A STUDY OF COMPETENCY AS A DRIVER FOR BUSINESS PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN BANKS

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian banking industry plays a critical role in its economy because of a number of jobs generated, contributing to financial stability due to the financial services provided by the banks. As Nigeria becomes tirelessly active in its pursuit of global economic integration and recognition, the entry of international banks in the Nigerian banking industry will increase, therefore, competition will, too. As a result, recognising the importance of competencies and competency frameworks to the bank's performance becomes important in improving the bank's core competencies and competitiveness. A critical review of the literature reveals that many researchers lay emphasis on the importance of competencies on performance. However, there is a lack of empirical study on competence in Nigerian banks. Therefore, this study investigates the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks.

In order to achieve this aim, the researcher conducted a field survey of ten Nigerian banks and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) with the use of qualitative semi-structured interviews. The researcher conducted thirty-one interviews with the staff of the ten selected banks and the CBN. Consequently, the interview data collected was analysed using Nvivo in order to achieve the aim of the research.

The findings revealed that Nigerian banks do use competencies which are influencing the performance of the banks. Findings from this research support the findings of other international research on competencies; therefore, suggesting the theory of competency and performance applies to Nigerian banks. This research contributes to existing literature, which highlights the strategic and operational importance of competencies on performance by focusing on Nigerian banks. In conclusion, this research proposes a wider sample size covering all the banks in Nigeria and using both qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide a more accurate finding on the influence of competency in Nigerian banks.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AT	Agency Theory
BSC	Balanced Scorecard
CAQDAS	Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis System
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
CEE	Capital Efficiency
CF	Competency Framework
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CM	Competency Mapping
CRA	Criterion-Referenced Assessment
DIC	Direct Intellectual Capital
EVA™	Economic Value Added Versus Profit-Based Measures of Performance
FMF	Federal Ministry of Finance
FSRCC	Financial Services Regulation Coordinating Committee
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
HCE	Human Capital Efficiency
HCE	Human Capital Efficiency
HR	Human Resource

HRM	Human Resource Management
IAM	Intangible Assets Monitor
IC	Intellectual Capital
IC-Index	Intellectual Capital Index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KSA	Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
MCM	Market Capitalization Methods
MINT	Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Turkey
NAICOM	National Insurance Commission
NBCB	National Board for Community Banks
NDIC	Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
RBV	Resource-Based View
ROA	Return on Assets
SC	Scorecard Methods
SC	Structural Capital
SCE	Structural Capital Efficiency
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SHRM	Strategic Human Resource Management

ST	Stakeholder Theory
TM	Talent Management
VA	Value Added

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AUTHORS DECLARATION

This is to declare that this thesis is my original work and written by me. I am solely responsible for the whole work. All the verbatim extracts have been distinguished and the sources have specifically acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that this thesis has not been submitted to any other institution within a degree programme and any mistakes in this thesis are of my sole responsibility.

DEDICATION

This PhD research is dedicated to the loving memory of my late father Mr Sunday E Adefe, who unfortunately didn't stay in this world long enough to see his son become a doctor.

Chapter One - Introduction

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Over the last 30 years, there has been a significant volume of empirical research in the field of competency-based managements (CIPD, 2016; Pace, 2016; Van Esch *et al*., 2016). This is because, at present, organisations are experiencing stiff competition both locally and internationally. As a result, organisations now aim to achieve optimum performance from their employees by developing their skills and competencies to ensure long-term success. Literature and best practice suggest that, if organisations treat their employees as valuable contributors to achieving the organisational goals and objectives, employees will remain committed to the shared goals and values of the organisation (Pace, 2016; Tripathi and Agrawal, 2014; Van Esch *et al*., 2016). However, even with the tremendous amount of studies on competencies available today, a lack of empirical studies investigating the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks still provides a gap in relation to understanding competencies in the Nigerian context, hence, the need for this research. The quest to clarify the key factors of competitive advantage for organizations have revealed that employee competencies are resources that enable organisations to generate profits and maintain their competitive edge over rival organisations (Díaz-Fernández, 2014; Kumar and Pansari, 2016). As a result, this has encouraged the significant need for organisations to improve their people management practice in order to achieve the desired goals of the organisational mission (Misra and Sharma, 2016; Santana *et. al*., 2017). In the past, researchers have traditionally viewed competitive advantages as barriers to entry as economies of scale, access to capital, and regulated competition, which was initially popularised by Porter (Díaz-Fernández, 2014; Kumar and Pansari, 2016). Researchers have also revealed that competitive advantage is the ability of an organisation to manage its human resources strategically, in a manner that rival organisations find it difficult to acquire or imitate (Santana *et. al*., 2017). The ever-increasing competitive business environment that banks now operate in has further reinforced the significance of managing people as a critical source for competitive advantage. This is due to the simplicity of acquiring or imitating other sources of advantages like technology, organisational structure and business strategy. Therefore, banking organisations now seek to understand how their human resources can be effectively managed and aligned with their overall business strategy in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. This research seeks to analyse the influence of competency based HR interventions in a more effective organisational performance and how these systems can be combined effectively in order to improve bank performance in Nigerian, using qualitative methods underpinned by the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm and the strategic human resource management (SHRM). The resource-based view to strategic human resource management (SHRM) focuses on the difficulty to copy attributes of the firm as the fundamental drivers of performance and competitive advantage (Díaz-Fernández, 2014). In relation to the understanding of the resource-based view of the firm, Barney (1991) described competitive advantage as "when a firm is implementing a value creating strategy not at the same time being implemented by any current or potential competitors". The idea is to maintain this competitive advantage in such a way that competitors' efforts to copy that advantage are frustrated and eventually terminated (Barney, 1991; Kumar and Pansari, 2016). The resource-based view focuses on the promotion of sustained competitive advantage through the development of the human capital rather than merely aligning human resources to current strategic goals (Kaufman, 2015). Competency framework can be said to be the glue that links the aspiration of making people competitive and seeing these assets with the reality of the business which enables organisations to measure, monitors and plan with it. Hence, if Nigerian banks get the competency profile right it will help achieve sustainable competitive advantage, which could lead to improved performance. In turn, the possibility of influencing the economy has been critically linked to the economic futures of any economy. The competency framework describes the combination of knowledge, skills and characteristics needed to effectively perform a role in an organisation and is used as a human resource tool for selection, training and development, appraisal and succession planning, identifying and mapping these competencies is rather complex. This research seeks to investigate the influence of competencies based on the performance of Nigeria banks.

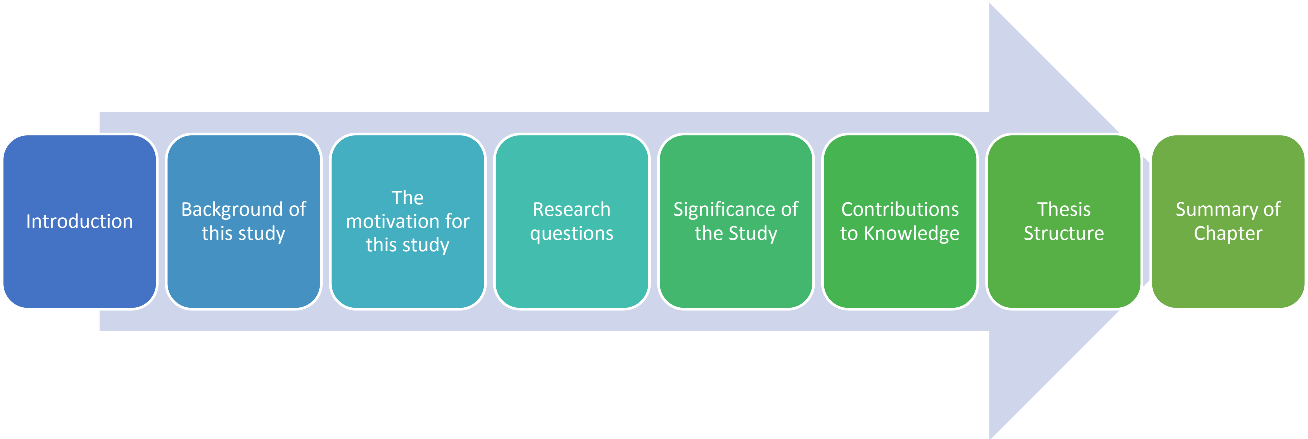
For the purpose of this study, competency is defined as a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affects a major part of one's job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development (Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999). This study makes use of this definition of competency as it best describes the idea. In most cases, job description only presents a list of responsibilities or expected results of the job; competencies on the other hand, are viewed broadly and include many other factors that influences job success but are not included in the job description. For example, optimism and pessimism are considered attitudinal terms and are not listed in job descriptions (Sheard *et al*., 2013). In the same way, personal traits are also different from competencies. People bring their underlying physical and mental traits into the workplace; these traits include qualities such as diligence, which researchers consider inherent or learned early in life and not at work (McWilliams and Nahavandi, 2006; CIPD, 2016). Similarly, researchers have documented the distinction between competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities (Cetin *et al*., 2016; Rutledge *et al*., 2016). According to these researchers, knowledge refers to the body of information about the theoretical and practical understanding of a subject, acquired by a person through experience or education. Skills on the other hand, refer to the application of data or information with manual, verbal, or mental proficiency. Skills can be tested to measure the quantity and quality of an individual's performance, usually within an established time limit (Cetin *et al*., 2016;

Rutledge *et al*., 2016). Ability refers to the sufficiency of strength to accomplish a task, especially the physical and mental quality to perform these activities (Hsieh *et al*., 2012; Cetin *et al*., 2016; CIPD, 2016; Rutledge *et al*., 2016; Vaishya *et al*., 2016). These KSAs are fundamental aspects of the individual's competencies; however, the competencies are more behaviour-based rather than skill-based. To sum this up, each competency requires several KSAs, while KSAs can be the cause of competencies just as personal traits may be the cause of competencies; the KSAs are not exactly competencies. That is to say that having the KSAs does not automatically mean that one has a certain competency (Hsieh *et al*., 2012; Vaishya *et al*., 2016). What Hsieh *et al*., (2012) suggests is that an individual may know how to carry out a certain task; however, they may lack the proficiency to carry out the task in an excellent manner (Hsieh *et al*., 2012; Vaishya *et al*., 2016).

