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# Benchmarking Strategy and Organizational Effectiveness of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria

**Enamuotor Russell[1] and B. Chima Onuoha[2]**

1. Doctoral Student, Department of Management, University of Port Harcourt.
2. Professor of Management, Department of Management, University of Port Harcourt

***ABSTRACT:*** *This study examined the influence of benchmarking strategies on the organizational effectiveness of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV), the research employed a quantitative approach using structured questionnaires administered to a sample of managerial personnel across selected FMCG companies. 289 questionnaires were distributed to managers and supervisors of FMCG firms in Rivers State, out of these, 264 of the retrieved were valid and useable. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS version 4.0. Findings revealed that both competitive and strategic benchmarking positively and significantly affect organizational effectiveness, specifically in the measures of goal attainment and adaptation. The rejection of all null hypotheses underscores the robustness of the conceptual model and reinforces the theoretical and managerial relevance of benchmarking as a strategic tool. The study concludes that FMCG firms must institutionalize benchmarking practices to remain agile and competitive. It recommends that FMCG firms should establish competitor intelligence units or assign cross-functional teams to monitor rival product launches, pricing strategies, and market campaigns*.

***Keywords:*** Benchmarking Strategy, Organizational Effectiveness, Goal Attainment, Adaptation

## Introduction

In the face of increasing globalization, market volatility, and shifting consumer preferences, Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) firms are under continuous pressure to enhance their organizational effectiveness. One strategic approach that has gained prominence for fostering competitive advantage and performance improvement is benchmarking. Benchmarking strategy involves comparing an organization's processes, products, and performance metrics with industry best practices to identify areas for improvement and drive continuous innovation (Adewale & Akanbi, 2020).

In today's hyper-competitive FMCG sector, firms must consistently align operational activities with best-in-class standards to meet growing consumer demands, reduce operational inefficiencies, and remain profitable. Benchmarking enables firms to understand performance gaps, set realistic targets, and adopt superior strategies that improve responsiveness and adaptability (Kumar & Sharma, 2017). It is particularly relevant for FMCG firms in emerging economies such as Nigeria, where market dynamics are unstable, and customer loyalty is hard-won.

Organizational effectiveness in the FMCG sector can be assessed through several performance indicators, including operational efficiency, product quality, customer satisfaction, and goal attainment (Amah & Wokoma, 2017). Benchmarking not only aids in monitoring these performance areas but also supports strategic decision-making by providing external perspectives that stimulate innovation and proactive change (Liu et al., 2019).

Despite the growing recognition of benchmarking in global business strategy, there is limited empirical evidence on its practical deployment within the FMCG industry in Nigeria, especially in Rivers State. The unique socio-economic challenges, infrastructural deficits, and competitive pressure facing firms in the region make it imperative to evaluate how benchmarking practices influence organizational outcomes. Thus, this study investigates the relationship between benchmarking strategy and organizational effectiveness of FMCG firms in Rivers State.

Fast-Moving Consumer Goods firms operate within a volatile business environment characterized by unstable supply chains, inconsistent consumer behavior, and intense market competition. In such settings, organizational effectiveness hinges on the ability to identify and implement strategies that enhance performance and agility. While benchmarking has been widely acknowledged as a strategic tool for performance improvement and organizational learning (Spendolini, 2015), many FMCG firms in the region struggle to adopt benchmarking practices that are systematic, data-driven, and aligned with international best practices (Nwokah & Maclayton, 2021).

The absence of structured benchmarking strategies often results in stagnation, inefficiencies, and missed opportunities for innovation. Many firms either rely on internal assessments or imitate competitors without clearly defined performance metrics or contextual

adaptation, leading to suboptimal organizational outcomes (Okon & Ogbanga, 2022). Moreover, the fragmented nature of data and limited inter-firm collaboration in the region further hinder benchmarking effectiveness.

While previous studies have explored benchmarking in the manufacturing and service sectors (Chinonso & Eze, 2019; Madu & Okpara, 2020), few have focused specifically on the FMCG sector in Rivers State, where firms face unique operational and competitive challenges. It remains unclear how benchmarking strategy influences key dimensions of organizational effectiveness, including operational efficiency and goal achievement, in this context. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by assessing the influence of benchmarking strategy on the organizational effectiveness of FMCG firms in Rivers State. The findings aim to provide actionable insights for managers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders on the strategic use of benchmarking to enhance organizational performance.

