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Career Management and Adaptive Capability of Hospitality Firms in South-East, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between career management and adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey. Questionnaire was formulated and administered to 354 respondents from the 5 South-East states in Nigeria. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the correlation and strength of relations with the aid of SPSS. The findings revealed a significant and positive relationship between the dimensions of career management (career planning and career pathing) and adaptive capability (technological and strategic adaptive capability). It recommended that hospitality firms should engage in the development of employees competencies because the more organizational members are developed the more adaptive the organization becomes.

Introduction

Organizations survival and success depend on the appropriate adaptation to a complex and ever changing environment. The changing environment occurs due to several factors such as technology, regulation, competition, preference and innovation. However, all organizations around the world are faced with this changing business environment. What differentiates them is how each firm handles reactions when faced with destructive dangerous situations, some adapted successfully and continue to grow while some eventually closed down due to lack of adequate response. Organization becomes more resilient if its adaptive capability is enhanced (Gunderson, 2000 & Scheffer, 2009). The organization's ability to adapt is at the heart of its ability to display resilient characteristics. Adaptive capability is therefore considered to be the organization's strategic ability to maintain competitive advantage by modifying, reconfiguring or interconnecting resources, capabilities and competences and seeking to increase the number of options or available strategic reactions in order to adapt quickly to determinism and environmental changes. Adaptive capability is also a measure of the culture and dynamics of an organization that allow it to make decisions in a timely and appropriate manner, both in day-to-day business and also in crises.

Adaptation and adaptive capability according to Chakravarthy (1982) differs, adaptive capability focuses more on effective search and balancing exploration and exploitation strategies while adaption describes an optimal and state of survival of a firm. To adapt to adaptive capability, a firm would need employees with aptitude and attitudes of managing well with change and instability to enable growth (Wall, Cordery & Clegg, 20002). The value of every organization stands in the quality of human potentials, not in the quantity of available material and financial resources. The human element is therefore, the most important and versatile resource in any organization. It is the recognition of people as being central to achieving organizational objectives that has made successful organizations to develop career management mechanism to employees to perform at optimal levels. Onyokoko (2021) in his study on organizational flexibility and adaptive capability revealed that organization's ability to adapt will improve the capacity to have the tenacity for quick, continuous and systematic evolutionary adaptation and entrepreneurial innovation and aimed at acquiring and sustaining a competitive advantage. Hameed and Waheed (2011) study on employee development and its effect on employee performance, advocated that when organizations are engaged in career management, the employees on the other hand tend to put more effort on the jobs by using their skills to improve workplace objectives and to meet with the turbulences facing the organization. Several scholarly works have addressed the concept of career management as well as the concept of adaptive capability but there is still shortage of works on the relationship between career management and adaptive capability of hospitality firms in south-east Nigeria. Hence, this study seeks to bridge the gap in the existing literature.

Statement of the Problem

Unfortunately, the Nigerian hospitality industry have come to face challenging issues such as erratic power supply as a result of governments inconsistent and misguided power reform policies inefficiency in power generation, transmission, distribution and consumption; and the incompetent workforce of the energy companies. The management of this industry struggles to survive as good percentage of profit that would have been injected to sustain the business goes to providing electricity through fueling of maintenance of generators. Second is the issue of continued insecurity in the country. This state of agitation affects the patronage of most hospitality firms. For instance, with rampant kidnappings on major highways in some part of the country, many

roads have become no-go area, making the industry loss many business opportunities. Other problems that affect the hospitality industry in Nigeria include: global economic situation, environmental changes, natural disasters, crisis etc.

Organizations that are not adaptive enough cannot demonstrate great persistence through their high self efficacy and function well under stress (Schwarzer and Warner, 2013). Langvardt (2007), believes that adaptive capability must be a strategic aspect and should not respond to specific crisis or monetary losses, but being able to anticipate changes and prevent their business from being adversely affected. In the face of these challenges facing the hospitality industry, it becomes necessary for organizations to address the problem of low adaptive capability to enable them withstand threats posing from the dynamic business environment.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between career management and adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

- i) Examine the relationship between career planning and technological adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria.
- ii) Investigate the relationship between career planning and strategic adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria.
- iii) Examine the relationship between career pathing and technological adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East, Nigeria.
- iv) Investigate the relationship between career pathing and strategic adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between career planning and technological adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between career planning and strategic adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between career pathing and technological adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East, Nigeria.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between career pathing and strategic adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria.