The alignment of competency-based management systems and the strategic human resource management has played a pivotal role in many organizations as it drives the organization's core competitive advantage by mobilizing all of its available resources, monitoring performances and shaping strategies. According to the behavioural approach to emotional, cognitive and social intelligence competencies, competence fall within the domain of human talent that can be developed (Boyatzis, 2009; Almatrooshi *et al*., 2016). The concept of competency has become a persistent topic of discussion in the management literature since David McClelland (1973) first proposed the term some 40 years ago (McClelland, 1973; Almatrooshi *et al*., 2016). It has evolved from a new way of thinking to a commonly accepted practice world-over in terms of critical differentiator of performance. Nevertheless, the concept remains indefinable, as there is hardly any consensus on the conceptualization of competency. Various other authors have sparked debates about the conceptual and terminological differences supported by the various management schools of thought mainly from the West. However, one unquestionable consensus of every literature reviewed by the researcher is on the importance and the relevance of competency to the performance of an individual and the organizations (Boyatzis, 2008, 2009; Winterton, 2009; Lester *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the literature revealed that the focus of most of the competency research in recent times seems to have focused on the identification and validation of competencies (CIPD, 2016). Robert W. White (1959) is arguably one of the earliest advocates that were critical to the existing tendency to relate cognitive intelligence with outstanding job performance (Almatrooshi *et al*., 2016). He specified that an individual's effectiveness could be predicted from his or her "*interaction with the environment*". However, it was not until 1973 when David McClelland introduced the concept of "*testing for competence*" (McClelland, 1973) that it was clear to him that the "context-free testing" for aptitude could not predict effective job performance and was methodically biased. This concept, however, later became the new "*critical differentiator of performance*" (Boyatzis, 2008, p.5). In addition, the research by Goleman (1990) went on to suggest that traditional testing for cognitive intelligence tells us just a little about what it takes to be successful in life and in business because cognitive and non-cognitive abilities are very much related (Sternberg, 2000). By revising the key literatures in the area of HR competencies, the researcher discovered that many researchers in the field of competency believe there is a link between competencies and performance. However, there is a gap in the competency literature in terms of influencing performance in the Nigerian banking industry. This research investigates the progress made by the CBN competency framework in the Nigerian banking industry, with a focus on the bank reactions to the CBN competency framework and evaluating the viability, sustainability and impact of the framework in order to establish the extent at which the CBN competency framework supports Nigerian banks in achieving business performance. Therefore, this research provides insight into the influence of competency on the performance of Nigerian banks.

This chapter compromise of a brief introduction and structure of the research. The remainder of this chapter is explained as follows: section 1.2 defines the background of this research, this is necessary because it highlight's setting of this study. The researcher presented the motivations for conducting this study in section 1.3 of this study. In addition, section 1.4 reveals the research questions this research intends to investigate, 1.5 highlights the significance of the study whereas section 1.6 provides the probable contributions to knowledge this research will make to the existing competency literature. Section 1.7 covers the overall chapter structure of this research and section 1.8 summarises this chapter.

Figure 1.1 Chapter Structure



1.2 Background of this study

The 2008 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) highlighted the importance of banking organizations to the economy. Because of this crisis and the ever-changing dynamic nature of the banking environment, banks are now reassessing their strategies in order to improve on their general performance. The past 30 years have emphasized the tremendous importance of competencies on organisational performance in developed and developing countries alike. In addition, the competency research over the last three decades has repeatedly demonstrated the links between the people management systems and improved business performance (Spencer, 1998; Sypniewska, 2013; CIPD, 2016; McKivor, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016). Recent researchers have also focused on the ways competencies are shaping the future and investigating the drivers of sustainable organisation performance (CIPD, 2016). Based on this perception, the competency-based approaches to managing and developing employees have gained enormous significance in studying organisational performance (Soderquist *et al.*, 2010). Amidst overwhelming support for competency-based management, the question regarding the assessment and applicability of competencies in organizational practice arises. The notion of assessment of competency remains a great challenge for researchers (Boyatzis, 2006); indeed 'multidimensional' and 'multicultural' construct of competency create problems in establishing the precise definition of competency (Erondu and Sharland, 2002; Boyatzis *et al*., 2017). Therefore, competency-based management is a technology HR uses and it does offer the potential of new techniques for HR, as a way of unlocking the issues of impact and measuring things in a coherent way. Boyatzis (2009) defined competency as a "*capability or ability*". It is a set of related but different sets of behaviour organized around an "*underlying construct*", which is called the "*intent*". These behaviours are alternate manifestations of the "*intent*", as appropriate in various situations or times (Boyatzis, 2009; Boyatzis *et al*., 2017). According to Boyatzis (2009) the construction of both this competencies are required for action (i.e., a set of both alternative behaviours) and intent called for measurement methods that makes room for reassessment of both the presence of "*behaviour and inference of intent*". It is also important to note that the basis for understanding which "*behaviour*" and which "intent" is relevant in a situation, emerge from predicting effectiveness (Boyatzis, 2009; Boyatzis *et al*., 2017). The various definitions have also promised performance benefits, which include the causal or instrumental relationship of competencies and job performance (Boyatzis 1982; CIPD, 2016; Boyatzis *et al*., 2017). In addition, CIPD (2016) has observed that the competency literature includes a huge range of claimed benefits specific to HR processes in organisations, and they are summarised as follows:

> *Improved recruitment and selection practices through a focus on required competencies; improved individual, organisational and career development programmes; improved performance management processes due to improved assessment; and lastly Improved communication on strategic and HR issues through a common language.*

Competency analysis and framework provides HR with a strategic insight into some key issues on how people behave, what they would do, their disposition and ability to change. As a result, competencies as a topic is attracting overwhelming attention in various fields, including HR professionals and academic research alike (Almatrooshi *et al*., 2016; CIPD, 2016). The researcher will investigate the opportunities of competencies through a Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) that is rooted in the resource-based view of the firm (RBV). The principle of the RBV hinges on the belief that a firm derives its competitive advantage from the organisation's distinct resources that are non-substitutable, valuable to the organisation, rare to rivals, and imperfectly imitable (Kaufman, 2015). Kaufman (2015) further stated that these resources could be either tangible or intangible resources. Although, the tangible resources are valuable to the organisation's competitive advantage, however, they are relatively easy to replicate due to their transparent nature. Intangible resources such as the organisation's reputation, employee competence, the culture of the organisation, and other intangible aspects of the organisation are the most important resources for sustaining a continuous competitive advantage (Kaufman, 2015). This view provides the bases for investigating competencies in organisations, as employee competencies now form a major source of competitive advantage for organisations.

There is hardly any theoretical research on SHRM over the past couple of decades that was not underpinned by the RBV theory. As a result, this researcher has highlighted some of the research on SHRM that were underpinned by the RBV theories. The researcher chose these studies either because they specifically attempt to build on the resource-based theory or because they tend to be most frequently cited within the SHRM literature and at least tangentially rely on resource-based logic. In an early application, Huselid (1995) argued at a general level that HR practices could help create a source of competitive advantage, particularly if they are aligned with the firm's competitive strategy (Huselid 1995; Gooderham *et al*., 2008; Sparrow *et al*., 2016). His study revealed a relationship between HR practices and employee turnover, gross rate of return on assets and Tobin's Q. The study received considerable attention because it demonstrated that HR practices could have a profound impact on both accounting and market based measures to performance. Koch and McGrath (1996) took a similar logic in their study of the relationship between HR planning, recruitment, staffing practices and labour productivity (Koch and McGrath, 1996; García-Lillo *et al*., 2016; Lin and Tang, 2016). They argued that, "*A highly productive workforce is likely to have attributes that make it a particularly valuable strategic asset*". They suggested that organisations that develop effective routines for acquiring human assets develop a stock of talent not easily imitated. They found that these HR practices were related to labour productivity in a sample of business units and that this relationship was stronger in capital-intensive organizations (García-Lillo *et al*., 2016; Lin and Tang, 2016). Lepak and Snell (1999) asked executives to describe the HR systems that existed for jobs that represented particular quadrants of their model (Lepak and Snell 1999; Morris *et al*., 2016). They found considerable support for the idea that the value and uniqueness of skills are associated with different types of HR systems within the same organization (García-Lillo *et al*., 2016; Lin and Tang, 2016). These results were mostly consistent with the Lepak and Snell (1999) model and supported the basic proposition that diverse HR strategies exist within firms. A recent study (Lepak, Takeuchi and Snell, 2001; Lin and Tang, 2016) indicated that a combination of knowledge work and contract labour was associated with higher firm performance (Messersmith *et al*., 2011; Bakker *et al*., 2015). Their findings did not only raise some interesting ideas about the development of valuable human resources, but also highlight the importance of combinations of various types used in conjunction with one another. In another case of examining the human capital pool, Richard (2001) used resource- based logic to examine the impact of racial diversity on firm performance. He argued that diversity provides value through ensuring a variety of perspectives that it is rare in that very few firms have achieved significant levels of diversity, and that the socially complex dynamics inherent in diversity lead to its imitation. In a research performed on banks in terms of performance, diversity was positively related to productivity, return on equity, and market performance for firms engaged in a growth strategy, but negatively related for firms downsizing (Delery and Gupta, 2016). In an effort to look beyond human capital pool alone, Youndt and Snell (2001) studied the differential effects of HR practices on human capital, social capital, and organizational capital. They found that intensive/extensive staffing, competitive pay, intensive/extensive training and promotion from within policies were most important for distinguishing high levels of human capital in organizations (Delery and Gupta, 2016). In contrast, broad banding, compressed wages, team structures, socialization, mentoring, and group incentives distinguished those with high social capital (i.e., relationships that engender knowledge exchange) but had very little effect on human capital itself. Finally, organizational capital (i.e., knowledge embedded in the organization's systems and processes) was established most through lessons learned data- bases and HR policies that reinforced knowledge capture and access (Delery and Gupta, 2016). For these reasons, the researcher has decided to use SHRM and RBV as the theoretical framework for this study. By aligning competencies with SHRM, the competency-based management systems becomes vital to achieving competitive advantage because it enables the organization to assess the current human resource capacity based on their competencies against the capacity needed to achieve the vision, mission and business goals of the organization. The performance management literature has documented several models used for measuring and managing performance. The models all have their advantages and disadvantages in terms of how they measure and report performance. The importance of the performance management systems is expressed in the constant improvement to the organisational performance that is achieved through enhanced individual staff performance (Timperley and Robinson, 1998; Macky and Johnson, 2000; Metasebiya and Lelissa, 2016). In the same way, Lawler (2003) suggested that the objectives of performance management systems often include the motivation of staff performance, assisting individual employees to develop their skills and abilities, creating a performance based culture, performance based promotion, identifying and eliminating poor performance, and supporting the implementation of the organisations strategy. As a result, performance management systems are designed to ensure that: the duties performed by the originations workforce achieve the goals of the organisation; the employees have a faultless understanding of their performance expectations; the employees receive continuous information on improving the effectiveness of their performance and what is expected of them; employee rewards commemorate employee performance; identifies developmental needs.

