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RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TAX POLICIES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR FIRMS IN THE TECHNOLOGY SECTOR: LEPU MEDICAL IN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: This study analyzed the market structure of agrochemicals in Nasarawa State, Nigeria, with emphasis on the socio-economic characteristics of agrochemical marketers and the degree of market concentration. A stratified sampling technique was employed to collect data from 165 marketers across six Local Government Areas using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and the Gini coefficient were used for analysis. The results on socio-economic characteristics showed that the agrochemical market is largely dominated by married males within the productive age bracket, most of whom have a considerable educational background but low levels of cooperative participation. Analysis of market concentration revealed a Gini coefficient of 0.58, signifying a high level of inequality in sales distribution and suggesting a monopolistic market structure dominated by a few marketers. Based on these findings, the study recommends the establishment of market information centers to facilitate effective communication and information flow among agrochemical marketers. It further advocates the promotion of cooperative associations to enhance market efficiency, reduce inequality in sales distribution, and ensure more equitable profit-sharing within the agrochemical marketing system.

Keywords: Agrochemicals, Market Structure, Gini Coefficient, Marketers, Nasarawa State

INTRODUCTION

Getting the right calibre of sales persons to deliver quality performance can only be realisable through adequate training of a company's sales foce (sales team). Achieving sales success in today's dynamic business world is herculean without properly educating the sales force; getting them to gain adequate knowledge of their company, their products and services, their customers, their competitors, their competitors and the entire marketing and selling environment. As competition continues to soar in the manufacturing and service industries, performance influence indices has become highly indispensable and as a matter of fact, raising a savvy and smart salesforce is very intractable. In this modern business world, organizations are confronted with several challenges, and training their sales force is absolutely high on the schedule of most organizations (Rao, 2020).

Numerous changes have affected the personal selling tasks, customers have more information and are aware of events happening in the market; demand levels have risen; customers demand quality service and have higher expectations (Angelova & Zekiri, 2021). Globalization has altered the way organizations conduct their businesses and made competition more pronounced, and technology is constantly becoming more advanced, particularly in the area of retail business (Anderson, 2019). To cope with the constantly changing business environment, sales persons must be equipped with new and improved skills which training makes feasible (Dubinsky, 2013). Attia, Jantan, Atteya and Fakhr (2014) suggested that organizations should employ every means to ensure and facilitate smooth performance process through coaching, role playing, demonstration, seminar etc. manufacturing the best product and offering the best service environment is not enough; a properly trained sales team is required to make the goals of an organization realizable. If organizations must exist profitably, great attention must be given to salesforce training (Jobber & Lancaster, 2009). This projects sales force enhancement the major area of interest and focus in attaining sales and overall business success for most managers (Boles, Brashear, Bellenger, & Barksdale, 2020).

The task of sales force has gone beyond attracting sales and generating leads and more towards building trust and fostering relationships with customers. Thus, sales force should pay more attention to implementing a customer-oriented method, which denotes putting in the extra effort and providing excellent customer service, building customer confidence, resolving customers' predicaments (Krista, 2020). Nevertheless, for automobile salesmen to become effective and skilled, and be capable of making more cars sales, automotive sales training is critical (Krista, 2020). It is clear that automobile salesmen were being majorly trained on how to close deals with little emphasis given to the other important selling skills. This leads to selling scenarios where pressure is applied rather than persuasion (Humbert, 2019). When sales people use a sales process that is effective for their products and services, the results achieved becomes greater, more money earned and higher quality of sales realized. Sales performance is the most preferred end result of any sales entity in which personal selling and sales administration is evaluated. Sales people as the champion and getter of sales force performance are very deliberate in sale performance initiative since they are the company and customers interface. Customers will be influenced via the exposition of sales force to training and change in behaviour which in turn impart on firm's continued existence and performance (Kuster & Canales, 2021).

Sales force enhancement is one of the most pertinent indicators of boosting sales force performance as rated by sales managers is sales force training. Sales force performance is the contributions of a company's salesforce to the attainment of the goals in terms of their behaviour toward the sale of company products and services. It is a veritable aspect of sales management as it immensely contributes to the growth and survival of most organisations (Ahmad & Akbar, 2020). Salesperson performance is the actualisation and achievement of results in the carrying out specific activities which cuts across different selling jobs and situations (Singh & Das, 2012). However, the understanding, communicating and accepting o ones role and attainment of corporate objectives as a salesperson will definitely improve sales performance (Amyx, 2014). They noted that failure to understand ones role as a salesperson will loosen organisational commitment and pursuit of higher performance. Increased sales growth and performance is achieved by training and motivating the sales force adequately.

Statement of Problem

The cost of doing business in Nigeria is so high and firms have observed that greater percentage of their cost is staff cost. Most firms cannot afford to spend their hard earned profits on those that are contributing little or nothing to their profit. Retail outlets are not charitable organizations and every sales person must add value and must earn his/her pay. They must justify their continuous stay with the organization.

In recent times based on subsidy removal, some retail firms in Nigeria announced that most of its business offices are making loss and can no longer bear their current wage bill. As a result, a lot of staff are being retrenched. Right sizing could demoralize other staff; expose firm's technology and security software to competition, this could affect the size of salesforce. People who contribute meaningfully to the accomplishment of the firm objectives should be fairly rewarded. Sales persons who are lazy, who avoid responsibilities and lack passion, ambition or creativity may need to look for job elsewhere.