Literature Review

This study is founded on contingency theory. The main idea behind the notion is that no one management approach suits every organization. The environment in which the organization operates is shaped by political, economic, legal and social elements (Doh et al, 2017). These elements can directly influence organizational behaviour, given that different business environments can inhibit or enhance certain management practices. The effectiveness of firms depends on the capability to fit with the environment (Langfield-Smith, 1997) and the adaptation of firms to their business environment would determine whether they could survive or not. The "Fit" concept refers to the combination of levels of controls and contingencies (example, environment and strategy) which would generate a superior performance.

A firm needs a strategy to be able to adjust and adapt to the continuous changes in the business environment. One of the first contributions of research using contingency approach was establishing the distinction between "Mechanistic" and "Organic" structure (Burn & Stalker, 1961). The mechanistic structure fits a stable environment because a hierarchical approach is efficient for routine operations. Given the routine nature of operations, the management at upper level of the hierarchy possess sufficient knowledge and information to make decision and this centralized control fosters efficiency. In contrast, the organic structure fits an unstable environment because participatory approach is required for innovation. This contingency theory does not describe the most appropriate way to organize a corporation or lead an organization or make managerial decision. Hence, the best course of action is dependent or liable on internal and external conditions.

Operational Framework

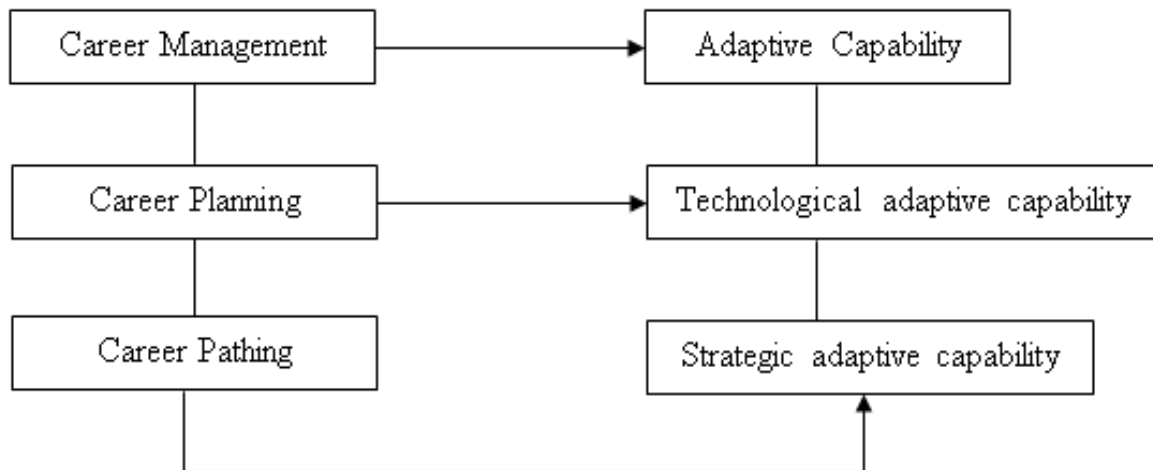


Figure 1.1: Operational Framework

Source: Adapted from Armstrong (2011) for career management and Annarelli, Baftistella and Nonino (2020) adaptive capability.

Concept of Career Management

Career is best described as the “pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of one’s life (Goschalk, Greehaus & Gallahan, 2000). This definition includes both objective events such as jobs and subjective view of work such as the person’s attitude, values and expectations. Therefore, both a person’s work-related activities and his/her reactions to those activities form part of the person’s career. However, career management is the combination of structured planning and the active management choice of one’s professional career (Ball, 1997). Career management can be seen also as the provision of opportunities for people to develop their abilities and their careers in order to ensure that the organization has the flow of talent it needs and to satisfy their own aspirations.