The choice for researcher the performance of banks in the Nigerian banking sector is simple. Undeniably, the stability of the banking sector can influence the activities of many organisations locally or internationally. Shi *et al.*, (2016) also highlighted the risk banks faced because of the 2008 GFC (Shi *et al.*, 2016). Since 1974, there has been 18 banking crisis around the world. Each shared a period of great financial liberalization and prosperity that preceded the crisis, and researchers like (Lo A. W, 2008; Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011; O'Reilly, *et al.*, 2011; Kerr and Robinson, 2011; Argandona, 2012; Hosking, 2012) have argued the 2008 GFC was because of unethical leadership practice. This has, however, questioned the leadership and management practices of many financial institutions, prompting a new wave of thinking and research about what could and should replace them. This crisis has produced changes in the aspirations and practice of leadership in banks, influencing not just banks and brokerage houses but businesses in every industry. This view questions the trends in leadership over the past 30 years, and predicts some new and back-to-basic actions we can expect from bank leaders. It also highlights the swift changes in board practices and articulates some clear direction for change both in the structure for governance and management, and in the characteristics that leaders will have to display (Mavridis and Kyrmizoglou, 2005; Chen Goh, 2005; Reed *et al*., 2006, 2009; Nhuta, 2016). This crisis has become a powerful catalyst for change in both the theory and practice of leadership and governance in the global financial sector. As a result, the banking industry presents the ideal context for exploring the influence of competencies on organisational performance.

1.3 The motivation for this study

Since the 2008 GFC, governments as well as central banks all around the world have adopted several approaches in order to deal with the financial crisis experienced in their countries (CBN, 2012). Like any other developing country, Nigeria felt the effects of the financial crisis mostly through international trade and capital in-flows due to the openness of the Nigerian economy and complete dependency on the exportation of crude oil as the main source of revenue for the Nigerian government. The impact of the GFC was not as direct or troubling in Nigeria as it was in some other developed countries, however, the ‘soundness and stability’ of the Nigerian banking industry was seriously threatened by the GFC, prompting a decisive intervention by the CBN to soften the developing crisis in the Nigerian economy and restore public confidence (CBN, 2012). According to the CBN, the GFC exposed the inadequacy of skills and dearth of executive capacity in the Nigerian banking industry. The skills gap as identified by CBN (2012) are as follows: the lack of in-depth knowledge of basic banking operations; poor understanding of basic banking operations; unethical conduct and unprofessional practices; poor risk management and corporate governance practices;

knowledge gaps in financial markets and treasury management; knowledge gaps in business development practices and poor relationship management techniques (CBN, 2012).

According to the CBN report (CBN, 2012), the reasons for these inadequacies includes the lack of a coordinated industry recognised training accreditation and certification system and a competency standard for practitioners in the Nigerian banking industry. Therefore, the CBN decided a development of staff competencies is necessary in addressing the identified problems, underscoring the need to train a new generation of banking professionals that are knowledgeable, skilled and competent to develop and deliver exemplary banking products and services to stakeholders which can better position Nigerian banks in the global financial market (CBN, 2012). Considering the scope for this research, and the fact that the researcher is Nigerian, it is of personal interest to explore ways of improving banking strategies and performance in Nigerian banks in order to enable Nigerian banks perform better and not only improve on the economy but also act more competitively on an international level. As stated earlier in Section 1.1 of this chapter, numerous researchers in developed and other developed countries have tried to understand the impact on organisational performance and have researched competencies. However, according to the researcher's knowledge, Nigerian banks lack in this area. The links between competencies and bank performance in Nigerian banks lack clarity and understanding of how this would work in the Nigerian banking sector. In addition, the opportunity of gaining access to banks in Nigeria presents an opportunity to the researcher, therefore, providing the researcher with an opportunity to study the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks.

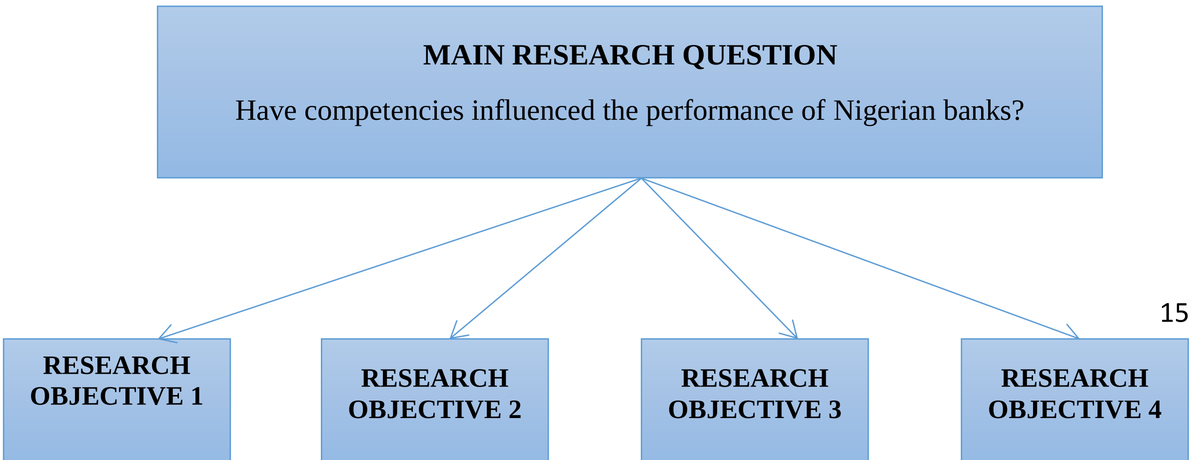
1.4 Research questions

In order to achieve the aim of exploring the role of competency based management systems in Nigerian banks, the central research question investigated in this study is "Have competencies influence the performance of Nigerian banks?" In order to answer this research question, the researcher created four key research objectives using the qualitative studies. The four key research objectives that underpin the above research questions are as follows:

- **Research Objective 1**: To investigate the existing frameworks in the selected Nigerian banks and their similarities with the CBN competency framework.
- **Research Objective 2**: To examine the management consistency of the framework, and whom the framework applies to within the banks.
- **Research Objective 3**: To examine the alignment of the framework in the banks' HR systems and processes.
- **Research Objective 4**: To investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of the selected case study banks.

See Section (3.1) of Chapter three for the justification for selection the main research question and objectives.

Figure 1.2 Approach to findings



1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for two specific reasons:

Academic Insight

This study promotes ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and the practical understanding of the influence of competency on performance.

Therefore, this study is a step towards theory building in relation to the influence of competency on the performance of Nigerian banks. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks as proposed by researchers and practitioners in developing and developed countries alike. In addition, this study contributes to the empirical knowledge of competencies because the study reveals the nature of the competency-performance relationship in the Nigerian banking sector.

Policy Development

This research enlightens the policy-makers in the Nigeria banking industry of the current practice of competencies. It also raises awareness of the importance of competencies as an important strategic function, which could help Nigerian banks to achieve their strategic goals and it gives a better understanding of how competency frameworks in terms of approach and implementation. Having identified and analysed the current position of competencies, with reference to the best practice and emergent academic research, this study provides useful guidelines to assist banks in Nigeria in deriving a better understanding of the role of competencies in organisations' development and success. Based on the above, the study will enlighten the Nigerian banking industry with regard to effective competency approach.

1.6 Contributions to Knowledge

According to the literatures on competencies, if Nigerian banks are able to get the competency profiles right and then manage these competencies in terms of performance relations and developmental relations, then, arguably that ought to drive all sorts of management decisions and feedback to staff. In addition, they would be able to rebalance the links between the appropriate corporate due diligence decisions and notions as supposed to sales and revenue.

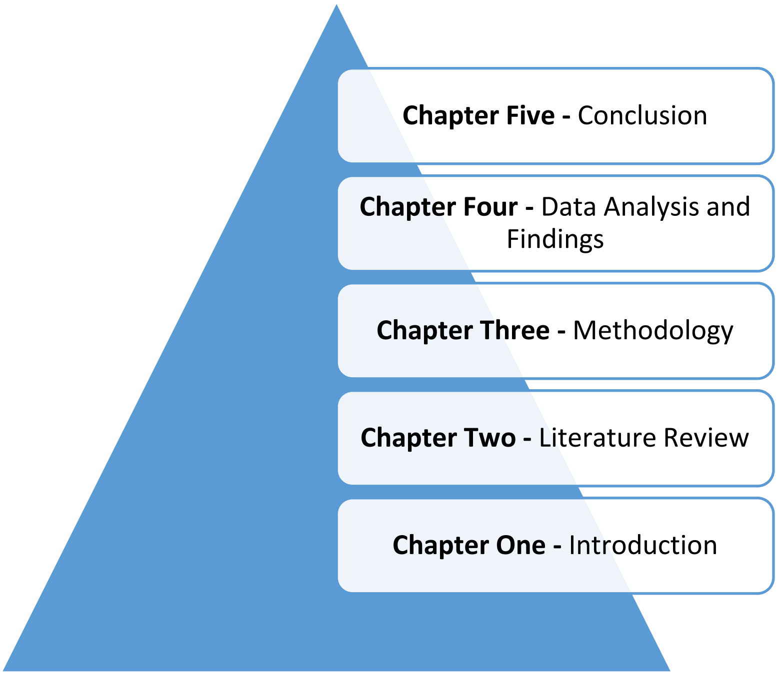
A significant number of researchers have actively researched ways to clarify the connections between competencies and organisational performance. Recent research literature has highlighted the complexity and provided ways in which competencies are developed. It is widely accepted that competencies do have an influence on organisational performance (Spencer, 1998; Sypniewska, 2013; Tripathi and Agrawal, 2014; CIPD, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016). However, gaps exist in the understanding on the relationships that exist between competencies and performance in Nigerian banks, therefore, highlighting the need for the researcher to investigate the gap that expressed in understanding the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks and add to the already existing body of knowledge.

This research identifies the limitations in the literature to enable the reader to understand the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks. The research, therefore, contributes to knowledge by investigating the influence of competence on the performance of Nigerian banks, therefore, filling the identified gap. Specifically, the research produced an empirical study across ten Nigerian banks that strategically reviewed how competencies influence performance in these banks. The combination of knowledge, skills and other personal characteristics that are necessary for the effective performance of the banks are included in the competency framework, and the theories on the influence of competency on performance from previous studies comply with the result of this research.