Similarly, challenges of career advancement in the Nigerian retail sector have led to early and midcareer sales person to begin to consider resigning as there are no clear career paths for them. Oftentimes due to these challenges, qualified sales persons are not given opportunities for training and development due to organizational politics, nepotism, greed and discrimination on the grounds of gender or ethnicity. To this end, it has been observed that employees do not engage properly with their jobs. Furthermore, it has been observed that there is a low productivity in firms as a result of a lack of proper mentoring and self-development. Therefore, sales persons will lack the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver quality services, improve sales performance and ensure that the organization maintains a competitive advantage over its rivals.

Employers have realized the importance of salesperson engagement and are taking steps to facilitate their performance. The intended consequence of salesperson engagement is cooperation and ability to achieving sales success. Sales managers create an enabling environment that engages the salesperson, which is demonstrated through communication and coaching. A salesperson who feels connected to the organization would then be more likely to exert additional effort, such as cooperating with the manager to meet sales objections. The purpose of this study is to investigate performance influence and sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to examine the effect of performance influence and sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State. The specific objectives are to:

i. Ascertain the effect of coaching on sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State.

ii. Determine the effect of commission based pay on sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State.

iii. Evaluate the effect of career advancement opportunity on sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study:

i. What is the effect of coaching on sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State?

ii. To what extent does commission based pay have effect on sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State? iii. How does career advancement opportunity have effect on sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the research objectives

$H0_1$: coaching does not have significant effect on sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State
$H0_2$: commission based pay does not have significant effect on sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State
H03: career advancement opportunity does not have significant effect on sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State

Scope of the Study

This study confined to examining performance influence and sales force enhancement on selected retail outlets in Delta State. This study identified two dimensions on performance influence as the dependent variable and sales force enhancement as the dependent variable. The study was carried out in Delta State and primary data was collected from owners and managers of selected retail outlets in Delta State.

Significance of the Study

Firstly, the study would benefit sales managers as they would gain adequate knowledge on the why their sales persons perform poorly or handsomely in selling. Knowledge will also be acquired on the various evaluation dimensions. They will also discover that there is need to coach and motivate workers to improve their performance. The salespeople would also be informed on management basis and reasons for performance influence evaluation. And this would guide their consciousness on how to perform their duties and responsibility with utmost diligence both presently and in the near future. Research students, lecturers, captains of industries and research organisations would use this repository to generate literature as well as data to guide the in further and future studies relevant to their fields.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section looked at studies that have been done in the area of performance influence, coaching, commission based pay, career advancement opportunity and sales force enhancement

Concept of Performance Influence

Performance influence is related with the comparison of predetermined goals and objectives with the actual output of the sales force of an organization. If company is able to achieve the desired results of the organization it shows that sales persons are achieving their objectives optimally otherwise there is the possibility of some underperformed employees, which are not able to achieve their targets (Stredwick, 2020). According to Armstrong and Baron (2018) performance influence is a strategic and integrated approach towards the performance of individuals and teams who are delivering their best for the success of the organization. Performance influence is the continuous process of monitoring that the organizational goals are achieved in an efficient and effective way (Tyson & York, 2012).

Performance influence is the vital factor for the success of an organization because in the current sales force are considering being one of the essential factors for an organization. Sales persons should know from the start of the year that what their desired goals, objectives and targets are so that during the year he can put his efforts in the right direction for the achievement of the goals. All the employees should know that at the end of the year their supervisors are going to check their performance by comparing the actual results with the desired results and on the basis of this they can be judged as the over performed, satisfactory or underperformed worker. Employees should also know that their pay and package is dependent upon their performance and the employees who are performing well in the current year they get high pay rise after their performance appraisal.

The focus of current work is to check that the effective performance influence process of any firm is helpful to increase the revenue and profitability of the firm or not. In this way useful information will be gathered about the impact of performance influence on the sales force performance of the firm (Tyson & York, 2012).

Importance of Performance Influence on Sales force

The success of a business relies heavily on the effectiveness of the sales force in the market. This implies that the company's manager has to pay great attention to the sales force performance as well as the market environment (Akpan, 2013). The followings are the duty and responsibility undertaken by sales force:

1. **Prospecting:** This is searching for a potential customer.
2. **Communicating**: Any information obtained from customers concerning the company's product is expected to be reported back to the manager. This creates a means of communication between the company's management and the customers.
3. **Selling:** This is the act of providing the company's product using different techniques that involve interacting with customers, providing answers to questions, and providing the product that best fits the customers‟ request.
4. **Gathering information:** this process involves studying the market environment, skillfully analyze and fill out reports.
5. **Allocation for resources and rendering of services:** the performance of any organization and its continuity depends on their key assets, employees, as well as the capabilities of the managers to be able to create a motivating environment for their people. On the other hand, it is a challenge for the managers to keep their people and sales force motivated and satisfied. That why every manager has to be aware about the needs and requirements their sales force and what they are looking for (Okolo, et al., 2015). A poorly motivated sales force will be costly to the organization in terms of lower productivity and performance, excessive staff turnover, increased expenses, higher use of the sales manager's time and a negative effect on the morale of colleagues. In keeping one's sales forces, motivation is thus a key factor. Motivation is at the heart of how innovative and productive employees are, and management has to get it right to enable employees of the organization to perform effectively. This is tricky, as not everyone is motivated by the same rewards, and sales managers need to work towards adapting the motivational environment to the individual (Wiese et al., 2013). Motivation allows obtaining the following benefits by providing initiative to the sales force to and allowing them to continue to perform well:

1. **Reduce role conflicts of tasks:** if the sales person is a customer to other company or groups which would create confusion for being a supporter for the company in one hand and for the customer on the other. Maintain a sustained eagerness in performing their task. There are repetitive and similar work procedures that are taken on a daily basis which some might feel disinterested in.
2. **Maintain the sense of belongingness to a team:** A sales person that works individually might be faced with a challenge of visualizing being part of a team with the rest of the company employees. Therefore, motivation can be used to develop a sense of being part of a team to increase cooperation among employees (Still, et al 1988).
3. **Provides role models**: providing role model are exemplary to help visualize themselves as successful and get inspired to obtain better outcomes. These inspirational ideas work at a conscious and subconscious level by providing positive thought that magnify the effect of the inspirational input. People would be able to visualize their success and work towards achieving it.

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4. **Provides encouragement:** providing encouragement to the sales force to utilize the resources at their disposal helps them maximize their efforts to yield higher outcome. Managers should use a personable approach to get across their ideas to the team to clarify their duties and responsibilities as well as the company's requirement on the team for their contribution (Chapman, 2010).

Coaching

Coaching is a training method that is mainly on-the-job (Kodz et al., 1997). It is used by management to develop and enhance sales force performance (Bradford et al., 2017). In other words, sales outcome had been positively influenced by coaching (Blume, Ford, Baldwin &Huang., 2010). Nguyen, Artis, Plank and Solomon (2019) support this view stating that both salespersons and performance are improved through coaching. Coaching is the most effective sales force training methods capable of achieving sales objectives as rated by most sales managers (Sales Management Association 2014). It is a robust management strategy for sales managers and has become a model for personal learning and effective selling by a company's sales force (Matthews, 2014). Coaching is defined as a process of correcting organisational work related challenges aimed toward improving of improving performance (Wardoyo, 2019; Bradford et al., 2017). It refers to the practice of educating an employee about the rules, regulations, norms, culture and goals of the organization aimed at ensuring employee adaptability and performance (Richardson, 2019). It is the transfer of knowledge, tools and opportunity from the trainer to the trainee aimed at making them more viable (Nguyen et al., 2019; Asiegbu et al., 2012).

In other words, it is the impacting of knowledge from a professional such as the sales manager to the learner such as a salesperson. It is the process of inculcating knowledge, skill and ability (KSA) traits on the senior sales executives, sales managers and salespeople aimed at developing cognitive, psychological and behavioural tendencies projected towards attaining organisational goals (Badrinarayanan et al., 2015). Coaching is a leadership style which showcases the influence the coach wields on the employee (Hallberg & Pustelnik, 2013). Sales managers invest in capability control in organisations via coaching (Li et al., 2020). Logically, sales force trainers or superiors offer coaching to give and guide direction and instruction necessary to increase and improve sales force competence and performance in an organisation (Bradford et al., 2017). Asiegbu et al. (2012) remarked that coaching creates an environment that leads to the development of a critical ideas, attitudes and behaviours about a phenomenon. It aids in increasing and improving the thought processes and knowledge of an individual in a particular working situation. Coaching is mostly done on the job and at such occasion, the coach uses real tasks and problems to increase the performance of the learner.

Commission-Based Pay

Commission-based pay is a compensation package that is determined by the quantity of sales made by sales persons. Rewards for sales persons under this scheme are dependent on the percentage of total sales made by employees. In this case, the more the sales, the better the reward. Although commission-based pays also include a base payment (salary), the per cent of the salary is made up of the commission. The concept behind paying by commission is that sales representatives often work harder to make sales because their salaries depend on the percentage of the commission. There are two types of commission-based payments – the flat and the ramped commission-based payments. Flat commission based type of compensation is often determined as a percentage on any sale made, for instance 5% on any sale made by the sales representative. The ramped commission based payment on the other hand is determined when a certain percentage of sale targets is met. Marketing managers today develop their commission-based pay wage to vary with the level of performance. The rationale is that the employee is motivated by a commission structure which provides the incentive to sell more, as it will reflect on the salary. In recent times, the need for a strategic, holistic and integrated approach to reward management has become imperative in an attempt to attract and retain employees (Chiang & Birtch 2016). Commission-based pay could serve as an integral tool for this purpose. Herman (2015) argues that commission-based pay helps organisations to focus on the position and duties performed by the employee. Besides, commission-based payment serves different to objectives by an organisation of which attracting and retention of sales force are paramount.

Career Advancement Opportunity

Career advancement normally entails a clearly marked path of progression through the ranks of an organisation. It is based on merit without regard for race, gender, age or ethnicity. Deserving cases become eligible for advancement. When employees get to know that each one of them has an equal chance of succeeding, it becomes easy for them to put in their best. Smit, Cronje, Brevis & Vrba, (2017) agree and note that the prospect of career advancement opportunity might in itself motivate sales people to work harder and more efficiently. Mullins (2017) also confirms that sales people aspire to progress steadily in organizations for which they work. Under common belief, career advancement opportunity would involve the existence of alternative career paths based on the individual sales person's and organisational needs.

