



Economics of Quality Management Practices and Performance of Bakery Firms in South East, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study evaluated economics of quality management practices and performance of bakery firms in south east, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to: investigate the relationship between strategic quality planning and market innovations of bakery firms; examine the relationship between people engagement and employee retention; explore the correlation quality implementation and: quality product standards; etc. The study used descriptive survey research. The population of the study was two hundred and eighty-six (286). The data collected was used to analyses the research questions and hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r). The findings indicated that there was significant relationship between: strategic quality planning and market innovations as reported in the probability value of ($r=.581 < .867, p<.05$); people engagement and employee retention as reported in the probability value of ($r=.708 < .828, p<.05$) etc. The study concluded that quality management practices had significant relationship with performance of bakery firms in South East, Nigeria. The study recommended among others that to bridge skill and knowledge gaps, bakery firms should ensure that their employees are sent for training and development once or twice yearly, thereby ensuring quality management of resources and edging out competition.

Keyword: *Quality, management, practices.*

Background to the Study

According to Ryan (2021), the concept of quality management practices can be traced back to medieval Europe when craftsman guilds developed strict guidelines for how products were inspected for defects. The craftsmanship model with emphasis on inspection for how products were inspected and quality control extended on. Nigeria has made some progress in socio-economic aspect of the economy in recent years, yet through the early years of the industrial revolution until the early 19th century manufacturing in the industrialized world tended to follow this craftsman model (Ryan, 2021). The factory system, a product of the industrial revolution in Europe, began to divide the craftsmen's trades into specialized tasks. This forced craftsman to become factory workers and forced shop owners to become production supervisors and marked an initial define in employees' sense of empowerment and autonomy in the workplace quality in the factory system was ensured through the skill of laborers supplemented by audit and/or inspections. Defective products were either reworked or scrapped.

Later in the 19th century the United States broke further from European tradition and adopted a new management approach developed by Frederick W. Taylor whose goal was to increases productivity without increasing the number of skilled craftsmen (Sumbul, 2020). The beginning at the 20th century marked the inclusion of processes in quality management practices. As the 21st century begins, the quality management practices movement has matured. New quality systems have evolved beyond the foundations not only on product and service but also on the means to achieve it (Ryan, 2021). Nigerian bakery firm has enjoined much prominence in Nigeria's development plans. With Nigerian governments drive for diversification, this industry is one key driver as it has been identified as a veritable engine of growth. Government has continuously put policies and incentive packages that would promote this segment of the economy. The bakery industry has been increasing steadily in the country as one of the largest processed food industries in Nigeria. It plays a crucial role in the economic growth of nations since they in no small measure change the supply of food and are the key stimulus for economic advancement (Omiyale, 2021).

It is understandable that bakery firms need to grow and develop with market and quality management practices (Darren, 2021). The goal of any organization is to have amongst other things provide proper product quality control as the ultimate goals, cost minimization and profit maximization, are to be attained. In fact, quality is a crucial parameter which differentiates an organization from its competitors. Effective quality management practices should be adopted by every organization in other to improve market innovations, employee retention, product quality standards, customer loyalty and retention including profitability which would in turn enhance the performance of the organization and that of its employees. Performance evaluations are important for an executive's motivation, attitude and behaviour development, communicating organizational aims, and fostering positive relationships between management and employees as it provides a formal, recorded, regular review of an individual's performance, and a plan for future development of the organization (Venkatesh, 2020).

Currently, most bakery firms in south east, Nigeria has been hampered by poor innovations consequent upon poor strategic quality planning. Some bakeries bumped into the market only to fizzle out of it due to business road bumps associated with the lack of strategic quality planning. The lack of strategic planning manifests itself either as a lack of vision or an organizational disability to deploy the chosen vision across all organizational units. The industry is noted with rising of one enterprise and the falling of others owing to the fact that there is absolutely no formidable policy upholding the operations and management of the enterprises. Most structure in bakery firms are open and flexible with no clear and precise delineations of job duties as a result of low people engagement which make it difficult to retention employee. Poor training leading to poor product quality standards and lack of relationship management that affect customer satisfaction and customer's continuous loyalty. Thus, fluctuated the prices of bakery products as well as reduces productivity.