1.7 Thesis Structure

This section presents the structure of the study and the rest of this thesis:

Figure 1.3: Thesis Outline



Chapter Two: Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to review the relevant literature that is significant to achieving the aim of this study, which is to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks. By reviewing this literature, the researcher will reveals how this research fits into the overall setting of research in the field of competency. The researcher will achieve this by outlining the current state of research in the field of competencies; analyse the major debates concerning competencies and their relevance to this study.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter explains the research design and processes used to structure this study and also explain how all the key parts of this study fit together to answer the research question including the methodology approach adopted, namely qualitative methods that supports the use of inductive approach. The chapter also describes the adopted approach for designing the research tool, conducting the interviews, the data analysis strategy, the data analysis method, and most importantly the justification for their selection.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

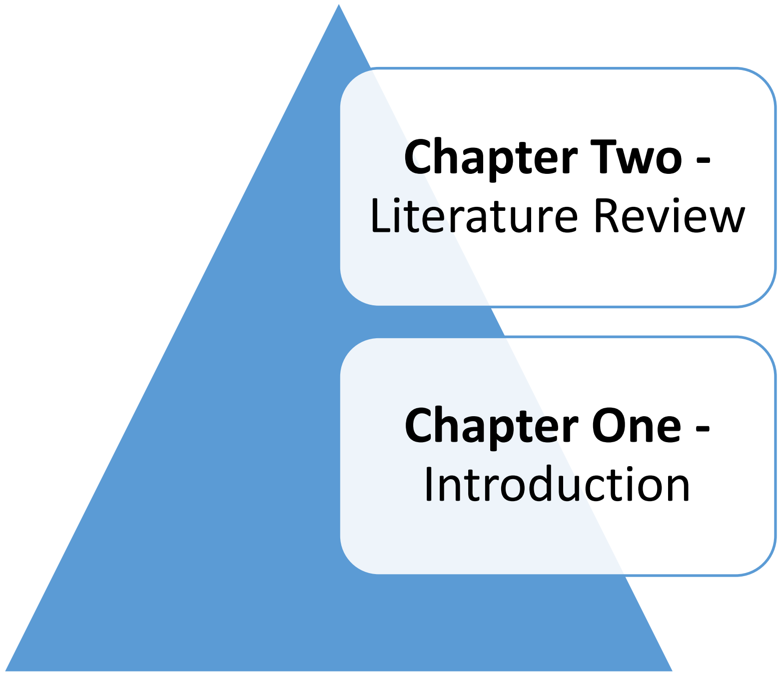
This chapter presented and discussed the findings from the data analysis chapter and the key findings from the research questions.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter concludes the research by presenting the key findings from the aim and objectives of the research, the research contribution to knowledge and recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with the researcher's personal reflection on learning throughout the process of the doctoral research.

1.8 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presents the background and context of the research. By doing so, the chapter outlines the main research question, "Have competencies influenced the performance of Nigerian banks?" and specifies the research objectives for the study. The chapter further identifies the motivation behind the selection of the research topic, the contribution to knowledge and the setting of this research. In addition, the chapter presents the structure of this research and a brief summary of each chapter. The next chapter provides an in-depth reflection on the main themes of this research, by exploring the competency literature, which is deeply rooted in the resource-based view theory and strategic human resource management theory, in order to understand the competency links to performance.



CHAPTER TWO

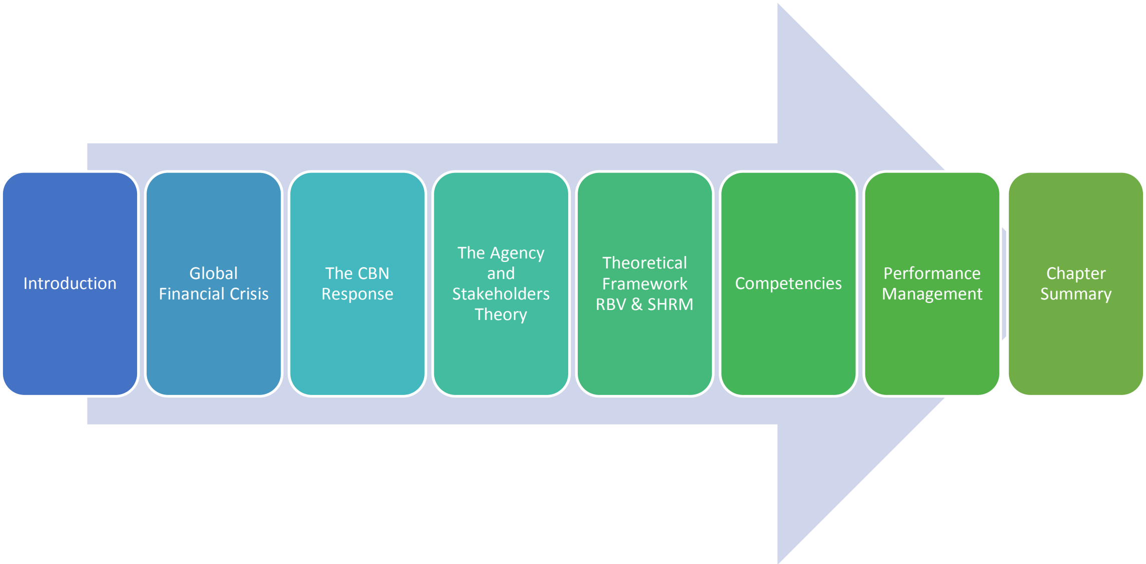
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the background and context of this research. The chapter outlined the main research question and objectives for this study. The chapter further identified the motivation behind the selection of the research topic, the contribution to knowledge, setting of this research, structure of this research and a brief summary of each chapter. This chapter reviews the key literature that underpins the research area critical to understanding the influence of competency on performance. In order to demonstrate how the research fits within the larger field of study, the chapter identifies the gap in the competency literature, traces the intellectual progress made in the field of competencies and the major debates by previous authors. The research aim of this thesis is to answer the following research question: “Have competencies influence the performance of Nigerian banks?” To answer this research question and understand the influence of competency on performance, the researcher explores the competency literature, which is profoundly entrenched in the resource-based view theory and strategic human resource management theory.

Other international studies have identified the influence of competency on organisational performance (Spencer, 1998; Sypniewska, 2013; Tripathi and Agrawal, 2014; CIPD, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016); however, no empirical research has shown if this theory is true with Nigerian banks being a developing country. This absence of empirical data on the influence of competency on the performance of Nigerian banks has created a gap in the competency literature with a focus on Nigerian banks. Over the past 30 years, the significance of competencies and competency frameworks has been widely researched because of its promised benefits to organisational performance (CIPD, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016). Based on this promise, the CBN has decided to introduce a competency framework for Nigerian banks in order to solve the identified lack of executive capacity in banking leaders in Nigeria which was exposed by the GFC of 2008 (CBN, 2012). Against this backdrop, the researcher has investigated the 2008 GFC and the debates around the crisis to explain how the GFC has influenced the competency framework in Nigeria. Since the CBN has imposed a competency framework for Nigerian banks, it is important to explain the relationship between the CBN and Nigerian banks in order to understand this relationship and the possible problems that may arise. The researcher will explain this relationship using the stakeholders and agency theory to explain the nature of their relationship. Once established by the researcher, the research will then review the competency literature and the rationale for the competency framework using the RBV and SHRM as the theoretical underpinning for this research. The structure for this chapter is as follows:

Figure 2.1 Chapter Structure



2.1 The Global Financial Crisis

This section reviews the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008 and the significance to this research.

2.2 The CBN Response

This section reviews the CBN response to the impact of the global financial crisis (GFC) on the Nigerian economy, and the rationale for introducing the competency framework for Nigerian banks.

2.3 Agency Theory and Stakeholder Theory

This section explains the relationship between the CBN and Nigerian banks using the agency and stakeholder's theory to explain the authority of the CBN on Nigerian banks, and the possible problems that may arise by introducing the competency framework.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This section discusses the theoretical underpinning for this research by reviewing the resource-based view of the firm, and the Strategic Human Resource Management. This is because the competency-based management system and the promised influence on performance are heavily rooted in the resource-based view theory of the firm and the strategy human resource management theory. Without these theories, there is no theoretical justification for suggesting the influence of competencies on performance.

2.5 Competencies

This section defines competencies, potential benefits of the competency approach and debates, leadership competency framework, impact of leadership behaviour on organizational performance, competency frameworks for organisational managements, and application of competency frameworks and the possible influence on performance.

2.6 Performance Management

This section defines performance and the concept of performance management. It also discusses the theoretical basis for performance management in organisations and some measures of non-financial performance.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This section concludes the chapter by providing a summary of what the chapter discussed.

2.1 The Global Financial Crisis

In 2008, the world experienced an unprecedented global financial crisis (GFC) that affected the global economy. This has since raised questions about the leadership and management practices of financial institutions, prompting a wave of thinking and research about what could and should replace them. The GFC has produced changes in the aspirations and practice in organisational management, influencing not just banks and brokerage houses but businesses in every industry. Argandona (2012) on what was a working paper at the time argued that the 2008 financial crisis was a problem of governance. Kerr and Robinson (2011) also supported this view. They revealed, through the analysis of a series of historically situated crisis, how competition between senior banking leaders for positions of domination within the field of elite banking in Scotland, the UK and globally, eventually contributed to the destruction of the banks themselves as independent institutions. They believe that the "*Bourdieusian*" approach to leader – leader relations can explain the apparently '*irrational*' behaviours of the banking leaders in the recent GFC. Similarly, Simon Johnson, a professor of entrepreneurship at the MIT Sloan School of Management and former chief economist at the IMF from 2007 to 2008. Simon Johnson believed that powerful elites caused the GFC, and he called it banking "*oligarchy*" that overreached in good times and took too many risks as he wrote in an article for *The Atlantic*, "*Elite business interests played a central role in creating the crisis, making ever-larger gambles, with the implicit backing of the government, until the inevitable collapse*." (Cited by *Cate Reavis, 2012*)

In a context apparently overwhelmed by the GFC, leadership theories in recent years have intensified their focus on ethics (Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011). This trend, supported by the persistent recording of business malfeasance and corruption in the last decade has led to the collapse of corporations such as Enron in the United States, HIH Insurance in Australia, and the Libor scandal in the United Kingdom. At the central of media recording on the GFC was the idea that the credit crisis was brought about by unethical bankers and poor management (O'Reilly *et al*., 2011; Willmott, 2011; Hosking, 2012). The GFC highlights the swift changes in board practices and articulates some clear direction for change both in the structure for governance and management, and in the characteristics that leaders will have to display (Mavridis and Kyrmizoglou, 2005; Chen Goh, 2005; Reed *et al*., 2006, 2009). This crisis has become a powerful catalyst for change in both the theory and practice of senior executives in the global financial sector (Dullien, *et al*., 2010; CIGI, 2013).