Successful career management is characterized by the activity of personal fulfillment, work/life balance, goal achievement and financial security. Eby, Allen & Brinley (2005), defined career management as the process by which individuals develop insight into themselves and their environment formulate career goals, strategies and acquire feedback regarding career progress. Career management can be analyzed into two different levels which are the organizational and the individual. The organizational level sees career as a process by which the organization develops itself while the individual level portrays career as a number of choices between different opportunities employees make. The dualistic perspective on career management, emphasizing both organizational and individual responsibilities expand the knowledge of how to best possibly handle the challenges organizations and employees meet with regarding to the careers.

Career Planning

Career planning is a process by which individuals determine their skills, interests and values. Employees chose career plans that match their individual competencies, aspirations, values, beliefs and engage in ways that will enable the career objectives to be actualized. Career planning process involves both the organization and individual responsibility. The organization needs to identify its needs and opportunities to plan its employees and to ensure its staff the necessary information and appropriate training. According to Leibowitz, Farren and Kaye (1986), career planning is a deliberate process for becoming aware of self, opportunities, constraints, choices and consequences, as well as identifying career related developmental experience to provide the direction, timing and sequence of steps to attain a specific career goal.

Career planning also seeks to provide guidance and encourage employees to fulfill their potentials and ensure better use of human resources through more satisfied and productive employees. Career planning facilitates expansion and growth of an organization. It is important that employees for effective career planning have information about job requirements, remuneration opportunities and available personal development resources.

Career Pathing

Career paths are routes that individuals take from their first foray into the job market through to their final positions before retirement. Career pathing is the way employees progress in the work either in one job or in a series of jobs. In setting career paths, employees and their supervisors must be realistic in terms of their potential and the time frames in which the career goals captured in the career paths can be achieved. Career path is a sequential pattern of work that makes up one’s career (Mangkuprawira, 2002). Eliza (2010), defines career path as the way that demonstrates a series positions in an incremental outline in which the workers moves and support through his career life in the association. According to Durai (2010), career path is defined

as an organized and purposeful development by an individual in his career in the whole work life. Career path can also be defined as the succession of job experiences that position an individual for advanced rank job (Steward & Brown, 2011).

Each employee could have a multitude of career pathing options. It is informed by the career goals set by individual during the career planning phase, the career progression structure which forms part and parcel of the employees conditions of service as well as the career development opportunities available to employees in an organization. Career path provides employees with an ongoing mechanism to enhance their skills and knowledge that can lead to mastery of their current jobs. Career path will represent real progression possibilities, whether vertical (Job enrichment), horizontal (job enlargement) or diagonal (application for a job within same job family at a higher level. Career paths will be responsive to changes in job content, work priorities and organizational needs and will specify requisite competencies for performance at each level along the path; but not necessarily define any required standard speed of progression.

Concept of Adaptive Capability

Adaptive capability is a firm's strategic flexibility to adapt, align and shift available resources through continual changes in products and services to respond to external opportunities (Wang & Ahmed, 2007). Adaptive capability can also be a measure of the culture and dynamics of an organization that allow it to make decision in a timely and appropriate manner, both in day-to-day business and also in crises. Adaptive capability may be defined as "the extent to which an organization can modify its circumstances to move to a less vulnerable condition.

Adaptive capability may be reactive (adapting to present conditions and reacting to changes) or proactive ability to forecast changes based on signals (Gorley, 2012). Reactive adaptive capability confers resilience capabilities on organization while proactive capabilities utilize foresight (sensing and seizing) to also deliver resilience for organizations. Adaptive capability can enable organizations to improve their actions as a proactive response to changing circumstances. Some definitions of adaptive capability emphasize the importance of learning (Carpenter, 2001) and an ability to experiment and innovate (Armitage, 2005). According to Folk et al (2003), adaptive capability involves learning to live with uncertainty and change, nurturing diversity for reorganization and renewal, combining different types of knowledge for learning and creating opportunities for self-organization.