As Saari and Judge (2014) point out lack of advancement, for any reason may damage a manager's chance to ascending the ranks within an organisation. Career advancement opportunity is significant to this study and sales force involved as it presents them with the opportunity for long term success, higher pay, job security and job satisfaction. A commitment to career advancement opportunity will enable steps toward achieving a better motivated workforce and a high performing organisation. It also presents sales people with opportunities to further their education and undergo training, thus strengthening employees' skill sets to receive consideration for a promotion and advance their career.

Sales Force Enhancement

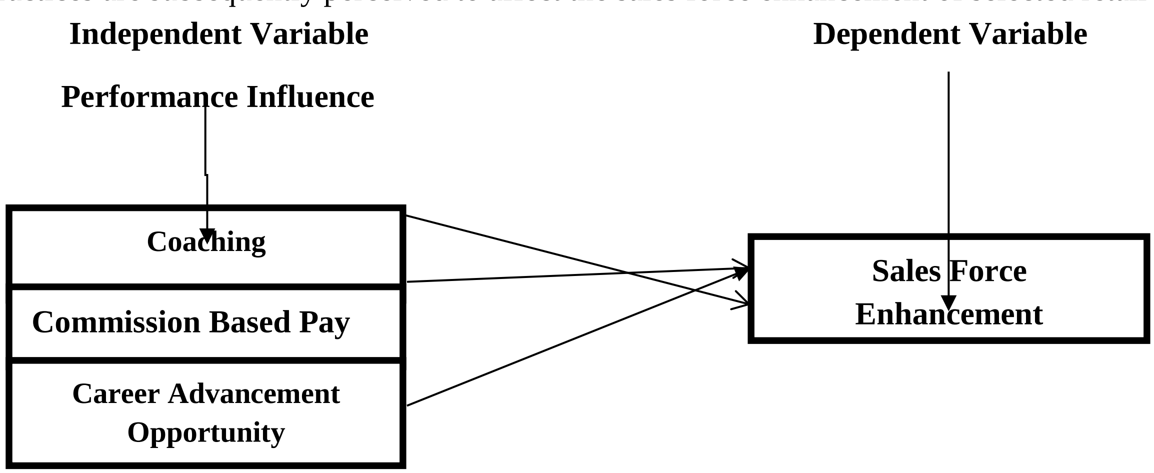
One of the most pertinent indicators of boosting sales force enhancement as rated by sales managers is sales force training. Sales force enhancement is the contributions of a company's sales force to the attainment of the goals in terms of their behaviour toward the sale of company products and services (Roman, Ruiz & Munuera, 2012). It is a veritable aspect of sales management as it immensely contributes to the growth and survival of most organisations (Ahmad & Akbar, 2020). It has gained a lot of interest in the sales literature (Amyx, 2014). Salesperson performance is the actualisation and achievement of results in the carrying out specific activities which cuts across different selling jobs and situations (Singh & Das, 2012). Wardoyo et al. (2018) revealed that sales force training has a significant effect on sales force enhancement.

Previous researches are trying to discover what is essential to define a salesperson's performance, the factors that affect the performance and controlling and forecasting the performance of a salesperson. The salesperson is defined as a person who embodies the organization for selling to encounter the customers is known as a salesperson. Selling is vital for the organization and this is the key marketing expenditure in the marketplace (Rao& Sadam, 2019). Many people believe that there is less temperament in salespeople, they have the skills required for selling, and they have the desire which they require. Moreover, clients expect respect, support, and advice from the salesperson instead of truth, sincerity; knowledge related to products and customers is also important after the quality .Return on Investment and advice related to business comes after salespeople’s qualities (Hartmann, Plou, Kohsuwan, & Cote, 2020). The salesperson influence the way the strategy is used (e.g. information sharing, advice, threats, promises, indoctrination or inspiring appeals) and take into account target sales performance (i.e. dealings / guidelines, commissions, initial sales prices, total sales and sales (including Percentage of ancillaries) unless salespeople meet through an "influence style" (ie, pragmatic, enthusiastic political figures) (Masa’deh, Al-Henzab, Ali, & Obeidat, 2018).

The opportunity in how we understand any relationship between the use of the salesperson's influence strategy and sales performance lies in examining the duration and form of this influence. As far as the author knows, there is no research on the process (i.e., the mediator) that affects sales strategy and performance, and the moderator's work that affects the relation between sales performance and strategy has also received attention (Hochstein, Bolander, & Goldsmith, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

This framework was developed based on an extensive review on the past literatures as discussed above. As shown below, influencing factors namely; coaching, commission based pay and career advancement opportunity. These practices are subsequently perceived to affect the sales force enhancement of selected retail outlets in Delta State



Source: Authors’ Conceptualization (2024)