2.2 The CBN Response

According to the central bank of Nigeria (CBN), the 2008 global financial crisis (GFC) exposed the inadequacy of skills and dearth of executive capacity in the Nigerian banking industry (CBN, 2012). This statement by the CBN aligns with the opinion of other international authors on what the GFC has revealed as the underlining cause of the GFC. This competency gap, as identified by the CBN (2012) manifested in the lack of in-depth knowledge of basic banking operations; poor understanding of basic banking operations; unethical conduct and unprofessional practices; poor risk management and corporate governance practices; knowledge gaps in financial markets and treasury management; knowledge gaps in business development practices; and poor relationship management techniques (CBN, 2012). In addition, the reasons for these inadequacies as stated by the CBN include the lack of a coordinated industry recognised training accreditation and certification system and a competency standard for practitioners in the Nigerian banking industry. As a result, the CBN has emphasised the need to develop a competency framework for Nigerian banks. In order to address the identified inadequacies, the CBN emphasised the need to train a new generation of banking professionals that are knowledgeable, skilled and competent to develop and deliver exemplary banking products and services to stakeholders, which will better position Nigerian banks in the global financial market (CBN, 2012). The CBN, being the apex bank in Nigeria with its main supervisory function as stated by the Nigerian constitutionalist to maintain the external reserves of the country, promote monetary stability and a sound financial environment, and to act as a banker of last resort and financial adviser to the federal government. In order for the CBN to achieve its statutory objective, the CBN has authorized the banks in Nigeria to provide banking services in the Nigerian economy. Therefore, having regulatory authority over other banks in Nigeria and providing the CBN with the legal justification for imposing a competency framework on Nigerian banks (CBN, 2016). In the next section, the researcher will put this relationship in perspective by analysing the relationship using the stakeholders and agency theory.

2.3 Agency Theory and Stakeholder Theory

The researcher has adopted the agency theory and the stakeholder theory to analyse the relationship between Nigerian banks and the CBN. The researcher is aware of other theories that investigate this view; however, the researcher will focus just on the agency theory and the stakeholders' theory. The reason for using the Agency theory for this research is because the theory clearly presents the conflicts of interest between principal and agency vastly used in the management literature.

2.3.1 Review of Agency theory

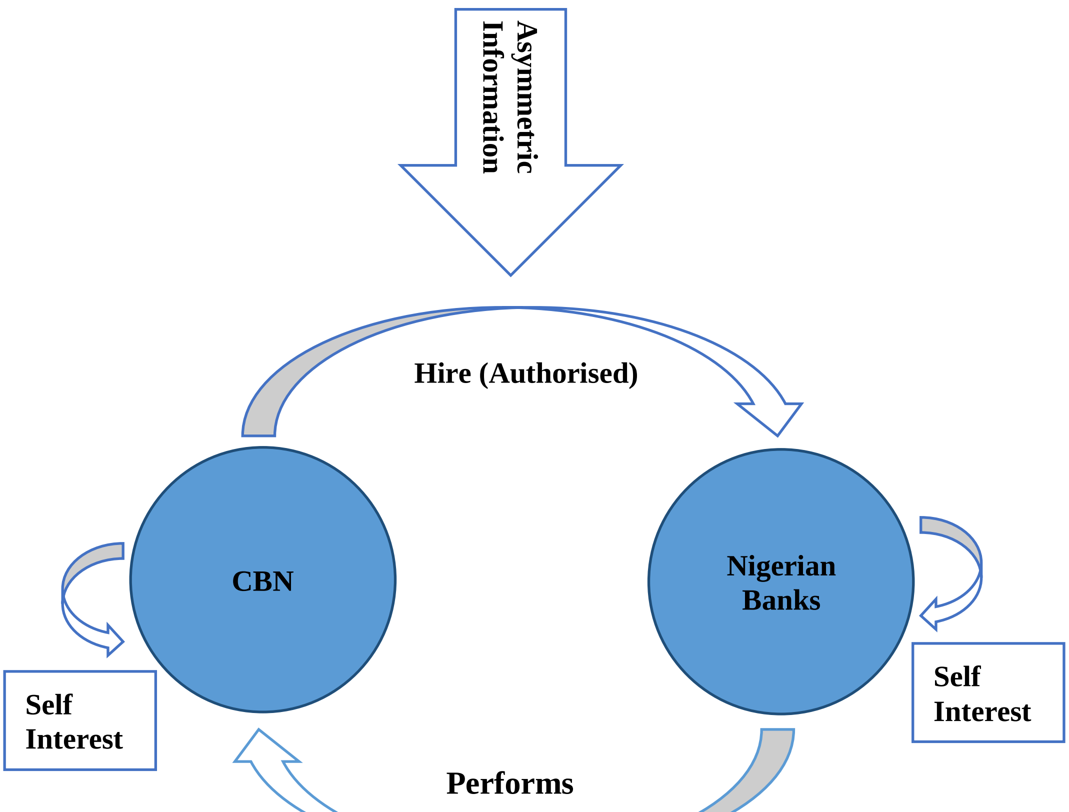
Over the years, researchers have documented that the agency theory was developed in the economic literatures during the 1960s and 1970s in order to define the optimal amount of risk sharing that exist between different individuals (Holmstrom, 1979, as cited by Eisenhardt, 1989; Martin *et al*., 2016). Arrow (1970) revealed that the source of the agency theory traces back to the 1960s and early 1970s. Over the years, economists and researchers alike have identified and paid to the risk that exists between individuals or groups (Arrow, 1970; Pepper and Gore 2015). In addition, Arrow (1970) further highlighted the arguments of risk that exists between cooperating parties and the risk of sharing problem (Arrow, 1970; Pepper and Gore 2015). In 1976, Jensen and Meckling pointed out the same view and supported the idea by defining agency relationship as a contract under which one or more persons (CBN) that engage another person (Nigerian banks) to perform some service on their behalf which involves delegating some decision making authority to the agent (Jensen and Meckling, 1976; Peleg, 2017). The focus of the agency theory is to provide the needed control to minimize the agency problems that exist in the relationship between the principal (CBN) and the agent (Nigerian banks). In the Nigerian banking context, the CBN being the apex bank in Nigerian has given authority to the banks in Nigeria to provide banking services to help improve the Nigerian economy.

The Principal –Agent Problem

A problem may arise where the two parties have different interests and asymmetric information (the banks having more information). As such, the CBN cannot directly make sure that the banks are always acting in their (CBN) best interest, especially when activities that are useful to the CBN are costly to the banks, and where elements of what the banks do are costly for the CBN to observe. There is the likelihood of the banks exploiting the CBN that they decide not to enter into the transaction at all, when it would have been mutually beneficial. However, the

CBN has the right to impose its regulatory authority against the banks by imposing sanctions on the banks which would impede them from carrying out their banking services, therefore, affecting their business. Based on this understanding, Nigerian banks are less likely to act against the interest of the CBN or disobey any CBN directive from the CBN for fear of losing their banking license or sanctioned.

Figure 2.2 The Principle - agent problem



Adapted from the Basic idea of agency theory (P: principal, A: agent)

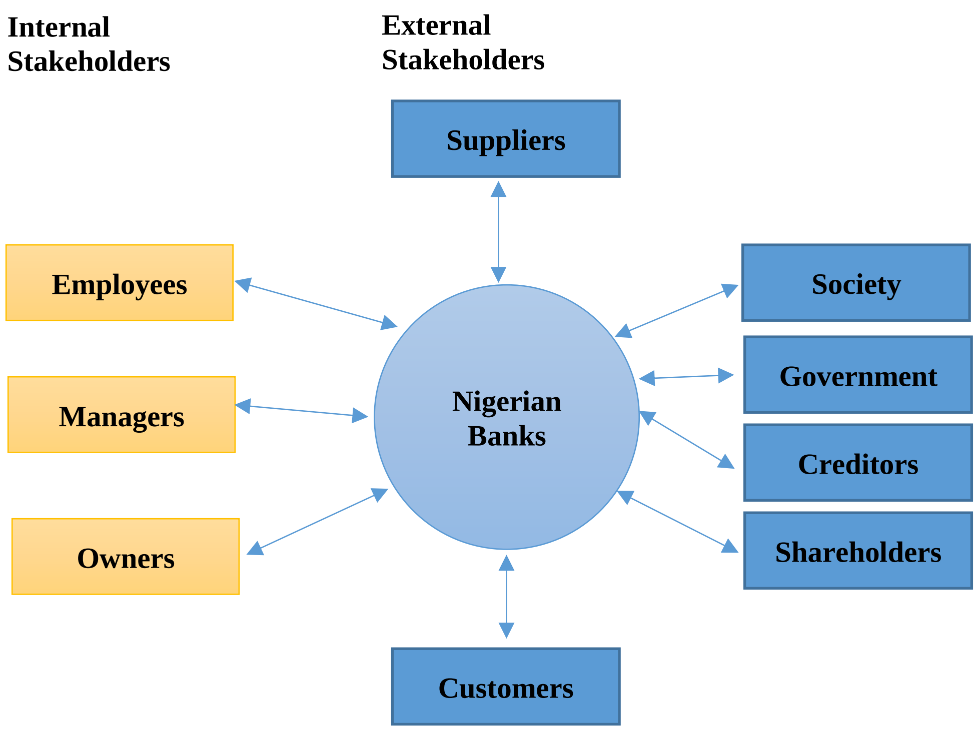
The diagram shows the basic idea of the principle agent problem. It clearly illustrates the working relationship between the CBN and the Banks in Nigeria while highlighting the presence of business partnership as well as self-interest.

2.3.2 The Stakeholder Theory

Freeman (1984) proposed the stakeholder's theory as an approach to strategically manage organizations, through the ages. The theory has achieved prominence with key authors like Clarkson (1994), Donaldson and Preston (1995), Mitchell *et al*., (1997), Rowley (1997) and Frooman (1999) allowing better theoretical depth and development of this theory (Govender and Abratt, 2016; McAdam *et al*., 2016). From an academic standpoint, there are numerous definitions of stakeholders and there is no singular generally accepted definition. In support of this view, the works of Bryson (2004), Buchhloz and Rosenthal (2005), Friedman and Miles (2006) and Beach (2008) had 66 different approaches for the term "Stakeholder". The rationale for using the stakeholder theory for this research is because it has been innovative and justified in the management literature based on its descriptive accuracy, instrumental power, and normative validity (Harrison and Wicks 2013; Horisch *et al*., 2014; Antolin-Lopez *et al*., 2016).