**Research Objectives**

This study seeks to examine the relationship between:

1. Competitive benchmarking and goal attainment of fast-moving consumer goods firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Competitive benchmarking and adaptation of fast-moving consumer goods firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
3. Strategic benchmarking and goal attainment of fast-moving consumer goods firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
4. Strategic benchmarking and adaptation fast-moving consumer goods firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses are proposed:

**$Ho_1$**: There is no significant relationship between competitive benchmarking and goal attainment of fast-moving consumer goods firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**$Ho_2$:** There is no significant relationship between competitive benchmarking and adaptation of fast-moving consumer goods firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**$Ho_3$**: There is no significant relationship between strategic benchmarking and goal attainment of fast-moving consumer goods firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**$Ho_4$:** There is no significant relationship between strategic benchmarking and adaptation of fast-moving consumer goods firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Review of Literature**

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, introduced by Barney (1991), offers a compelling framework for understanding how benchmarking strategies influence organizational effectiveness. According to RBV, firms gain competitive advantage and sustain performance by acquiring and leveraging resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. Benchmarking—particularly competitive and strategic forms—serves as a channel for identifying high-performing processes and practices that can be emulated and adapted to strengthen a firm's internal capabilities (Anand & Kodali, 2010). In the context of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firms in Rivers State, benchmarking allows organizations to evaluate their position within the competitive landscape, identify operational gaps, and deploy resources more effectively, thereby aligning with the principles of RBV.

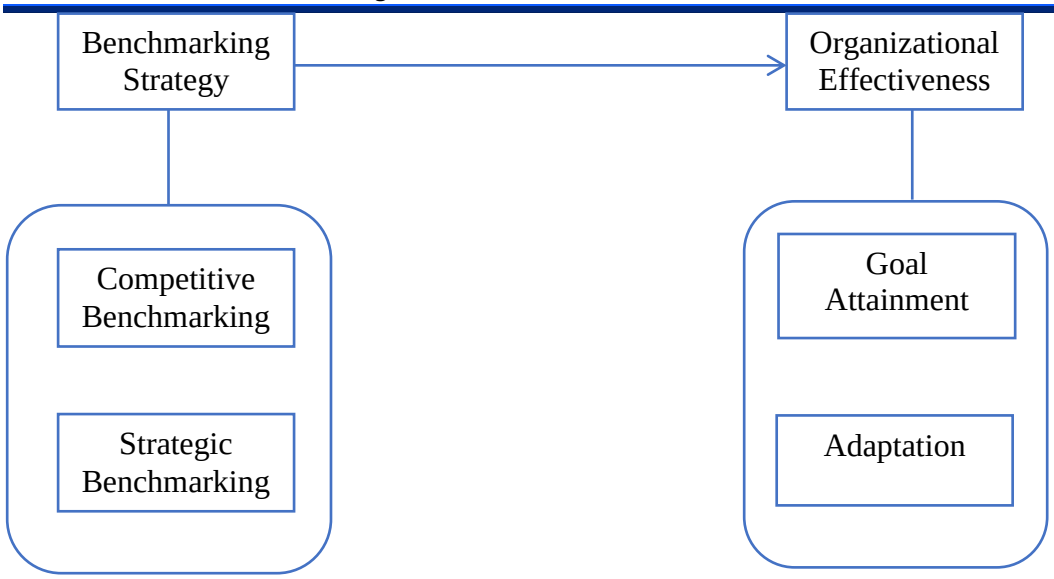


**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**
Source: The dimensions of Benchmarking Strategy were adapted from Anand and Kodali (2010), while the measures of Organizational Effectiveness were adapted from Richard, Devinney, Yip and Johnson (2009)

**Benchmarking Strategy**

Benchmarking strategy is a structured management tool that facilitates performance improvement by comparing organizational processes, outcomes, and strategies to those of high-performing counterparts. Camp (2010) defines benchmarking as the "search for industry best practices that lead to superior performance," emphasizing its role in strategic learning and continuous improvement. In modern business environments, benchmarking is not solely about imitation—it is about adapting superior approaches to fit an organization's unique context (Anand & Kodali, 2010). FMCG firms can use benchmarking to improve supply chain efficiency, customer service quality, and innovation output, all of which contribute to higher organizational effectiveness (Obinna & Osuji, 2023).