This requires careful planning of resources and the order in which they need to be used; strategic quality planning that can ensure market innovations. Relationship Management is considered a key driver of success and essential component of business strategy for customer's retention. The goal of Relationship Management is to create long-term, mutually beneficial relationships that ensure for customer's retention. A committed leader must exhibit perseverance and toughness that can create income resulting to profitability. Thus, lack of quality management practices can result in decreased in market innovations, customer retention, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction and revenue. Therefore, the present study would examine the effect of quality management practices on performance. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Investigate the relationship between strategic quality planning and market innovations of bakery firms in South east, Nigeria.
- ii. Examine the relationship between people engagement and employee retention of bakery firms in South east, Nigeria.
- iii. Explore the correlation between training and product quality standards of bakery firms in South east, Nigeria.

The research questions guided the study are what are the relationships between strategic quality planning and market innovations of bakery firms in South east, Nigeria? What is the relationship between people engagement and employee retention of bakery firms in South east, Nigeria? What is the correlation between training and product quality standards of bakery firms in South east, Nigeria? , What are the effects of relationship management on customer loyalty and retention of bakery firms in South east, Nigeria? What is the relationship between committed leadership and profitability of bakery firms in South east, Nigeria? The following null hypotheses guided the study: i. Strategic quality planning has no positive significance relationship with market innovations. ii. People engagement has no positive significance relationship with and employee retention iii. Training has no positive significance correlation with product quality standards iv. Relationship management has no positive significance effect with customer loyalty and retention. v. Committed leadership has no positive significance relationship with profitability.

The study was guided by the following theories: Total Quality Management (TQM) Theories is a strategic management tool that focuses on delivering quality products and services. The management tool operates through the frameworks of quality control, quality planning, quality standard measurement, and continuous quality improvement. It aims at improving production efficiency, output quality, customer satisfaction, and internal processes effectiveness. TQM is considered a customer-focused process that focuses on consistently improving business operations management. It strives to ensure that all associated employees work toward the common goals of improving product or service quality, as well as improving the procedures that are in place for production (Mitchell. 2022).

Expectation confirmation theory (ECT) is a widely accepted theoretical framework that seeks to explain how individuals' prior expectations about a specific phenomenon shape their perceptions and judgments of it. The theory posits that individuals' expectations influence their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors towards an event, product, or service. This review provides an overview of ECT's fundamental concepts, theoretical foundation, empirical evidence, and critiques. ECT's fundamental concept is that people have specific expectations about a product or service, and their perceptions and attitudes towards it are shaped by the extent to which their expectations are confirmed or disconfirmed. Expectations are based on prior experiences, information, and beliefs, and they guide people's perceptions, judgments, and behavior (Mwathi & Kitur, 2021).

Structural contingency theory holds that the effect on organizational performance of organizational structure depends upon how far the structure fits the contingencies, such as uncertainty, strategy, and size. Organizations facing low uncertainty are fitted by specialized and centralized hierarchical structures, whereas organizations facing high uncertainty are fitted by lower specialization and decentralization (i.e., decisions being taken at lower levels of the hierarchy). Undiversified strategy is fitted by a functional structure, whereas diversified strategy is fitted by a multidivisional structure. Larger size is fitted by more specialized and decentralized structure. Various changes over time in focus are identified, such as from differentiation to interdependence.