In contrast to the agency theory, the stakeholder theory focuses on the interest of all the parties associated with the organization. Stakeholder theory is a theory for organizational management and ethics (Harrison and Wicks, 2013). Based on this view, the organization should not just maximize any shareholder value but benefit and profit other stakeholder groups (Harrison and Wicks, 2013; Antolin-Lopez *et al*., 2016). Freeman (1994) identified two key questions for the stakeholder theory organizations must focus on and they are as follows: first is the purpose of the organization and the second is what responsibility organizations have to their stakeholders (Antolin-Lopez *et al*., 2016). The first question is very helpful to the organizations because it focuses on the shared awareness of the value they create and brings their stakeholder together, achieving performance by focusing on the aim of the organization and the market. The second question focuses on how the organization wishes to conduct business and is looking for the preferred relationship with stakeholders to achieve their own interest (Harrison and Wicks, 2013; Antolin-Lopez *et al*., 2016). The purpose of the banks in Nigeria is to provide banking services that will drive economic activities in Nigeria, and the responsibility of the banks to make sure they have well trained professionals that are competent in providing these banking services. The desire of the CBN is for Nigerian banks to act in the interest of the entire stakeholder and not just its shareholders, therefore, the need for banking professionals to be competent in providing first class banking services. This is why the CBN has introduced the reform by imposing a competency framework for Nigerian banks.

Figure 2.3 Nigerian Banks Internal and External Stakeholders



The CBNs desire for banking professional in Nigeria is to develop competencies that would enable them deliver exemplary banking products and services to all stakeholders whilst being very much dependent on the actions of the banks themselves. The banks are agent of the CBN and as seen in Figure 2.2, problems may arise if both parties have different interests. Although, the proposed changes may be costly to the banks, the banks are more likely to adhere to the CBN directives or sanctioned by the CBN, which will affect their business activities. Therefore, it is able to reduce the identified risk and challenges of the principal – agent problems. In addition, the stakeholder theory highlights the fact that the bank cannot have just its interest and that of their shareholders at heart but the interest of all its stakeholders in achieving their strategic business objective because the other stakeholders play an important role in achieving their goals and objectives.

Through competencies, Nigerian banks can achieve their desire business objectives by sustaining and improving their workforce, linking or integrating the overall strategic aims of their business, the human resource strategy and the implementation (Misra and Sharma, 2016). Therefore, it is important for the researcher to find out if Nigerian banks already have a competency framework, the HR strategies in place to support the framework, and how it supports their brand values. Barney (1991) suggested that human resources are the most important resources in organisations today. Therefore, the management of people becomes very important because other sources of competitive advantage are now secondary (Barney, 1991; Kabue and Kilika, 2016). Accepting this change is important to developing the most appropriate strategy to human resource management. The traditional sources of advantage such as product and process technology, protected markets, economies of scale, etc. can still provide competitive advantage but an organization's human resources are more vital for its sustainability (Harrison and Wicks, 2013). Based on this belief, it is important for the organisation to adopt a strategic approach to it human resource management.

2.4 Theoretical underpinning of the research

It is common practice in most organisations for the human resource function to consistently struggle to justify its position in the organisation (Drucker, 1954; Anvari *et al*., 2010; Kabue and Kilika, 2016; Medlin *et al*., 2016). This is because in times of prosperity, organisations freely provide funds for staffing, training, rewarding, and employee involvement. However, this is different during financial recession. The HR functions of the organisation are usually the first to fall pray of financial cutbacks (CIPD, 2016). The introduction of strategic human resource management (SHRM), as a sub field has focused majorly on exploring the role of HR in supporting the business strategy of the organisation by demonstrating its value to the organisation (Wheelen and Hunger, 2011; Wright and McMahan, 2011; Aryee *et al.*, 2016). Walker (1978) suggested the existence of a link between the strategic planning of the organisation and the human resource planning of the organisation (Walker, 1978; Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Kabue and Kilika, 2016). Therefore, Walker (1978) research signified the introduction of the field of SHRM. However, the actual birth of the field came into existence in the early 1980's with Fombrun *et al*., (1984) article devoted to exploring the links between business strategy and HR. From that point, the evolution of SHRM has constantly charted developments within the field of strategic management (Wheelen and Hunger, 2011; Wright and McMahan, 2011; Kabue and Kilika, 2016). Miles and Snow (1978) highlighted this in their research, and further developed to include the associated HR systems (Miles and Snow, 1984; Sollosy, 2013; Díaz-Fernández, 2014). SHRM researchers that define the specific HR strategies (Jackson and Schuler, 1987; Wright and Snell, 1998; Delery, and Gupta, 2016) have also used Porter's (1980) model of generic strategies. It is important to note that the field of SHRM was not directly born of the RBV theory; however, it has significantly influenced the development of SHRM (Wheelen and Hunger, 2011; Wright and McMahan, 2011; Kabue and Kilika, 2016). This is mainly because the RBV emphasized a shift in the strategy literature by focusing on the internal firm resources as a source of competitive advantage rather than the external factors (Kehoe and Wright, 2013; Díaz-Fernández, 2014). The growing recognition of internal sources of competitive advantage has conveyed the acceptability of HR assertion that people are strategically important to the organisations' success. Therefore, providing the need to conceptualise the value of HR and the tendency for the SHRM field to borrow concepts and theories from the broader strategy literature (Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Zehir *et al.*, 2016). Over the past couple of decades, two uneasily predicted developments have emerged and they are as follows; firstly, the popularity of the RBV within the field of SHRM as the underpinning for both theoretical and empirical investigation has far surpassed the expectation of researchers (McMahan *et al*., 1999; AL-Sinawi, 2016). Secondly, the application and implication of the RBV theory within the strategy literature has led to an increasing convergence of both fields (Snell *et al*., 2001; Delery, and Gupta, 2016). The RBV theory has significantly supported the importance of human resource with the strategic literature with concepts such as, knowledge (Argote and Ingram, 2000; Boxall and Purcell, 2011), dynamic capability (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000; Teece *et al*., 1997), learning organisation (Fiol and Lyles, 1985) and leadership management (Finkelstein and Hambrick, 1996; Norburn and Birley, 1988). These knowledge, dynamic capability, learning and leadership management are believed to be sources of competitive advantage, therefore, turning their attention towards the intersection of strategy and HR issues.

2.4.1 The Resource-based view of competitive advantage

Competitive advantage is the ability of an organisation to create additional values economically than its business contenders in a particular market (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991; Peteraf and Barney, 2003; Delery, and Gupta, 2016; Kabue and Kilika, 2016). The understanding and sustaining sources of competitive advantage in the strategic management literature has gained massive attention for decades (Bromiley and Rau, 2016). Some of the earlier researchers like Porter (1980) mainly focused on the external factors that offer opportunities or threats to the firm (Panwar *et al*., 2016). Porter (1980) maintains that the industry set up has a robust influence on the organisation in determining their competitive strategy. Therefore, the focus of a firm's competitive strategy within a particular market is to discover its place in the market where the organisation can best protect itself against the five key competitive forces. These five forces are as follows; entry into the market, threat of substitution, the negotiating power of suppliers, the negotiating power of buyers, and competition between current contenders (Porter, 1980:6; Panwar *et al*., 2016). In order to achieve these objectives, Porter (1980) recommended three strategic approaches the firm must adopt in order to outperform its contenders in the market (Porter, 1980; Díaz-Fernández, 2014; Panwar *et al*., 2016). The first strategic approach is the complete cost of leadership that recommends having a generally reduced cost of production in the market can help profit the firm beyond ordinary earnings. The firm can achieve this reduced cost of production in the market by ensuring a relatively extraordinary market share level or other sources of advantages, such as better access or deals to raw materials. Secondly, the differentiating approach, the firm can achieve its desired advantage by differentiating its products and services uniquely offered in the market (Panwar *et al*., 2016). This is achievable by having differentiating product design, image of the brand, and access to technology, good customer service or through other dimensions. Furthermore, the firm can achieve its desired advantage by outperforming its competitors by concentrating on a specific group of customer, a particular line of product or a geographical market (Díaz-Fernández, 2014). Organisations have the ability to be more competent or effective if they narrow their strategic market target (Porter, 1980:35-40). Porter (1980) further explained this as the sources of competitive advantage. According to porter (1980), the organisation can achieve this by concentrating on the connection between the external factors and the organisations strategy (Grant, 1991; Díaz-Fernández, 2014). Most of the strategic management literature within this period analysed competitive advantage from this perspective and paid little or no attention to the role of internal resources in achieving this advantage (Panwar *et al*., 2016). In 1991, Porter developed the dynamic strategic theory that recognised the significance of the internal resources. However, Porter still argued in favour of the external factors as "the true source of competitive advantage" (Panwar *et al*., 2016).

Although Porter's idea for competitive advantage was a major contribution to the field of strategic management and thought in business schools, there are also those who imposed certain critiques to his approach (Panwar *et al*., 2016). Wernerfelt (1984) revealed that a resource viewpoint offers a foundation for evaluating the competitive advantage of the organisation. This meant the best strategy for competitive advantage is revealed in the substitute resources of the organisation like their brand name, internal knowledge and use of technology, employee skills and capabilities, process efficiency, and access to capital. Other researchers also built upon internal resources as a source of competitive advantage in this foundation. From this point, numerous other researchers (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991; Peteraf, 1993; Díaz-Fernández, 2014; Kabue and Kilika, 2016) have adopted a resource-based viewpoint to clarify the competitive advantage of the organisation. Accordingly, the resource-based view (RBV) has subsequently turned out to be one of the most imperative theories in the study of strategic management. Barney (1991) revealed that constant competitive advantage hinges on the resources specific to the organisation (Panwar *et al*., 2016). Barney (1991) identified four key attributes: valuable to the organisation, imperfectly imitable by rival, rare to rivals, and finally non-substitutable (Barney, 1991; Kabue and Kilika, 2016). The organisation's internal resource as a means of sustained competitive advantage has to be valuable to the organisation and have the potential to take advantage of opportunities in the market, and at the same time able to nullify threats from rivals in the market environment. He further stated that the resource must also be rare to current and potential rivals, implement value-creating strategies not previously implemented by any rivals at the same time (Barney, 1991; Díaz-Fernández, 2014; Kabue and Kilika, 2016). Resources that are imperfectly imitable refer to the resource that are challenging to reproduce by rivals, due to the unique historical conditions of the resource, causally uncertain (Barney, 1991; Díaz-Fernández, 2014), and socially complex (Dierickx and Cool, 1989; Calicchio and Marcondes 2016). Finally, for the firm's resource to qualify as a means of competitive advantage, the resource is required to be non-substitutable. What this means is that the resource is not easily substituted by a different resource that is either common or replicable (Barney, 1991; Díaz-Fernández, 2014). Barney (1991) contributed to the advancement of the resource-based view theory by defining the far-reaching conditions required for a resource to be classed as a means of competitive advantage to the organisation (Lockett *et al*., 2009; Calicchio and Marcondes 2016). Peteraf (1993) was another major contributor to the RBV development, by arguing that long-lived differences in organisational profit should not be because of differences in industry conditions (Peteraf, 1993; Inan and Bititci 2015). The RBV justification for the theoretical situations that triggers competitive advantage comprises of four key factors: the resource must be superior, ex-post restrictions to rivalry, imperfect resource flexibility and ex-ante restrictions to rivals. According to Peteraf (1993), in order to achieve sustained competitive advantage, all of these conditions must be met (Panwar *et al*., 2016). Collis and Montgomery (1995) suggested that the management of organisations ought to form their competitive strategies on resources that are durable, inimitable, appropriable, substitutable and superior competitively (Collis and Montgomery, 1995; Gaya and Struwig, 2016).