Theoretical Elucidation

This study is anchored on Resource Based View Theory

Resource-Based-View Theory

In strategic marketing, the resource based theory has become a dominant paradigm and has been applied in related fields such as marketing, logistic management, entrepreneurship and human resource management (Hitt et al., 2015). The theory originated in Economics and was propounded by Penrose (1959). Managers use this theory widely for project management (Almarri & Gardiner, 2014). Resource-based theory emphasizes the relevance of performance influence in gaining sales force performance and realizing marketing objectives (Barney, 2001). Kull et al. (2016) opined that a firm’s sales force performance is driven by the internal resources. So, sales force performance can seamlessly be achieved through the acquisition, development and retention of the best sales person (Chidi, 2013). This theory explores the relationship between a firm’s growth (performance) and its resources (Almarri & Gardiner, 2014). It has been widely applied in researches related to performance in organizations (Ahmed et al., 2018; Innocent 2015). The theory stipulates that sales force performance is highly a function of the capability of the sale persons makeup (Ahmed et al., 2018). However, management competencies, assets resources, capabilities resources, process resources, knowledge resources and technological resources are considered some of the major organizational resources (Ahmed et al., 2018). Ahmed et al. (2018) remarked that organizational performance is improved by these resources and capabilities which hitherto, earn advantage for the firm. This theory strongly backs a positive relationship between performance influence/indices and its capabilities and competencies (Innocent, 2015).

In view with this, Kull et al. (2016) added that resource based theory examines the connection between sales force performance and performance influence. Ahmed et al. (2018), Ahmed and Othman (2017) described organizational commitment, culture and tactical orientation as unique internal resources owned by organizations that are aimed at actualizing substantial organizational performance and competitive advantage over competitors. This theory holds the view that the success and survival of an organization solely depend on the viability of its employees (Armstrong, 2009). Thus, coaching and role playing will generate more commitment and improved salesforce enhancement for retail outlets in Delta State.

Empirical Review

Iyke-Ofoedu, Okafor and Ogbuagu (2023) examined the effect of career development techniques on employee performance in deposit money banks in Nigeria. The research design employed in this study was the descriptive survey research design. The sample size of 231 respondents was drawn from population of the study which consists of 548 employees of Wema Bank Plc, Sterling Bank Plc, First Bank of Nigeria Plc and Access Bank Plc in Enugu State. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The hypotheses stated were tested using single regression analysis. The empirical result shows that there is a positive and significant effect of induction training on employee quality of service delivery (t-statistics (58.161) > critical value (0.000). Again, the study revealed that there is a positive and significant effect of job rotation on employee punctuality (t-statistics (59.146) > critical value (0.000). The study also revealed that there is a positive and significant effect of formal education on employee transparency (t-statistics (53.984) > critical value (0.000). The study recommended that Management of deposit money banks in Nigeria should invest more in induction trainings as it provides opportunity to both old employees and new hires to learn the ropes of their new jobs and roles thereby enhancing the quality of service delivery.

Murithi (2022), looked into the relationship existing between coaching and employee performance among frontline employees and Line managers in Standard Chartered Bank. This study sought to understand specifically how coaching builds staff performance, and what areas need to be looked at so as to address any concerns the coaches may have on the process. The study was guided by the following objectives; to establish the effect of frequent provision of feedback on employee performance at Standard Chartered Bank; to evaluate the effect of a structured coaching plan on employee performance at Standard Chartered Bank and to determine the effect of the coaching environment on employee performance at Standard Chartered Bank. The study employed a descriptive survey design, systematic random sampling was used to obtain a sample of 140 respondents from a population of 200 frontline sales staff. To select informative and useful information for the study among the interviewed line managers, purposive sampling was used. Questionnaires were the main data collection instruments used. The completed questionnaires were then edited to ensure is consistency and completeness. The quantitative data that was already collected was analysed using descriptive statistics by the help of SPSS (Version 20). The analyzed data was then presented in form of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. Bar and pie charts, graphs and prose means were used to display the information. Multiple regression analysis and correlation analysis were further employed in the study. The study findings revealed that frequent provision of feedback; structured coaching plan and coaching environment were all significant factors and positively influenced employee's performance of standard chartered bank. This study concludes that a coaching environment enhances morale, motivates and helps in improving productivity. This study therefore recommended that the bank management should ensure that a wellplanned and strategic coaching program is in place and the coaching is done and implemented effectively. The management should also ensure that coaching program is exposed to all employees. A feedback mechanism should be established at the start of any mentoring or coaching programme. The purpose of the coaching session should be well explained to the employee by the coach so that the employee has realistic expectations.

Okolo, Chinedu and Zita (2018) conducted to discover the effects of sales force enhancement evaluation on effective and efficient sales management of First Bank Nigeria Plc. The relationship between sales force enhancement evaluation and training as well as the relationship between sales force enhancement evaluation and motivation were the two specific objectives of the study. The population of study is 100 executive staff of First Bank Nigeria Plc in Enugu metropolis was purposively targeted in the study. For the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was vetted by research professionals based on face validity in terms of relevance to the subject matter, objective of the study, coverage of the content areas, appropriateness of language usage and clarity of purpose. The value of the test of reliability is 0.930 which was conducted using Cronbach's alpha. Primary data was adopted for the study and data was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Hypotheses revealed that there is a significant relationship between sales force enhancement evaluation and training of sales people ($r = 0.507$, $p < 0.05$). It was also revealed that sales force enhancement evaluation has a significant relationship with motivation of sales people ($r = 0.788$, $p < 0.05$). The conclusion is that there is a direct and positive relationship between sales force enhancement evaluation and both training and motivation. Researchers recommend that sales managers need to take the evaluation of salespeople seriously to be able to be accountable to management regarding the nature and personality of sales people they recruit.