Somoye, Akpa, Akinlabi, & Herbertson (2021) examined the effect of employee retention strategies on employee proactive behaviour of selected Bakery firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. The population was 568 directors, top management staff and human resources managers of six selected bakery firms in Lagos State Nigeria. A sample size of 292 was found usable. Stratified random sampling was adopted. A validated questionnaire was used to collect data. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranged from 0.76 to 0.88. The response rate was 86.9%. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that employee retention strategies had significant effect on employee proactive behaviour (Adj. R² = 0.349; F (4,249) = 34.853, p= 0.000). The study concluded that employee retention strategies dimensions had significant effect on employee proactive behaviour of the selected Bakery firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study recommends that managers with proactive personality should be allowed to lead bakery firms so as to ensure

their survival in the fiercely competitive industry by creating environment that would be favorable for their success by anticipating and leading change.

Ama, (2023) examined quality management practices and market innovations using empirical data from ISO 9001 certified manufacturing and service firms. The results show that a set of QM practices through process management has a positive relationship with all of these five types of innovation. It was found that process management directly and positively relates to incremental, radical, and administrative innovation. Organizational capability to manage processes may play a vital role in identifying routines, establishing a learning base, and supporting innovative activities. The findings also reveal that the value of an individual QM practice is tied to other QM practices. Therefore, highlighting just one or a few QM practices or techniques may not result in creative problem solving and innovation.

Pinto & Romero, (2020) studied relationship between quality management and innovation. The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between quality management and innovation, since although quality and innovation issues are dealt with extensively, there is still little information on this relationship. An exploratory bibliographic research was conducted in order to extract the most important ideas from the literature. The focus on quality as a competitive tool is crucial but insufficient, and innovation emerges as a new way of meeting customer requirements and expectations. The coexistence of quality management practices and innovation management practices seems to be important although difficult to achieve. The literature review was limited to a database. The implementation of quality management systems in parallel with innovation poses enormous challenges, as the philosophy governing the two areas can be contradictory. This requires that companies have well-structured and knowledgeable teams. This study contributed to a better perception and systematization of the relationship between quality and innovation.

Ruales Guzmán, Castellanos Domínguez, & Brun (2020) investigated on instruments to identify relevant quality management practices to productivity. The objective of this research was to develop data collection instruments that allow to identify the relevant quality management practices (QMP) to productivity indicators of the dairy industry. The identification of the variables was carried out, on the one hand, through an exhaustive literature review and, on the other hand, through the suggestions of academy and industry experts. Subsequently, the most cited models in the literature about quality management were considered in the construction and validation of the instruments. The findings revealed the 32 most reported QMP in the literature and seven productivity indicators of the dairy industry suggested by the experts. Content validation evinced that the vocabulary and structure of the instruments are adequate and understandable. The originality and value of the developed instruments in this study consist in that, unlike the previous ones, they would allow identifying the relevant QMP to specific productivity indicators in the dairy industry context.

Kurdi, Alshurideh, & Alnaser, (2020) conducted a study on the impact of employee satisfaction on customer satisfaction: Theoretical and empirical underpinning. The purpose of this study is to observe and test practically the relationship between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction, A set of hypotheses were then developed theoretically and tested practically using the SEMPLS approach. In conclusion, it was found that customer satisfaction had a causal relationship with employee satisfaction and an understanding of the employees' findings from the study as well as suggests future related research areas.

Kamble, & Singh, (2022) examined impact on the product quality and customer attitudes in the baking industry toward product quality improvement. This study set out to assess a Bekasi bakery's efficiency from the perspective of the quality of its products and services as perceived by its clientele. When discussing the manufacture of bakery items, the food sector has a unique position among the processing industries. The authors of this study were motivated to investigate the causes of the wide range of product quality methods most commonly used in bakery plants, as well as other "convenient" methods, to highlight the limitations of these approaches and to argue for the benefits of using them to better test product quality.