**Competitive Benchmarking**

Competitive benchmarking involves comparing an organization's key performance indicators with those of its direct competitors. This approach is particularly useful in industries with intense rivalry and saturated markets, such as FMCGs. Eleanya and Onuoha (2023) observed that firms in Rivers State use competitive benchmarking to strengthen product differentiation, market responsiveness, and innovation strategies. Udo and Onuoha (2024) further revealed that FMCG companies employing benchmarking for market penetration and customer retention strategies achieved significantly better financial and non-financial outcomes. By understanding competitor strengths and customer expectations, firms can proactively refine their products and services, thereby enhancing both goal attainment and adaptability.

**Strategic Benchmarking**

Strategic benchmarking, unlike operational or competitive benchmarking, focuses on long-term strategy, business models, and organizational philosophy. FMCG firms engage in strategic benchmarking to gain insights into effective governance, innovation frameworks, and cross-sectoral practices. According to Andrews and Thomas (2025), firms in Rivers State adopt deliberate and emergent strategic approaches based on observations of industry leaders, which foster proprietary innovation and strategic agility. Similarly, Mamedu (2016) found that alignment of governance principles and strategic goals—often inspired by benchmarking—enhances goal clarity and execution. Strategic benchmarking is especially relevant in dynamic markets, enabling firms to anticipate changes and build resilient models that can withstand volatility and disruption.

**Organizational Effectiveness**

Organizational effectiveness refers to a firm's ability to achieve its goals, respond to changes, and sustain long-term performance. Richard et al. (2009) proposed that effectiveness encompasses goal achievement, operational efficiency, stakeholder satisfaction,

and environmental adaptability. For FMCG firms, effectiveness often hinges on their responsiveness to consumer behavior, regulatory changes, and supply chain complexities. Nduka and Mbawike (2022) emphasized that organizational effectiveness is not only determined by internal capabilities but also by strategic alignment and leadership agility. Effective organizations consistently evaluate their performance against benchmarks, enabling timely intervention and improvement.

### Goal Attainment

Goal attainment represents the degree to which an organization realizes its strategic and operational objectives. This dimension of effectiveness is often driven by precise planning, resource deployment, and performance monitoring. Chukwu and Needu-Efeeloo (2025) found that in educational institutions, professional competence and infrastructure management significantly contribute to achieving predetermined goals. Translated to FMCGs, similar findings suggest that strategic alignment, operational efficiency, and benchmarking insights directly influence firms' ability to meet set objectives. Mamedu (2016) observed that consistent goal attainment is often supported by strategic foresight and disciplined execution—elements derived from robust benchmarking.

### Adaptation

Adaptation reflects an organization's capacity to respond to external and internal changes, maintaining relevance and resilience. For FMCGs in Rivers State, adaptation involves navigating infrastructural challenges, shifting consumer demands, and regulatory changes. Wegwu (2024) discovered that adaptation among manufacturing firms is bolstered by innovation-centric policies and benchmarking practices that promote agility. Lekara (2024) further demonstrated that firms employing strategic management and benchmarking strategies exhibited better adaptability, especially in areas of technology adoption and customer engagement. These findings underscore that adaptation is not a reactive process, but a strategic posture grounded in organizational learning and benchmarking insights.

## Empirical Review

Eleanya and Onuoha (2023) conducted a study on manufacturing firms in Rivers State and found that competitive benchmarking significantly enhances differentiation and innovation capabilities, which in turn positively impact goal attainment. Udo and Onuoha (2024) affirmed that market penetration and customer responsiveness, guided by benchmarking, are linked to financial performance and strategic objective fulfillment.