Oyibo (2012) determined the influence of sales force compensation on Marketing Performance. To build a competitive sales force and attract good salespeople, company must have an appealing compensation plan for its sales force. The study made use of a sample of 220 staff of sales reps of the selected Breweries. Survey research design was adopted, and the statistical tool employed comprises of correlation as well as regression analysis. The findings show that there is a significant positive relationship between sales force compensation variables and marketing performance. Sales force compensation through profit sharing, cash bonus, salary and commission showed a significant positive relationship with marketing Performance. The study therefore concludes that to attract good salespeople, Breweries must have an appealing compensation plan. Ideally sales representative should be paid in such a way that what they want to do for personal interest and gain is in the company's interest and implementation of sales force compensation strategies avails the organizations with the opportunity to motivate employees to perform better and also for keeping the employees ensuring their loyalty which stimulate repeat purchase. Organizations leaders should voluntarily integrate different sales force compensation plan in the organization to ensure marketing performance. This study has established that Profit Sharing motivates employees to perform more effectively and that sales force motivation through profit sharing is a veritable tool for marketing performance.

Gaps Identified in Literature

This study examined performance influence on sales force enhancement of selected retail firm in Delta State. From the review of empirical literature, the following gaps were unraveled. It was discovered that, most of the existing studies were conducted in different geographical settings aside Nigeria. Thus, the present study seeks to fill this research gap by means of providing new perspectives and information on performance influence on sales force enhancement in marketing literature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research employed a descriptive survey method. The descriptive survey method, which enables the use of a questionnaire as a data-gathering tool, was considered acceptable for this investigation. The ability to explore and analyze correlations amongst that significant number of participants or a geographically scattered focused population was one of the key justifications for using this method. It made it possible to measure performance influence and sales force enhancement.

Study Population

The population represents the entire population that will be studied. According to Burns and Grove (2010), a population is an entire group meeting the sampling criteria for a research study. This study’s target population consists of owners and managers of selected retail outlets in Asaba Delta State, Nigeria.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A sample is a discrete segment of the population chosen for investigation. One can draw certain conclusions about the features of the population from which the sample was drawn by looking at the sample’s demographics (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study adopted simple random sampling methods to select 131 owners and managers of selected retail outlets in Asaba Delta State, Nigeria.

Instrument(s) for Data Collection

This study’s data collection instrument was the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire items were explicitly created to achieve the research objectives. The survey was broken down into two segments. Section one contains demographic information, including the respondents’ bio-data, like marital status, educational qualifications, age, gender, work experience, and professional status (six items). Section two covers items on performance influence and sales force enhancement

Validity of Research Instrument

Abbas (2015) opined that validity and reliability are essential in determining the worthiness and acceptability of research findings. The instrument was given to information research experts to guarantee the validity of the data collection tool utilized in this study. The instrument was modified based on the expert’s observations, suggestions and comments. This determined that the instrument had face, content and constructs validity, confirming its suitability for this study. **Instrument Reliability**

Reliability of the instrument refers to how consistently an instrument measures the things it says it measures. This questionnaire was administered to 10 postgraduate students in the Faculty of Management Sciences, to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire used to collect data. A test-retest method of two weeks intervals was employed. Afterwards, the replies gathered were tested using Cronbach's alpha. The entire instrument's overall Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was determined to be r=0.820. This is deemed sufficient, confirming the questionnaire's reliability for use in the study.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Coaching	0.848	4
Commission Base Pay	0.906	4
Career Advancement Opportunity	0.872	4
All Variables	0.875	12

Source: Research Data (2024)

Data Collection Procedure

To ensure a high response rate, the researcher and one research assistants administered the questionnaire to the respondents in their various offices. Because the best time to interact with personnel is during opening hours, copies of questionnaire were distributed during that time. The respondents received 131 copies of questionnaire. Out of the 131 copies distributed 117 copies were gathered right away after they were distributed to the participants. The respondent's support and the research assistants' efforts ensured that the exercise went off without a hitch. Out of the 131 copies questionnaire administered, only 117 copies were returned and 89 copies were correctly filled, amounting to a response rate of 68%, which was used for the analysis.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data was analyzed using descriptive (mean, standard deviation and frequencies) and inferential statistical techniques. Under inferential statistics, linear regressions were used to determine the effect of a set of independent variable (performance influence) on dependent variable (sales force enhancement), coefficient of correlation using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0 package.

The regression model was as follows:

$y = \beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 + \varepsilon$

Where Y was Sales Force Enhancement (SFE)

, dependent variable was performance influence; β was the standardized regression coefficient.

X1 represents Coaching (C)

X2 represent Commission Base Pay (CBP)

X3 represent Career Advancement opportunities (CAO)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data generated from owners of retail outlets Delta State were presented using descriptive statistics and analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistical tool. The analysis was done with descriptive and inferential statistics.

Table 1: Coded Responses on the Effect of Coaching on Sales force Enhancement

S/N	Questionnaire Item*	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
		Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	
1	Your sales method have influence more value from sales force	42	28	15	04		89
2	Coaching procedures aligns with market demands	47	29	12	01		89
3	Coaching procedures aligns with customer demands	39	33	11	05	01	89
4	Your sales methods have produce optimal performance overtime	44	34	09	01	01	89
5	There have been improvements in the attributes of sales force	36	40	10	03		89
6	Your sales force have become more self reliant	38	31	18		02	89
Total		**246**	**195**	**74**	**14**	**04**	**534**

Source: Fieldwork 2024

In Table 1, based on the aggregate response, a total of 246 indicated strongly agree, 195 indicated agree, 75 indicated neutral, 14 indicated disagree, while 04 indicated strongly disagree respectively. This implies that coaching has a significant positive influence on sales force enhancement.