Technological Adaptive Capability

The competitive business environment demands that organizations remain on top of the ever changing technology world. Firms that want to develop and maintain a competitive advantage cannot avoid new technologies (Becheikh, Landry & Amara, 2006). In order to maintain and adapt technologies to competitive conditions, organizations gain and generate knowledge by making small innovations necessary for their operation and development. These activities according to Lall (1992) are called technological capability. Technological capability is the ability to adapt technology in order to maintain the efficiency of the process, grounded in empirical informal learning so as to solve problems that impede the routine operation of the firm's production. Technological capability can also be seen as the ability to improve the technology in use through scientific knowledge and professional expertise. Wang et al (2006), defined technological capability as the ability of a firm to design and develop new process, product and upgrade knowledge and skills about physical environment in unique way, and transforming the knowledge into instructions and designs for efficient creation of desired performance.

Technological capability can be assessed in terms of a firm's ability to identify its technological needs and to select the technology to fulfill the needs; to operate, maintain, modify and improve the selected technology, and to promote technical learning (Kumar et al, 1999) technological adaptability enables organization to innovate, lower costs, promote growth, improve quality and efficiency.

Strategic Adaptive Capability

Strategic capability has been described as a "complex bundle" consisting of information and competencies which enable organizations to perform their activities (Johns, 1992). A firm's strategic adaptive capability is a major component in remaining financially viable and growing despite the presence of competitors in a free market. Strategic adaptive capability is also based on the firm's capacity to reconfigure its underlying business concept. In order to accomplish this, it must rethink some important aspects, like the redefinition of the company's mission in order to meet the demands on the market; the correct identification of the final customer, the distribution channels and the pricing model it must apply under the new conditions.

Strategic thinking is a mindset of preparing for changes and having plans in place to deal with them. Reacting quickly allows the firm to take advantage of opportunities and minimize the damage of unseen negative events. Organizations that are proficient in strategic thinking continually evaluate their business strength and weakness to those of their key competitors.

The goal of every organization strategy is to achieve or sustain its competitive advantage (Johnson et al, 2014). Organizations that understand the effect of each force in the industry, take defensive strategies in order to place themselves in an appropriate position against pressure exerted by these industry forces (Tavitiyaman et al, 2011).

Empirical Review

Chryssochoidis, Dousios and Tzokas (2016) investigated on how adaptive capability alters the relationship between small firm competitive strategy and performance outcomes of small firm. Data was collected from a sample of 250 small firms randomly selected from a population of 748 firms in Greece

using structured questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered on the CEOs of the selected firms and analyzed using exploratory structured equation modeling (ESEM) technique. The results of the analysis supported the notion that adaptive capability mediates the influence of competitive strategy on performance outcomes. The study also showed that adaptive capabilities moderate the relationship between competitive strategy and firm performance. The main limitation of the study was that it used only financial/sales turnover – related performance indicators of performance, learning out non-financial indicators of performance. The study contributes to the ongoing debates on dynamics capabilities by highlighting the importance of adaptive capability on supervisor performance.

A study by Kaehler, Busatto, Grace and Santos (2014) examined the relationship between strategic orientation and adaptive capabilities and as drivers for firm performance. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire which was administered on 106 randomly selected employees drawn from maintain company in Brazil. The results of multiple regression analysis showed that strategic orientation of entrepreneurs influence the effect of adaptive capabilities on firm performance. The study provided a new understanding on how adaptive capability drives performance. the main limitation of the study was that it was done on only one case company and which therefore suffer the inability to be generalized with other companies operating in different industries and countries.

Lyria et al, (2017) also carried out a research work in the effect of career management on organizational performance of firms listed in the Nairobi securities exchange. Descriptive and correlation survey research was adopted. Stratified simple random sampling technique was employed to enable select the respondents from the ten stratum of MSE listed companies. The target population was 534 top managers of listed companies in the NSE. A sample size of 224 respondents was picked from the listed firms. Results revealed that there is a strong and positive relationship between career management and organizational performance of all listed companies. An R squared of 0.245 indicates that 24.5% of the variances in the acceptance of career management by listed companies explained by the variances in the organization performance.