Although the conditions and characteristics presented by the various researchers for creating resources that provides advantage are to some extent different between the scholars. One of the key perceptions of the resource-based view is the viewpoint that suggests not every resource is classed as a source of advantage competitively to the organisation. The vast majority of resources reveal that ordinary functions in the organisation and allows the organisation to manufacture and market its leading products and services. They suggest that only rare and superior resources in use by the organisation can be classed as a possible source of create advantage (Fahy, 2000; Peteraf and Barney, 2003; Gaya and Struwig, 2016). Grant (1991) explained that some in-house capabilities and resources like the brand name, patents, and internal technologies of the organisation can be responsible for the basic route for the organisation's strategy and class as the main sources of advantage to the organisation. He further recommends a hands-on structure of resource-based method by first evaluating the organisation's resource-base; secondly, by valuing the organisation's capabilities; thirdly, by examining the profit-earning possibilities of the organisation's resources and capabilities; fourthly, by choosing a strategy approach and finally, spreading and improving the organisation's pool of resources and capabilities (Barney and Mackey, 2016).

In view of all the former models that describe organisational performance by concentrating on factors that are external to the organisation, the resource-based view is of the opinion that organisation derive their competitive advantage from resources specific to the organisation's capabilities (Díaz-Fernández, 2014). The resource-based view contribution to academic literature presents a systematic structure for evaluating inter-firm differences in performance (Lockett *et al*., 2009). As a result, it is an acceptable supplement to the external industry market focused methods to achieving market advantage over rivals (Lockett *et al*., 2009; Peteraf and Barney, 2003; Díaz-Fernández, 2014). In effect, the resources-based view does not disregard the market, instead, the RBV links together the firm-based and market-based viewpoints of achieving competitive advantage (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993; Fahy, 2000; Díaz-Fernández, 2014). The RBV as a theory has achieved significant importance in the field of strategic management since the 1990's. On the other hand, some scholars have expressed their worries concerning the practical and methodological complications found in the RBV approach (Fahy, 2000; Clulow *et al*., 2003; Foss and Knudsen, 2003; Lockett *et al*., 2009; Porter, 1991; Priem and Butler, 2001; Díaz-Fernández, 2014; Mohamud and Sarpong, 2016). The first point is that the RBV have a tendency to be static in theory, and this restricts its effectiveness for strategy scholars (Priem and Butler, 2001; Hitt *et al*., 2016). The second point is that the RBV has a tautological deficiency that defines resources in terms of the organisation's performance result (Fahy, 2000; Clulow *et al*., 2003; Lockett *et al*., 2009; Porter, 1991; Reed *et al*., 2006; Díaz-Fernández, 2014). The third point is that the RBV has been criticised as being too broad. The excessively inclusive definition of resources makes it more problematic to create an appropriate and rigid restrictions (Priem and Butler, 2001; Makadok, 2001; Reed *et al*., 2006; Díaz-Fernández, 2014). Accordingly, some researchers argue that accuracy of the theory in relation to identifying the various advantages linked with the diverse forms of resources should be emphasized (Miller and Shamsie, 1996; Reed *et al*., 2009; Lioukas *et al*., 2016).

In order to deal with these criticisms, researchers have developed the dynamic understanding of the resource-based view (Helfat and Peteraf, 2003; Winter, 2003; Sirmon *et al*., 2007; Teece, 2007; Lioukas *et al*., 2016). The dynamic understanding of the RBV examines the influences of the management of these resources on the formation of value and considers how the process of managing resources is influenced by the external factors (Sirmon *et al*., 2007; Carnes *et al*., 2016). They further recommend a model to explain ways in which firms can use their internal capabilities and resources to achieve advantage over competitors (Sirmon *et al*., 2007; Carnes *et al*., 2016). In recent times, more researchers have emphasized the dynamic process of managing resources in organisations (Díaz-Fernández, 2014). Teece (2007) relates the resource-based view and dynamic capabilities together, and stated that, "*Dynamic capabilities allows organisations to produce, organise, and defend intangible resources that encourage* *efficient long-run performance of the business*" (Teece, 2007:1319; Inan and Bititci 2015; Raman *et al*., 2017). According to Teece (2007), the organisation's dynamic capabilities can be classified into the subsequent dimensions: "*firstly, to perceive and create opportunities for the organisation and nullify threats; secondly, to grasp opportunities or take chances; and thirdly, to preserve competitiveness through improving, merging, defending, and, recalibrating the intangible and tangible resources of the business* (Teece, 2007:1319; Inan and Bititci 2015). According to this researchers, the organisation's viable competitive advantage originates from their strategic resources and their dynamic capabilities that they adapt to the fluctuating business environment (Inan and Bititci 2015; Raman *et al*., 2017).

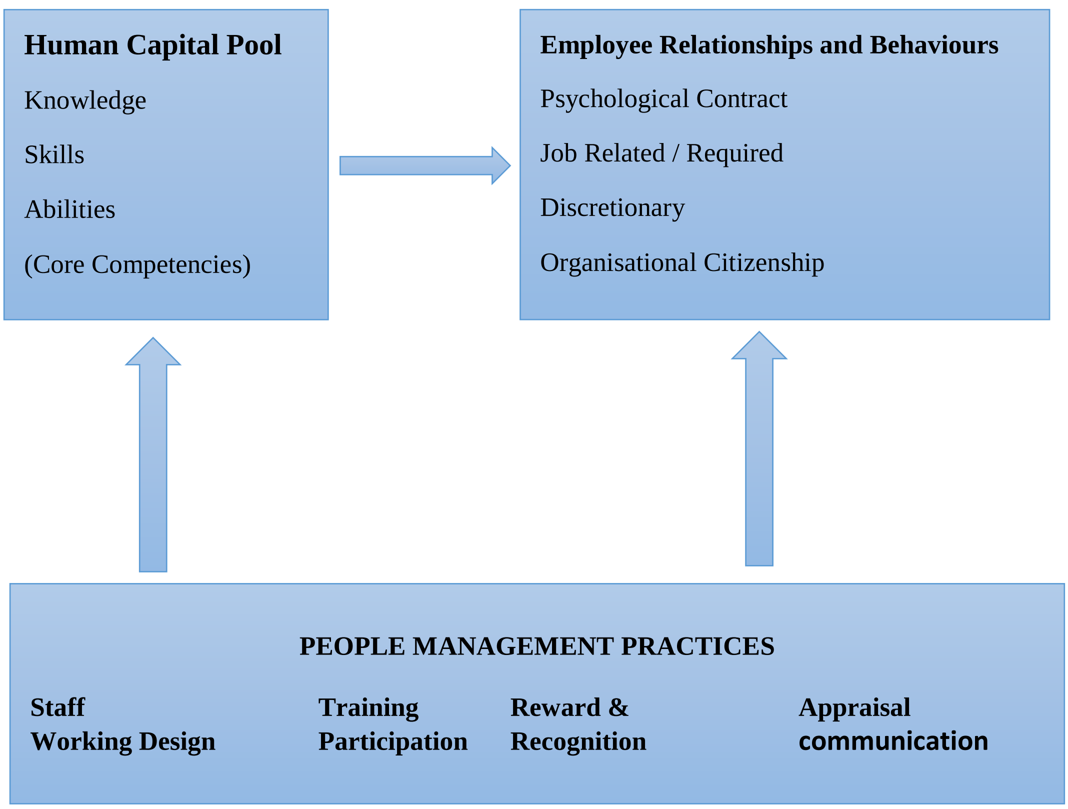
2.4.2 RBV and Empirical SHRM Research

In support of the many applications of the RBV to the theoretical developments within SHRM, this standpoint has also emerged as a fundamental underpinning for exploring the empirical importance of the SHRM theory. In fact, one is hard pressed to find any SHRM empirical studies conducted over the past decade that do not at least pay lip service to the RBV theory. In the interest of brevity, this section of the study will cover a sample of such studies that illustrate the application of RBV concepts to empirical SHRM research. The researcher chose these studies either because they specifically attempt to build on the resource-based theory or because they tend to be most frequently cited within the SHRM literature and at least tangentially rely on resource-based logic. In an early application, Huselid (1995) argued at a general level that HR practices could help create a source of competitive advantage, particularly if they are aligned with the firm's competitive strategy (Gooderham, 2008; Brewster *et al*., 2016). His study revealed a relationship between HR practices and employee turnover, gross rate of return on assets and Tobin's Q. The study received considerable attention because it demonstrated that HR practices could have a profound impact on both accounting and market based measures to performance. Koch and McGrath (1996) took a similar logic in their study of the relationship between HR planning, recruitment, staffing practices and labour productivity (Lin and Tang, 2016). They argued, "*A highly productive workforce is likely to have attributes that make it a particularly valuable strategic asset*". They suggested that organisations that develop effective routines for acquiring human assets develop a stock of talent not easily imitated. They found that these HR practices were related to labour productivity in a sample of business units and that this relationship was stronger in capital-intensive organizations (Lin and Tang, 2016). Furthermore, empirical studies using the RBV build upon Lepak and Snell's (1999) architectural framework. Lepak and Snell (1999) asked executives to describe the HR systems that existed for jobs that represented particular quadrants of their model (Morris *et al*., 2016). They found considerable support for the idea that the value and uniqueness of skills are associated with different types of HR systems within the same organization (Morris *et al*., 2016). These results were mostly consistent with the Lepak and Snell (1999) model, and supported the basic proposition that diverse HR strategies exist within firms. A follow up study (Lepak *et al*., 2001; Morris *et al*., 2016) indicated that a combination of knowledge work and contract labour was associated with higher firm performance (Messersmith, 2011; Bakker *et al*., 2015). This finding not only raises some interesting ideas about the development of valuable human resources, but also highlights the importance of combinations of various types used in conjunction with one another. In another example of examining the human capital pool, Richard (2001) used resource- based logic to examine the impact of racial diversity on firm performance. He argued that diversity provides value through ensuring a variety of perspectives that it is rare in that very few firms have achieved significant levels of diversity, and that the socially complex dynamics inherent in diversity lead to its inimitability. In a sample of banks, he found out that diversity was positively related to productivity, return on equity, and market performance for firms engaged in a growth strategy, but negatively related for firms downsizing (Delery and Gupta, 2016). In an effort to look beyond human capital pool alone, Youndt and Snell (2001) studied the differential effects of HR practices on human capital, social capital, and organizational capital. They found that intensive/extensive staffing, competitive pay, intensive/extensive training and promotion from within policies were most important for distinguishing high levels of human capital in organizations (Delery and Gupta, 2016). In contrast, broad banding, compressed wages, team structures, socialization, mentoring, and group incentives distinguished those with high social capital (i.e., relationships that engender knowledge exchange) but had very little effect on human capital itself. Finally, organizational capital (i.e., knowledge embedded in the organization's systems and processes) was established most through lessons learned data-bases and HR policies that reinforced knowledge capture and access (Delery and Gupta, 2016). Based on this view, competency based management systems is vital to achieving competitive advantage because it enables the organization to assess the current human resource capacity based on their competencies against the capacity needed to achieve the vision, mission and business goals of the organization.