Noori, (2020) researched on impact of total quality management practice on customer retention and satisfaction. Total quality management practice is a strategy of business-wide management to consistently increase the quality of products/services/processes by focusing on the needs and desires of consumers to improve customer engagement, loyalty and company performance. The relationship between overall quality control strategies and client retention, loyalty and efficiency is mixed Total quality management is a firm-wide. Management methodology for the constant enhancement of products/services/processes quality with an emphasis on customer demands and preferences. This paper aims at exploring and recognizing the effect on consumers' retention and loyalty of full-fledged quality management activities, different methods of total quality. In order for a competitive edge to emerge and to boost corporate efficiency and customer loyalty an increasing number of companies use absolute quality control as a strategic basis. As a consequence of intensive global competition, the idea of total quality management was created. The concepts of total quality management, processes, tools and strategies are given significant importance by international trading and competitive competition organisations.

Agber (2023) assessed the impact of inventory management and control on profitability of top choice bakery Makurdi - Benue State, Nigeria. The objectives in the study were; (i) to assess the impact of Inventory Management and Control on relative cost of Top Choice Bakery, (ii) to assess the impact of Inventory Management and Control on efficiency of Top Choice Bakery, (iii) to assess the impact of Inventory Management and Control on competitive strength of Top Choice Bakery, (iv) to assess the impact of Inventory Management and Control on product price of Top Choice Bakery, and (v) to assess the impact of Inventory Management and Control on demand of Top Choice Bakery. The researcher used relative cost, efficiency, competitive strength, price, and demand as the

factors that affect profitability of the company. 60 copies of Questionnaire were issued and 59 copies were returned. Employees in the two departments were sampled. The sample size for the study was sixty (60) while the population is seventy (70). Primary data was collected and analyzed using Pearson correlation analysis. The researcher used SPSS for data analysis. The result of the study shows that inventory management and control have a positive significant impact relationship on efficiency, relative costs, competitive strength, product price and demand.

Methodology

Descriptive Survey Research was utilized in this study. The area of the study is south east, Nigeria. The South east is the one of the six geopolitical zones of *Nigeria* comprises of five states: Abia State, Anambra State, Ebonyi State, Enugu State and Imo State. The population of the study is made up of all bakery firms that are registered members of the Master Bakers association of Nigeria, south east Nigeria chapter and this comprised of 286 master bakers as shown in below; Accordingly, the population of this study is made up of two hundred and eighty-six (286) directors and their managers of all registered members of the Master Bakers association of Nigeria in south east, Nigeria. Purposive sampling techniques were utilized in this study. Since the population is small the researcher decided to use the entire population for this study.

The study requires experts in the area of quality management practices relating to bakery industry. They are only directors and managers (Master bakers) who had the expertise in this area. This is very clear criterion and rationale for conclusion. Other workers in the bakery firms lack this criterion for inclusion and were therefore excluded. Data for this study were collected by means of questionnaire. The instrument was given to two experts from the bakery industry and academia to measure face and content validity. The application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 using Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used to obtain the reliability index which yielded a score of 0.88. Cronbach's Alpha is the most popular form of internal consistency reliability coefficient. The reliability value was above .7.

For the research questions, the likert type scale was utilized to analyze the data. The responses from the respondents were measured as follows: Strongly Agree [SA] – 5 points, Agree A – 4 points, Undecided UN – 3 Points, disagree [D] – 2 points and strongly Disagree SD – 1 point. The frequency of answers was stated for each of the responses to each of the relevant questions in the appropriate research questions in the questionnaire. The results obtained were used to compare the relative importance of various answers. For the hypotheses, the questions in the questionnaire that relate to each hypothesis were identified and tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient statistical tool. The correlation coefficient r determines the strength of correlation between two variables x and y and is calculated by using the formula below:

$$r = \frac{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})^2 \sum(y_i - \bar{y})^2}}$$

Where: r = Pearson correlation coefficient x_i = Values of the x -variable I sample $\tilde{x}$ = Mean of the values of the x -variable y_i = Values of the y -variable in a sample $\tilde{y}$ = Mean of the values of the y -variable Σ = Summation

Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 were tested by utilizing Pearson correlation coefficient model and conclusions made accordingly tested at 0.05, level of significance.

