \frac{150}{1+150(0.05)^2} \)

\( n = \frac{150}{1+150(0.0025)} \)

\( n = \frac{150}{1.375} \)

\( n = 109.09 \)

\( n = 109 \)

3.5 Sampling Technique
Simple random sampling technique was used by the researcher.

3.6 Methods of Data Analyses
Data gathered for the study was analyzed using descriptive analysis i.e. frequency, standard deviation, mean and percentage and inferential statistics i.e. correlation, ANOVA, and regression was used to test hypotheses, with the aid of statistical packages for social sciences version 23.

3.6 DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS
In this study, a total of 109 questionnaire were given out to respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total copies of questionnaire</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number returned</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>89.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number not returned</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey, 2020
Table 3.6.1 showed the number of questionnaire that were distributed by the researcher were 109 and the number returned were 98 which made up of 89.91% of the total number while the remaining 11 copies which made up of 10.1% were not returned.

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis one**

H0₁: Benchmarking process has no significant effect on the profitability of Nigerian Breweries plc. Enugu

**Regression result on showing the effect of benchmarking process on profitability**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Durbin-Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.939*</td>
<td>.881</td>
<td>.879</td>
<td>.42177</td>
<td>.401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Operations in order to achieve continuous improvement increases profitability,

To what extent does benchmarking application enhances profit

b. Dependent Variable: Profitability of bank through benchmarking

Coeficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Un standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95.0% Confidence Interval for B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.520</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To what extent does benchmarking application enhances profit</td>
<td>.834</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>10.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operations in order to achieve continuous improvement increases profitability</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Profitability of bank through benchmarking

R-Square = 0.881
Adjusted R-Square = 0.879
F-Statistics (df1=2 & df2=95) = 353.035 (p=0.000)
T Statistics = 3.718

The coefficient of determination R-square of 0.881 implied that 88.1% of the sample variation in the dependent variable was explained or caused by the explanatory variable while 11.9% was unexplained. The remaining 11.9% could be caused by other factors or variables not built into the model. The high value of R-square was an indication of a very good relationship between the dependent variable. The value of the adjusted R² was 0.879 this showed that the regression line which captured 97.9 percent of the total variation in the dependent variable was caused by variation in the explanatory variable specified in the model with 11.9 percent accounting for the stochastic error term. The F-statistics was also used to test the overall significant of the model. The high and positive F-value of 353.035 was an indication that the model was statistically significant at 5 percent level of significance at degree of freedom df₁ = 2 and df₂ = 95.
Findings
The main objective of this study was to examine the effect of benchmarking on performance of manufacturing firms with respect to Nigerian Breweries Plc. Enugu. The following finding was made.

a) Benchmarking process had significant effect on the profitability of Nigerian Breweries, Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria

3.7 CONCLUSION
The study revealed that benchmarking process has a positive impact on organizational profitability of the Nigerian Breweries, Enugu. There was a positive relationship between benchmarking process and effectiveness of the Nigerian Breweries, Enugu. Therefore, Benchmarking is a multifaceted technique that can be utilized to identify operational growth and strategic gaps, and to search for best strategies that would eliminate such gaps.

3.8 RECOMMENDATION
Based on the findings, the study thus recommended that;

a) Management of the Nigerian Breweries, Enugu should use the well-established mechanism of the benchmarking process that contributes to an improvement in the organizational performance by using the best industrial practices backed by a workable policy.

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