Salleh, Omar, Aburumman, Mat and Almhairat (2020) researched on the impact of career planning and career satisfaction on employee's turnover intention of banks in Jordanian capital Amman. The survey questionnaire was gathered from 412 employees located in 25 banks in the Jordanian capital Amman. The study used the software Smart PLS (Version 32.8) to test the study hypotheses. The findings indicate that career planning and career satisfaction negatively impact employees' turnover intention and career satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between career planning and employee's turnover intention.

Al-Shawabkeh (2017) examined career path development and its impact on organizational citizenship behaviour in greater Amman municipality. The study population consisted of (122) managers at middle managerial level in greater Amman municipality. The study used simple random sample. A total of (90) respondents were targeted, from which questionnaire was administered. The study used the statistical analysis SPSS (Statistical Package for social Sciences) for testing the hypotheses through regression analysis. The results of testing hypotheses have shown that there is a significant impact at level $P < 0.05$ of career path development on organizational citizenship behaviour in greater Amman municipality. The study recommended that organization should use reward systems that support the organization's career path development strategy and enhancing the OCB.

Mengesha and Zewude (2021) carried out a study on the effect of career management on public employee job satisfaction in Jimma city. Cluster sampling technique was used to select sample respondent. Survey questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 224 employees of public institution in Jimma city and structural equation model using Medsem Stata 14 command was applied to analyze meditation analysis. The findings revealed that career management elements has small effect on employee's job satisfaction. The study findings contribute to a better understanding of career management practices and job satisfaction for public employees and provide empirical evidence on the relationship between the two variables in public institutions.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey. A total of 354 managers/supervisors from (50) fifty hotels in the various states in South-East Nigeria were selected for this study. The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was used to arrive at a sample size of 186. Hence, 186 questionnaires were administered to the respondents. The simple sampling method was adopted. Spearman rank order correlation co-efficient was used to analyze the hypotheses in order to ascertain the relationship between career management and adaptive capability. The decision rule for the Spearman's rank order correlation was premised in the P-value < 0.05 for rejection of null hypotheses based on the evidence of significant correlation and the P-value > 0.05 for acceptance of the null hypotheses based on the evidence of insignificant correlation. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 25.0 was used to analyze the data.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section comprise of the analysis of data obtained. Out of the 354 questionnaire distributed, only 306 copies (86%) of the retrieved questionnaire were dimmed valid for use. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the correlations and strength of relations.

The decision rule is:

$p < 0.05$ significant level = accept the alternate hypotheses

$p > 0.05$ significant level = accept the null hypotheses

Table 1 Career planning and Technological adaptive capability

Correlations

			Career planning	Technological adaptive capability
Spearman's rho	Career planning	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.586**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	305	305
	Technological adaptive capability	Correlation Coefficient	.586**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	305	305

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Career planning and Technological adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria.

The result of the analysis in Table 1 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), this means that there is a significant relationship between Career planning and Technological adaptive capability. A correlation value of $\rho = 0.586$ implying that there is a strong positive relationship between Career planning and Technological adaptive capability. This entails that as one variable increases the other increases, that is, a positive impact of Career planning will lead to a corresponding increase in the Technological adaptive capability. The study therefore observes that there is a strong positive and significant association between Career planning and Technological adaptive capability. In light of this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that that *there is a significant relationship between Career planning and Technological adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria*. This result confirms the works of Salleh, Omar, Aburumman, Mat and Almhairat (2020) whose findings indicate that career planning and career satisfaction have an impact on adaptive capability and negatively impact employees' turnover intention. Career planning also seeks to provide guidance and encourage employees to fulfill their potentials and ensure better use of human resources through more satisfied and productive employees.