Decision Rule:

The decision rule is to accept the null hypothesis if the computed r is less than the tabulated or otherwise rejects the null hypothesis

Data Relating to Research Questions**Table 1** Responses on Strategic quality planning and market innovations

S/ N	Strategic quality planning and market innovations	5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD
6	Quicker, more efficient and reactive atmosphere upscale quality	600 120 45.8	288 72 27.5	51 17 6.5	32 16 6.1	37 37 14.1
7	Menu selections prompt consumer service delivery	575 115 43.9	276 69 26.3	57 19 7.3	44 22 8.4	37 37 14.1
8	Well-defined controls to help and reactions to quality issues.	320 64 24.4	508 127 48.5	51 17 6.5	40 20 7.6	34 34 13.0
9	With the right knowledge, output can be improved	680 136 51.9	160 40 15.3	81 27 10.3	52 26 9.9	33 33 12.6
10	Quality control is used as a strategic basis for a competitive edge to emerge	355 71 27.1	540 135 51.5	45 15 5.7	30 15 5.7	26 26 9.9
		2530 506 38.62	1772 443 33.82	285 95 7.25	198 99 7.56	167 167 12.75
	Total					

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1, 192 respondents out of 262 representing 73.3 percent agreed that quicker, more efficient and reactive atmosphere upscale quality with mean score of 3.85 and standard deviation of 1.422. Menu selections prompt consumer service delivery with 184

respondents representing 70.2 percent agreed with mean score of 3.77 and standard deviation of 1.441. Well-defined controls to help and reactions to quality issues with 191 respondents representing 72.9 percent agreed with mean score of 3.64 and standard deviation of 1.287. With the right knowledge, output can be improved with 176 respondents representing 67.2 percent agreed with mean score of 3.84 and standard deviation of 1.461. Quality control is used as a strategic basis for a competitive edge to emerge with 206 respondents representing 78.6 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.80 and standard deviation of 1.190.

Research Question Two

Table 2: Responses on people engagement and customer retention

S/ N	People engagement and customer retention	5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD
11	Right software implementation makes bakeries more agile	340 68 26.0	460 115 43.9	48 16 6.1	78 39 14.9	24 24 9.2
12	A well -documented production process standardizes both production	400 80 30.5	392 98 37.4	36 12 4.6	96 48 18.3	24 24 9.2
13	A reduction in overtime flexibility promote customer retention	280 56 21.4	404 101 38.5	78 26 9.9	100 50 19.1	29 29 11.1
14	Establishment of baking school close skill and knowledge gaps	240 48 18.3	504 128 48.9	15 5 1.9	96 48 18.3	33 33 12.6
15	Evidence based decision making correlates with productivity.	350 70 26.7	396 99 37.8	27 9 3.4	96 48 18.3	36 36 13.7
	Total	1610 322 24.58	2156 541 41.30	204 68 5.19	466 233 17.78	146 146 11.15

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2, 183 respondents out of 262 representing 69.9 percent agreed that right software implementation makes bakeries more agile with mean score of 3.63 and standard deviation of 1.268. A well-documented production process standardizes both production with 178 respondents representing 67.9 percent agreed with mean score of 3.62 and standard deviation of 1.330. With the right knowledge, output can be improved with 157 respondents representing 59.9 percent agreed with mean score of 3.40 and standard deviation of 1.311. Establishment of baking school close skill and knowledge gaps with 176 respondents representing 67.2 percent agreed with mean score of 3.42 and standard deviation of 1.319. Evidence based decision making correlates with productivity with 169 respondents representing 64.5 percent agreed with a mean score of 3.45 and standard deviation of 1.407.