Table 2: Hypothesis One: Coaching has a significant effect on sales force Enhancement.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.946a	.894	.894	.28101	.377

a. Predictors: (Constant), Coaching

b. Dependent Variable: Sales force Enhancement

Table 3: ANOVAᵃ.

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
1 Regression Residual Total	177.261 20.926 198.187	1 265 266	177.261 .079	2244.801	.000[b]

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a. Dependent Variable: Sales force Enhancement
b. Predictors: (Constant), Coaching

Table 4: Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.074	.090		.828	.409
Coaching	.985	.021	.946	47.379	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sales force Enhancement

R = 0.946

R^2 = 0.894

F = 2244.801

T = 47.379

DW = .377

Data Interpretation

Table 3 indicates that the regression sum of squares (177.261) is greater than the residual sum of squares (20.926), which indicates that more of the variation in the dependent variable is not explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is less than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is due to chance. In Table 2, R is the correlation coefficient and has a value of 0.946, indicating that coaching has a significant effect on sales force enhancement e. R-square, the coefficient of determination shows that 89.4% of the variation in sales force enhancement is explained by the model. With the linear regression model, the error of the estimate is low, with a value of 0.28101. The Durbin-Watson statistics of 0.377 which is less than 2 indicates that there is no autocorrelation. However, coaching coefficient of 0.946 indicates that there is a significant positive effect of coaching on sales force enhancement, which is statistically significant as shown in Table 4 (with t = 47.379). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Table 5: Coded Responses on the Effect of Commission Based Pay on Sales Force Enhancement

S/N	Questionnaire Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
		Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	
1	Sales force receives consistent income even during slow sales periods	45	36	05	02	01	89
2	Commission Based Pay provides financial stability	37	38	08	05	01	89
3	Base commission have allow sales reps to generate more sales	46	30	11	02		89
4	There is unlimited earnings potential	43	34	06	06		89

Original Article

5	Base commission encourage sales reps to focus on meeting specific sales goals	36	35	14	02	02	89
6	Commission cuts down sales force turnover	41	29	13	05	01	89
	Total	**248**	**202**	**57**	**22**	**05**	**534**

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

In Table 5, based on the aggregate response, a total of 248 indicated strongly agree, 202 indicated agree, 57 indicated neutral, 22 indicated disagree, while 05 indicated strongly disagree respectively. This implies that commission based pay has a significant positive relationship with sales force enhancement.

Table 6: Hypothesis Two: Commission Based Pay has a significant effect on Salesforce Enhancement.

Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**	**Durbin-Watson**
1	.943[a]	.888	.888	.27689	.340

a. Predictors: (Constant), Commission Based Pay

b. Dependent Variable: Sales force Enhancement

Table 7: ANOVA[a].

Model	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**f**	**Sig.**
1 Regression Residual Total	161.713 20.317 182.030	1 265 266	161.713 .077	2109.293	.000[b]

a. Dependent Variable: Sales force Enhancement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Commission Based Pay

Table 8: Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.718	.943		9.003	.000
Commission Based Pay	.854	.019	.943	45.927	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sales force Enhancement

R = 0.943

R^2 = 0.888

F = 2109.293

T = 45.927

DW = .340

Data Interpretation

Original Article

Table 7 indicates that the regression sum of squares (161.713) is greater than the residual sum of squares (20.317), which indicates that more of the variation in the dependent variable is not explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is less than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is due to chance. In Table 6, R is the correlation coefficient and has a value of 0.943, indicating that Commission Based Pay has a significant effect on sales force Enhancement. R-square, the coefficient of determination shows that 88.8% of the variation in Commission Based Pay is explained by the model. With the linear regression model, the error of the estimate is low, with a value of 0.27689. The Durbin-Watson statistics of 0.340 which is less than 2 indicates that there is no autocorrelation. However, role playing coefficient of 0.943 indicates that there is a significant positive influence of role playing on sales force enhancement, which is statistically significant as shown in Table 8 (with t = 45.927). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Table 9: Coded Responses on the Effect of Career Advancement Opportunity on Sales force Enhancement

S/N	Questionnaire Item*	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
		Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	Freq	
1	There are programs that build a strong, committed, skilled sales force in your firm	42	28	15	04	-	89
2	There is motivational support programs in your firm	47	29	12	01	-	89
3	The firm helps set your priorities right	39	33	11	05	01	89
4	There are opportunity for higher-paying positions	44	34	09	01	01	89
5	The sales task are properly defined	36	40	10	03		89
6	There is an established mentoring program	38	31	18	-	02	89
	Total	**246**	**195**	**74**	**14**	**04**	**534**

Source: Fieldwork 2023

In Table 9, based on the aggregate response, a total of 246 indicated strongly agree, 195 indicated agree, 75 indicated neutral, 14 indicated disagree, while 04 indicated strongly disagree respectively. This implies that career advancement opportunity has a significant positive influence on sales force enhancement.

Table 10: Hypothesis One: Career Advancement Opportunity has a significant effect on sales force Enhancement.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.916a	.890	.892	.22101	.317

a. Predictors: (Constant), career advancement opportunity

b. Dependent Variable: Sales force Enhancement

Table 11: ANOVA^a.