Wegwu (2024) established that competitive benchmarking enhances firm adaptability through innovation and brand positioning, especially in large-sized FMCG firms. Lekara (2024) corroborated this by identifying strategic management practices as pivotal in fostering adaptation and competitive survival.

Andrews and Thomas (2025) reported that FMCG firms employing strategic benchmarking benefit from improved innovation and strategic clarity, enhancing goal attainment. Mamedu (2016) also linked governance-oriented benchmarking to superior planning and execution outcomes.

Chukwu and Needu-Efeeloo (2025) highlighted the role of professional competence, enhanced through benchmarking, in facilitating adaptability and innovation among school leaders, with implications for FMCG managerial adaptation. Mbarawii and Amabibi (2024) emphasized that strategic processes such as evaluation and planning support adaptive capacity in highly regulated sectors.

## Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey method. The population of the study comprised managers and supervisors of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firms operating in Rivers State, Nigeria. These firms were selected based on their active registration with the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) and their strategic relevance to the consumer goods sector. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across different FMCG sub-sectors (e.g., food and beverage, personal care, household products). The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula for finite populations, resulting in a sample of 289 respondents. This size is considered adequate for structural equation modeling, particularly when using PLS-SEM, which tolerates smaller samples compared to covariance-based SEM (Hair et al., 2022). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure the constructs of benchmarking strategy (competitive and strategic benchmarking) and organizational effectiveness (goal attainment and adaptation). The questionnaire items were adapted from validated scales in previous studies (Anand & Kodali, 2010; Richard et al., 2009) and refined to suit the Nigerian FMCG context. Questionnaires were administered both physically and electronically to accommodate respondents' preferences and ensure a high response rate. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via

SmartPLS version 4.0. PLS-SEM is suitable for exploratory research and complex models involving multiple constructs and indicators (Hair et al., 2022).

**Results and Discussion**

A total of 289 questionnaires were distributed to managers and supervisors of FMCG firms in Rivers State. Out of these, 273 questionnaires were retrieved, representing a 94.5% response rate, 9 questionnaires were discarded due to incomplete responses, and final usable sample was 264 respondents (91.3% of total distributed). This high retrieval rate reflects strong engagement and enhances the credibility of the data. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS version 4.0.

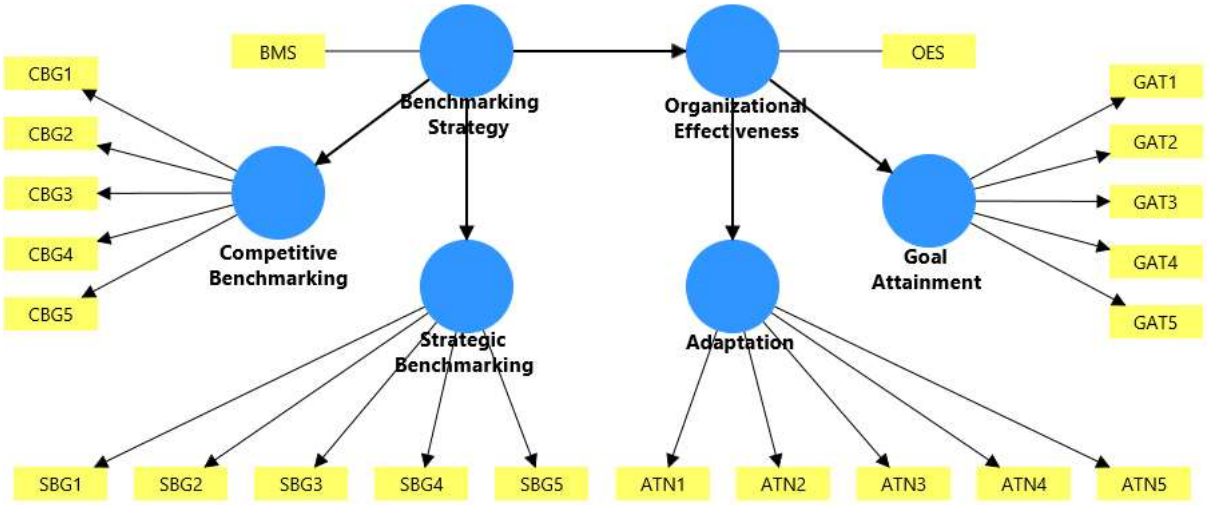


**Figure 2: Research Model**

The research model illustrates the hypothesized influence of benchmarking strategies on organizational effectiveness within the FMCG sector. Two key independent variable dimensions—competitive benchmarking and strategic benchmarking—are examined for their impact, on the two dependent variable measures—goal attainment and adaptation.