Research Question Three

Table 3: Responses on Training and Product Quality Standards

S/ N	Training and customer loyalty	5 SA	4 A	3 N	2 DA	1 SD
16	Optimum utilization of resource avoid wastage enhance product.	575 115 43.9	240 60 22.9	33 11 4.2	124 62 23.7	14 14 5.3
17	efficiency of production depends on employee's amenities	360 72 27.5	412 103 39.3	33 11 4.2	124 62 23.7	14 14 5.3
18	Continuous improvement increases efficiency, quality and reduce costs	295 59 22.5	512 128 48.9	33 11 4.2	124 62 23.7	2 2 0.8
19	An improved working conditions flexibility promote product quality standards	685 137 52.3	248 62 23.7	42 14 5.3	68 34 13	15 15 5.7
20	Training and development correlate with better customer services	665 133 50.8	328 82 31.3	39 13 4.9	38 19 7.3	15 15 5.7
	Total	2580 516 39.39	2100 435 33.21	180 60 4.58	478 239 18.24	60 60 4.58

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3, 175 respondents out of 281 representing 62.3 % agreed that direct interaction ensures buyer satisfaction and repeat business with mean score of 3.58 and standard deviation of 1.489. Efficiency of production depends on employee's amenities with 175 respondents representing 62.3 % agreed with mean score of 3.42 and standard deviation of 1.382. A reduction in overtime flexibility promote customer retention with 185 respondents representing 66.6 % agreed with mean score of 3.51 and standard deviation of 1.251. An improved working conditions flexibility promote staff retention with 199 respondents representing 70.9 % agreed with mean score of 3.90 and standard deviation of 1.323. Training and development correlate with better customer services with 215 respondents representing 76.5 % agreed with a mean score of 4.00 and standard deviation of 1.236.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

Table 4: Correlation analysis between Strategic quality planning and market innovations

Correlations		Quicker, more efficient and reactive atmosphere upscale quality	Menu selections prompt consumer service delivery	Well-defined controls to help and reactions to quality issues.	Continuous improvement increases efficiency, quality and reduce costs	Quality control is used as a strategic basis for a competitive edge to emerge
Quicker, more efficient and reactive atmosphere upscale quality	Pearson Correlation	1	.867**	.819**	.718**	.645**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
Menu selections prompt consumer service delivery	Pearson Correlation	.867**	1	.813**	.753**	.649**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
Well-defined controls to help and reactions to quality issues.	Pearson Correlation	.819**	.813**	1	.763**	.581**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
Continuous improvement increases efficiency, quality and reduce costs	Pearson Correlation	.718**	.753**	.763**	1	.623**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
Quality control is used as a strategic basis for a competitive edge to emerge practices.	Pearson Correlation	.645**	.649**	.581**	.623**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	262	262	262	262	262
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Source: SPSS, ver. 23.0

Table 4, showed the Pearson correlation matrix on strategic quality planning and market innovations of bakery firms Nigeria showing the correlation coefficients, significant values and the number of cases. The correlation coefficient shows .581 < .867. This value indicates that the correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed) and implies that there was significant positive relationship between the strategic quality planning and market innovations of bakery firms in south east, Nigeria ($r = .581 < .867$). The computed correlations coefficient is greater than the table value of $r = .000$ with at alpha level for a two-tailed test ($r = .581 < .867$, $P < .05$).

Decision:

Since the computed ($r = .581 < .867$) is greater than the table value of .000, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we concluded that there was significant positive relationship between strategic quality planning and market innovations of bakery firms in south east, Nigeria as reported in the probability value of ($r = .581 < .867, p < .05$).

Hypothesis Two**Table 5:** Correlation analysis between people engagement and employee retention

Correlations		Right software implementation makes bakeries more agile	A well documented production process standardize both production	With the right knowledge, output can be improved	Establishment of baking school close skill and knowledge gaps	Evidence based decision making correlates with productivity.
Right software implementation makes bakeries more agile	Pearson Correlation	1	.828**	.708**	.796**	.766**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	-	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
A well documented production process standardize both production	Pearson Correlation	.828**	1	.753**	.769**	.854**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	-	.000	.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
With the right knowledge, output can be improved	Pearson Correlation	.708**	.753**	1	.857**	.781**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.000	-	.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
Establishment of baking school close skill and knowledge gaps	Pearson Correlation	.796**	.769**	.857**	1	.871**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.000	.000	-	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
Evidence based decision making correlates with productivity.	Pearson Correlation	.766**	.854**	.781**	.871**	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	-
	N	262	262	262	262	262