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Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression Residual Total	168.261 22.926 188.187	1 265 266	217.261 .077	2261.822	0.000[b]

a. Dependent Variable: Sales force Enhancement

b. Predictors: (Constant), career advancement opportunity

Table 12: Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.074	.090		.828	.409
Coaching	.985	.021	.986	53.379	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sales force Enhancement

R = 0.986

R^2 = 0.894

F = 2261.822

T = 53.379

DW = .377

Data Interpretation

The results from the analysis indicates that the regression sum of squares (168.261) is greater than the residual sum of squares (20.926), which indicates that more of the variation in the dependent variable is not explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is less than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is due to chance. In Table 10, R^2 is the correlation coefficient and has a value of 0.946, indicating that career advancement opportunities has a significant effect on sales force enhancement e. R-square, the coefficient of determination shows that 89.4% of the variation in sales force enhancement is explained by the model. With the linear regression model, the error of the estimate is low, with a value of 0.28101. The Durbin-Watson statistics of 0.377 which is less than 2 indicates that there is no autocorrelation. However, coaching coefficient of 0.986 indicates that there is a significant positive effect of career advancement opportunity on sales force enhancement, which is statistically significant as shown in Table 12 (with t = 53.379). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one reveals that coaching has a significant positive influence on sales force enhancement (R = 0.946; T = 47.379; F = 2244.801; $p < 0.05$), which is consistent with this finding, Utrilla et al. (2015) revealed in their study that coaching has a significant influence on sales force performance. Also, Nguyen et al. (2019) supports this view stating that coaching improves sales force performance. Another empirical study also revealed that sales force performance is boosted via coaching (Bradford et al., 2017).

Similarly, it was revealed that Commission Based Pay has a significant positive influence on sales force performance ($R = 0.943$; $T = 45.927$; $F = 2109.293$; $p < 0.05$). This is in tandem with Igwe and Tamunoiyowuna (2016) who revealed in their study that Commission has a strong, positive and significant relationship with sales force performance. However, market coverage, sales volume and recovered lost account were used as sales force performance indicator in the study. Hypothesis three reveals that career advancement opportunity has a significant positive effect on sales force enhancement ($R = 0.966$; $T = 47.379$; $F = 2261.801$; $p < 0.05$), which is consistent with this finding, Utrilla et al. (2015) revealed in their study that career advancement opportunity has a significant influence on sales force performance. Also, Nguyen et al. (2019) supports this view stating that coaching improves sales force performance. Another empirical study also revealed that sales force performance is boosted via career advancement opportunity (Bradford et al., 2017).

Conclusion

Sales force coaching and sales force role playing are important and effective sales force training methods used by retail and service organization to secure customer interest and sustain their relationship aimed at continuously improving sales force and performance (Nguyen et al., 2019). This study revealed a strong positive influence of coaching on sales force enhancement. The implication is that organizations (big or small) require to train their sales force to enable them understand and earn good knowledge of their company, customers, competitors and the entire marketing environment in order to gain competitive advantage and sustained profitability. Coaching and role playing is indispensable as many salespeople do not possess the necessary experience to scout for profitable customers, make bold sales presentation and demonstration, handle objections effectively, close sales promptly, and follow-up on customers professionally.

Moreover, it could be concluded that the form of motivation adopted by a company to remunerate salesforce on commission-based pay is essential to their salesforce enhancement This position is expressed by respondents confirming their level of agreement to this assertion. In addition, regardless of certain sentiments expressed on the rewards system, it could be concluded that commission based pay reasonably motivates sales force Enhancement.

The study also concluded that there is a significant effect of career advancement opportunity on sales force enhance in selected retail outlets in Delta State. This is because induction training provides opportunity to the new sales persons to get familiarized with their current posts and to make them apprehend the general aims, policies, scope, challenges, and organization of the industry; job rotation enables marketing managers discover the aptitude of workers, area of interest and determine the area of specialization; formal education provides opportunity to sales people to acquire specialized training and skills capable of promoting sales force enhancement.

Recommendations

i. Marketing and sales managers need to take the evaluation of sales people seriously to be able to be accountable to management regarding the nature and personality of sales people they recruit. In other words, retail outlets should not embark on rule-of-thumb in determining how salespeople perform. An empirical measure must be put in place to evaluate them.

ii. Performance influence indices are very significant in revealing a poor performing sales person to discover what is lacking. What is lacking might be that the sales person requires more training or that he needs to me motivated to bring him to the state of emotional, social and economic equilibrium to enable him perform his duty judiciously. iii. Lastly, Management of retail outlets in Delta State should invest more induction training as it provides opportunity to the new sales people to get familiarized with their current posts and make them apprehend the general aims, policies, scope, challenges, and organization of the industry hence promotes their quality service delivery

Limitations and Future Research

Researchers can also access this relationship into other industries as well that how it concludes in other sectors such as banking sector and Agricultural Sector. This limitation means that attention must be paid to the generalizability of the findings recorded here to other settings, and more research is needed. Future research across multiple countries will shed light on some interesting questions, such as: Are the patterns identified in this research prevalent in other settings? What other relationships exist and how do they differ from the patterns presented in this study? The model presented and described in this research has helped guide this additional research.

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