**Table 1: Reliability Test**

| Constructs | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability |
|---|---|---|
| **Competitive Benchmarking** | 0.872 | 0.901 |
| **Strategic Benchmarking** | 0.861 | 0.894 |
| **Goal Attainment** | 0.846 | 0.882 |
| **Adaptation** | 0.834 | 0.871 |

All constructs exceed the recommended thresholds of 0.70 for Cronbach's Alpha and 0.80 for Composite Reliability, indicating strong internal consistency and reliable measurement scales.

**Table 2: Validity Test**

| Constructs | AVE | Adaptation | Competitive Benchmarking | Goal Attainment | Strategic Benchmarking |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Adaptation** | 0.612 | **0.782** | | | |
| **Competitive Benchmarking** | 0.629 | 0.641 | **0.793** | | |
| **Goal Attainment** | 0.602 | 0.667 | 0.701 | **0.776** | |
| **Strategic Benchmarking** | 0.619 | 0.659 | 0.688 | 0.673 | **0.787** |

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are all above 0.50, confirming convergent validity. Diagonal values (bolded) are higher than off-diagonal correlations, satisfying Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity

**Table 3: Hypotheses Testing Result**

| Hypotheses | Path Relationship | Path Coefficient ($\beta$) | P Values ($p$) | Predictive Accuracy ($R^2$) | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **$Ho_1$** | Competitive benchmarking and Goal attainment | 0.684 | 0.000 | 0.468 | Reject null hypothesis |
| **$Ho_2$** | Competitive benchmarking and Adaptation | 0.659 | 0.000 | 0.434 | Reject null hypothesis |
| **$Ho_3$** | Strategic benchmarking and Goal attainment | 0.612 | 0.000 | 0.374 | Reject null hypothesis |
| **$Ho_4$** | Strategic benchmarking and Adaptation | 0.598 | 0.000 | 0.358 | Reject null hypothesis |

All hypotheses are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and show moderate predictive accuracy ($R^2 > 0.30$). This confirms that both benchmarking strategies are strong predictors of organizational effectiveness.

Hypothesis 1: Competitive Benchmarking and Goal Attainment

The results revealed a strong positive relationship between competitive benchmarking and goal attainment ($\beta = 0.684$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that FMCG firms in Rivers State that actively engage in benchmarking against competitors are more likely to meet their strategic objectives. This suggests that competitive awareness, market positioning, and the adoption of superior operational practices from rivals significantly contribute to goal fulfillment. This finding is consistent with Eleanya and Onuoha (2023), who emphasized that benchmarking enhances product differentiation and innovation capability. By systematically observing competitor offerings and market responses, firms are able to set realistic performance targets, prioritize impactful projects, and allocate resources effectively. Similarly, Udo and Onuoha (2024) confirmed that competitive benchmarking helps firms formulate aggressive market penetration strategies, which are linked to improved goal realization. In practice, FMCG firms in Rivers State operate in a highly saturated environment, and failure to monitor competitor strategies could lead to strategic misalignment. Benchmarking allows these firms to remain goal-focused, ensuring that their strategic efforts match market realities and consumer expectations.

Hypothesis 2: Competitive Benchmarking and Adaptation

The second hypothesis showed a statistically significant path ($\beta = 0.659$, $p < 0.05$), confirming that competitive benchmarking also fosters organizational adaptation. In essence, FMCG firms that regularly monitor and learn from competitors demonstrate higher agility and responsiveness to changing market conditions. This aligns with Wegwu (2024) who found that benchmarking contributes to stronger brand positioning and customer loyalty by enabling firms to pivot their strategies in response to competitor innovations. Additionally, Lekara (2024) observed that strategic management tools derived from benchmarking facilitate rapid adaptation in manufacturing firms, enhancing resilience against environmental shocks. In Rivers State, FMCG firms face challenges such as fluctuating consumer behavior, supply chain disruptions, and regulatory changes. Competitive benchmarking helps firms interpret and react to these external changes more quickly, embedding adaptive strategies into product development, distribution, and customer engagement. The result is real-time strategic agility, reducing vulnerability and increasing market survival odds.