Source: SPSS, ver. 23.0

Table 5, showed the Pearson correlation matrix on people engagement and employee retention of bakery firms Nigeria showing the correlation coefficients, significant values and the number of cases. The correlation coefficient shows $.708 < .828$. This value indicates that the correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed) and implies that there was significant positive relationship between people engagement and employee retention of bakery firms in south east, Nigeria ($r = .708 < .828$). The computed correlations coefficient is greater than the table value of $r = .000$ with at alpha level for a two-tailed test ($r = .708 < .828, p < .05$).

Decision

Since the computed ($r = .708 < .828$) is greater than the table value of $.000$, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we concluded that there was significant positive relationship between people engagement and employee retention of bakery firms in south east, Nigeria as reported in the probability value of ($r = .708 < .828, p < .05$).

Hypothesis Three

Table 6: Correlation analysis between training and product quality standards

		Direct interaction ensures buyer satisfaction and repeat business	Efficiency of production depends on employee's amenities	A reduction in overtime flexibility promote customer retention	An improved working conditions flexibility promote staff retention	Training and development correlates with better customer services
Direct interaction ensures buyer satisfaction and repeat business	Pearson Correlation	1	.841**	.723**	.806**	.749**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
Efficiency of production depends on employee's amenities	Pearson Correlation	.841**	1	.764**	.781**	.830**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
A reduction in overtime flexibility promote customer retention	Pearson Correlation	.723**	.764**	1	.866**	.725**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
An improved working conditions flexibility promote staff retention	Pearson Correlation	.806**	.781**	.866**	1	.821**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	262	262	262	262	262
Training and development correlates with better customer services	Pearson Correlation	.749**	.830**	.725**	.821**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	262	262	262	262	262

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

Source: SPSS, ver. 23.0

In Table 6, the correlation coefficient shows $.749 < .841$. This value indicates that the correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed) and implies that there was significance relationship between training and product quality standards of bakery firms in South East, Nigeria. The computed correlations coefficient is greater than the table value of $r = .000$ with at alpha level for a two-tailed test ($r = .749 < .841, p < .05$).

Decision:

Since the computed ($r = .749 < .841$) is greater than the table value of $.000$, we reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, we concluded that there was significance relationship between training and product quality standards of bakery firms in South East, Nigeria as reported in the probability value.

Findings

The findings of this study are as follows:

- i. There was significant positive relationship between strategic quality planning and market innovations of Bakery Firms in South East, Nigeria ($r = .581 < .867, p < .05$). this implies that strategic quality planning lead to market innovations thereby ensuring quality management of resources and edging out competition.
- ii. There was significant positive relationship between people engagement and employee retention of Bakery Firms in South East, Nigeria ($r = .708 < .828, p < .05$).
- iii. There was significant positive correlation between training and product quality standards ($r = .749 < .841, p < .05$).

Conclusion

The study concluded that quality management practices had significant positive relationship with performance of bakery firms in South East, Nigeria. Quality management is the act of overseeing different activities and tasks within an organization to ensure that products and services offered, as well as the means used to provide them are consistent. It helps to achieve and maintain a desired level of quality within the organization. It goes to show transparency and confidence that employees have in an organization that can inspire them to be engaged meaningfully with enthusiastic and commitment to their work because they're involved. Thus, Engagement correlates with productivity, customer services and profitability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations were proffered:

- i. To bridge skill and knowledge gaps, bakery firms should ensure that their employees are sent for training and development once or twice yearly, thereby enhancing productivity, innovation and performance of the employees.
- ii. Bakery firms should develop direct interaction and friendly management employee engagement policy that can ensure that optimum utilization of employees.
- iii. Continuous improvement policy that increases efficiency, quality and reduce costs must be maintained.

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