Table 2 Career planning and Strategic adaptive capability

Correlations

			Career planning	Strategic adaptive capability
Spearman's rho	Career planning	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.506**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	305	305
	Strategic adaptive capability	Correlation Coefficient	.506**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	305	305

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Career planning and Strategic adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria.

The result of the analysis in Table 2 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), this means that there is a significant relationship between Career planning and Strategic adaptive capability. A correlation value of $\rho = 0.506$ implying that there is a positive relationship between Career planning and Strategic adaptive capability. This entails that as one variable increases the other decreases, that is, a positive impact of Career planning will lead to a corresponding decrease in Strategic adaptive capability of the employees. The study therefore observes that there is a strong positive and significant association between Career planning and Strategic adaptive capability. In light of this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that that *there is a significant relationship between Career planning and Strategic adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria*. Salleh, Omar, Aburumman, Mat and Almhairat (2020) opined that career planning affects employees strategic adaptive capability hence reducing. Organizations that understand the effect of each force in the industry, take defensive strategies in order to place themselves in an appropriate position against pressure exerted by these industry forces (Tavitiyaman et al, 2011).

Table 3 Career pathing and Technological adaptive capability

Correlations

			Career pathing	Technological adaptive capability
Spearman's rho	Career pathing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.602**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	305	305
	Technological adaptive capability	Correlation Coefficient	.602**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.

N	305	305
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** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between Career pathing and Technological adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria.

The result of the analysis in Table 3 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), this means that there is a significant relationship between Career pathing and Technological adaptive capability. A correlation value of $\rho = 0.602$ implying that there is a strong positive relationship between Career pathing and Technological adaptive capability. This entails that as one variable increases the other increase, that is, an increase in Career pathing will lead to a corresponding increase in Technological adaptive capability. The study therefore observes that there is a strong positive and significant association between Career pathing and Technological adaptive capability. In light of this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that that *there is a significant relationship between Career pathing and Technological adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria*. This findings is in confirmation with the assertion of Mengesha and Zewude (2021) who opined that career management elements has an effect on employee's job satisfaction, and their capability to adapt to changing technology. Firms that want to develop and maintain a competitive advantage cannot avoid new technologies (Becheikh, Landry & Amara, 2006).

Table 4 Career pathing and Strategic adaptive capability

Correlations			Career pathing	Strategic adaptive capability
Spearman's rho	Career pathing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.589**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	305	305
	Strategic adaptive capability	Correlation Coefficient	.589**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	305	305

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between Career pathing and Strategic adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria.

The result of the analysis in Table 4 shows a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), this means that there is a significant relationship between Career pathing and Strategic adaptive capability. A correlation value of $\rho = 0.589$ implying that there is a positive relationship between Career pathing and Strategic adaptive capability. This entails that as one variable increases the other increase, that is, an increase in Career pathing will lead to a corresponding increase in Strategic adaptive capability. The study therefore observes that there is a positive and significant association between Career pathing and Strategic adaptive capability. In light of this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that that *there is a significant relationship between Career pathing and Strategic adaptive capability of hospitality firms in South-East Nigeria*. Al-Shawabkeh's (2017) findings support this result of data analysis as it opines that there is a significant impact at level ($p < 0.05$) of career path development on organizational citizenship behaviour and employees strategic adaptive capability. Career path is the succession of job experiences that position an individual for advanced rank job (Steward & Brown, 2011).

Conclusion

Career planning and pathing are good indicators of technological and strategic adaptive capability. Hence embracing career management will help boost adaptive capability of a firm. Career management practices are effectively useful in situations where productivity depends on the application of knowledge rather than physical energy. The knowledge, the firm assimilates in the process needs to be carefully stored and managed for later use and exploitation.

Recommendations

1. Hospitality firms should engage in the development of employee's competencies because the more organizational members are developed the more adaptive the organization becomes.
2. Career management programs in hospitality firms should be used as a knowledge retention tool by management to significantly channel efforts in a way that will drive organization to build adaptive capability.
3. Management of hospitality firms should rightly identify potential talent and take into account their willingness to learn and grow

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