Hypothesis 3: Strategic Benchmarking and Goal Attainment

Strategic benchmarking was also significantly associated with goal attainment ($\beta = 0.612$, $p < 0.05$), reinforcing the idea that long-term strategy comparison plays a vital role in guiding organizations toward effective goal execution. Strategic benchmarking includes reviewing governance models, innovation policies, and organizational cultures that drive performance excellence across industries—not just competitors. Andrews and Thomas (2025) illustrated how firms in Rivers State adapt emergent and deliberate strategies from industry leaders to foster innovation and strategic alignment. Strategic benchmarking promotes a broader vision orientation, encouraging organizations to move beyond short-term competitive gains and plan for sustainable growth. This perspective is supported by Mamedu (2016), who identified strategic planning—especially when informed by cross-sector benchmarking—as a

crucial factor in goal success among SMEs. For FMCG firms, strategic benchmarking cultivates a mindset of proactive strategy formulation, where goals are not static but evolve based on insights gathered across multiple industries and geographies. This leads to better goal structure, clearer priority setting, and more effective execution.

Hypothesis 4: Strategic Benchmarking and Adaptation

Finally, the relationship between strategic benchmarking and adaptation was significant ($\beta = 0.598$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that firms engaging in strategic comparisons are better positioned to adjust to environmental changes. Strategic benchmarking informs decision-makers about industry-wide shifts, regulatory trends, and technological advancements, enabling forward-thinking adaptation mechanisms. The findings support Chukwu and Needu-Efeeloo (2025), who linked professional competence developed through strategic learning to better infrastructure management and organizational responsiveness. Likewise, Mbarawii and Amabibi (2024) revealed that tools such as monitoring and evaluation—core components of strategic benchmarking—boost adaptation across highly regulated sectors. In the FMCG industry, adaptation is not just operational but strategic. It involves restructuring supply chains, repackaging offerings, redesigning promotional tactics, and even altering corporate governance frameworks. Strategic benchmarking ensures that such adaptations are strategically aligned and not merely reactive, increasing the likelihood of long-term organizational effectiveness.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study provides strong empirical evidence that benchmarking strategies—both competitive and strategic—significantly contribute to the organizational effectiveness of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. By examining their relationship with two key measures of effectiveness—goal attainment and adaptation—the research offers nuanced insight into how firms can leverage benchmarking to thrive in a competitive and volatile environment. The findings indicate that competitive benchmarking strengthens internal performance by enabling firms to evaluate themselves against peers, identify performance gaps, and adopt proven practices. This approach has a direct influence on goal clarity, execution discipline, and organizational agility. Likewise, strategic benchmarking, which involves the emulation of long-term business philosophies and innovation frameworks across industries, also enhances a firm's ability to adapt and sustain relevance.

The rejection of all four null hypotheses confirms the robustness of the conceptual model and validates the predictive power of benchmarking in driving organizational success. With high reliability and validity indices, the measurement constructs demonstrated statistical soundness and theoretical depth. The implications are clear: FMCG firms in Rivers State can no longer afford to operate in isolation—they must engage with external performance ecosystems and institutionalize benchmarking as a continuous management tool. Therefore, the study recommends that:

i. FMCG firms should establish competitor intelligence units or assign cross-functional teams to monitor rival product launches, pricing strategies, and market campaigns.
ii. FMCG firms should periodically assess their responsiveness using benchmarking tools such as gap analysis and contingency modeling.
iii. Leaders of FMCG firms should evaluate long-term planning models and governance structures from benchmarked firms and integrate them into strategic development sessions.
iv. Strategic benchmarking must be embedded into enterprise risk management and innovation cycles. FMCG firms should develop dynamic capability dashboards informed by insights from strategic peers beyond the FMCG sector.

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