2.4.3 SHRM link to the RBV Theory

The strategic human resources management (SHRM) is a complete set of managerial activities and responsibilities associated with the development and maintenance of a qualified workforce. The contributions of the workforce are significant to organizational effectiveness, as defined in the organization's strategic goals. SHRM take place in a complex and dynamic environment within the organizational context, and a common trend today is for HR managers to adopt a strategic perspective for their job and to recognize the critical links between organizational and HR strategies (Fottler *et al.*, 2010; Seethalakshmi, 2015). According to Wright and McMahan (1992), the RBV is a singular perspective that provides the foundation for a firm's human resources to provide a potential source of sustainable competitive advantage (Wright *et al.*, 1994; Ostroff and Bowen, 2016). Cappelli and Singh (1992) provided an examination of the implications of the RBV on SHRM. Specifically, they noted that most models of SHRM was based on best fit and assume that (1) a certain business strategy demands a unique set of behaviours and attitudes from employees and (2) certain human resource policies produce a unique set of responses from employees. Furthermore, they argued that many within the field of strategy have implicitly assumed that it is easier to rearrange complementary assets/resources given a choice of strategy than it is to rearrange strategy given a set of assets/resources, even though empirical research seems to imply the opposite (Delery and Gupta, 2016). Based on this view, they proposed that the resource-based view could provide a theoretical justification for why HR could have implications for strategic formulation as well as implementation. Not long after this, two new articles emerged, arguing almost completely opposite implications of the potential for HR practices to constitute a source of sustainable competitive advantage. Wright *et al.*, (1994) distinguished between the firm's human resources and HR practices. In applying the idea of value, rareness, inimitability, and substitutability, they argued that the HR practices could not form the basis for sustainable competitive advantage since rivals could easily copy any individual HR practice (Delery and Gupta, 2016). They, then, proposed that the human capital pool, what they defined as a highly skilled and highly motivated workforce, has a greater potential to constitute a source of sustainable competitive advantage. In addition, they further noted that to constitute a source of competitive advantage, the human capital pool must have both high levels of skill and willingness to display desired expected behaviours. This skills and behaviour distinction appears as a rather consistent theme within this literature. In contrast, Lado and Wilson (1994) proposed that a firm's HR practices could provide a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Antonioli and Della Torre, 2016). Emerging from the viewpoint that explores the role of HR in influencing the competencies of the firm, they suggested that HR systems, as opposed to individual practices could be unique, causally ambiguous and synergistic in how they enhance firm competencies, and therefore could be inimitable. Wright *et al*., (1994) supported the imitability of individual practices, and interdependencies among the set of practices, would be impossible to imitate. This notion seems well accepted within the current SHRM paradigm (Snell *et al.*, 1996; Delery and Gupta, 2016). Boxall (1996) further built upon the RBV/SHRM paradigm, suggesting that human resource advantage (i.e., the superiority of one firm's HRM over another) consists of two parts. First, human capital advantage refers to the potential to capture a stock of exceptional human talent "*latent with productive possibilities*" (p. 67). Boxall (1998) then improved upon his basic model presenting a more comprehensive model of strategic HRM. He argued that one major task of organizations is the management of mutuality (i.e., alignment of interests) to create a talented and committed workforce (Zehir *et al*., 2016). He stated that if the organisation is able to accomplish this task successfully, then competitive advantage could be achieved (Zehir *et al*., 2016). A second task for the organisation is to develop employees and teams in a manner that enables the organisation to create an organization capable of learning within and across industry cycles. The successful accomplishment of this task will enable the organization to achieve a process advantage. Lepak and Snell (1999) presented a structural approach to SHRM based upon the RBV. They proposed that within the organizations, a considerable variance exists between the uniqueness and value of skills (Lepak and Snell, 1999; Delery and Gupta, 2016). In order to comparing these two dimensions, they came up with a 2 by 2 matrix describing the different combinations with their corresponding employment relationships and HR systems. The key implication of this model was that some employee groups are more instrumental to competitive advantage. This means they are likely to be managed differently within the organisation and the premise of this perspective is rooted in HR (Osterman, 1987; Tsui *et al*., 1997; Bornay-Barrachina *et al*., 2016; Delery and Roumpi, 2017) and strategy (Matusik and Hill, 1998; Prajogo *et al*., 2016). Lepak and Snell (1999) helped SHRM researchers recognize that real and valid variance exists in HR practices within the organization and looking for one HR strategy may mask the important differences in the types of human capitals available to firms (Truss and Gratton, 1994; Zehir *et al*., 2016). In essence, the conceptual development of SHRM as a field has leveraged the RBV to achieve some consensus on the areas within the human resource framework in which sustainable competitive advantage could be achieved. Figure 2.4 below depicts these components. First, the human capital pool refers to the stock of employee skills (core competencies) that exist within a firm at any given point in time. Researchers have focused on the need to develop a pool of human capital that has either higher levels of skills (general and/or firm specific), or achieving a better alignment between the skills represented in the firm and those required by its strategic intent. The actual stock of human capital can and does change overtime, and to match with the strategic needs of the firm, constant monitoring is required. Secondly, an increasing consensus is emerging among researchers that employee behaviour is an important independent component of SHRM. Separate from skills available in the human capital pool, employee behaviour recognizes individuals as intellectual and emotional beings in possession of free will.

Figure 2.4 A model of the basic strategic HRM components



Adapted from Salaman, Storey and Billsbery (2005)

This free will enables the employees to make decisions regarding the behaviours in which they will engage in. This is an important, yet subtle, distinction in employee behaviour. One basic premise of human capital theory is that the organisations do not own the competencies with the pool; the individuals do. The organisation may have access to valuable human capital; however, this could be either through the poor design of work or the mismanagement of people. In some cases, the organisation may not adequately deploy the talent within the pool to achieve strategic impact. This was highlighted by MacDuffie (1995) stating the concept of discretionary behaviour. According to MacDuffie (1995), discretionary behaviour recognizes that even within prescribed organizational roles, employees exhibit discretion that may have either positive or negative consequences to the organisation (MacDuffie, 1995; Zehir *et al*., 2016). This was similar to March and Simon's (1958) concept of "the decision to contribute". SHRM's ability to focus on discretionary behaviour recognizes that competitive advantage can only be achieved if the talents in the human capital pool individually and collectively choose to engage in behaviour that benefits the organisation (Arekar *et al*., 2016). Finally, many researchers describe HR practice, as broader conceptualization might simply be the people management system. Becker & Huselid, (1998) stated that by introducing the word system in HR practice, we turn our attention to the importance of understanding the multiple practices that influence employees rather than the single practices. In the same light, by using the word people, rather than HR, we increase the relevant practices to those beyond the control of the HR function, such as communication, work design, culture, management leadership, and a host of others that influence employees and shape their competencies, cognitions, and attitudes (Arekar *et al*., 2016). According to Becker and Huselid (1998) an effective system for managing people evolves through unique historical paths and maintains interdependence among the components that rival organisations cannot easily imitate (Becker and Huselid, 1998; Saridakis *et al*., 2017). The unique components of these systems is that they are the means through which the organisation continues to create advantages over time as the actual employees' flow in and out of the pool, and the required behaviours change because of changing environmental and strategic contingencies. What this implies, is that it is through the people management system that the organisation influences the talent within the human capital pool and stimulates the desired employee behaviour wanted by the organisation. The implications of the figure above (Figure 2.4) and the model is that while the organisation may achieve a superior position in any one of the three key components, sustainable competitive advantage requires achieving superior positions on all three components of the model. This is because of the following three key reasons. First, it is the understanding that the value that skills and behaviours can generate requires that they be effectively paired together. This hinges on the notion that without skills, certain behaviours cannot be exhibited, and that the value of skills can only be realized through exhibited behaviours. Secondly, it is difficult to conceive of an organisation's human capital pool containing both the highest levels of skills and exhibiting optimal behaviours in the absence of an aligned people management system. Finally, is the understanding that the organisation effect on the people management systems is subject to time compression diseconomies (Dierickx and Cool, 1989; Calicchio and Marcondes, 2016). While these systems might be immediately imitated, a significant time lag will occur before their impact is realized, thus making it costly or difficult for rival organisations to imitate the value generated by the human capital pool (Dierickx and Cool, 1989; Calicchio and Marcondes, 2016).

2.4.4 Strategic Human Resource Management

According to Werbel and DeMarie (2005), HRM practices create procedures that constitute the building of employees' knowledge and skills throughout the organization to promote valued and unique organizational competencies, which support competitive advantage (Werbel and DeMarie, 2005; Lau *et al.*, 2017). Strategic HRM is a new paradigm in managing HR in the modern organization hinges on the understanding that the most critical resource that any organization must provide itself of is HR, since HR is responsible for coordinating the other factors of production to spur corporate performance. Strategic HRM aims to achieve strategic fit. It produces HR strategies that are integrated vertically with the business strategy and are ideally an integral part of that strategy. Vertical integration is necessary to provide congruence between business and HR strategy so that the latter supports the accomplishment of the business strategy and helps to define it. SHRM is also about horizontal integration, which aims to ensure that the different elements of the HR strategy fit together and are mutually supportive (Armstrong *et al.*, 2008; Crispin *et al.*, 2016). The horizontal integration enables strategic decisions to be made that have a major and long-term impact on the behaviour and success of the organization by ensuring that the organization has the skilled, committed and well-motivated employees it needs to achieve competitive advantage. Cooke *et al.,* (2005) asserted that SHRM is an efficient function that copes with environmental changes. It directly and indirectly benefits companies because it changes passivity into initiative, transmits organizational goals clearly and encourages the involvement of line managers (Cooke *et al.,* 2005; Ghosh and Gurunathan, 2015). Marchington and Wilkinson (2008) argue that SHRM positively influences firm performance because it generates structural cohesion, an employee-generated synergy that propels a company forward, enabling the firm to respond to its environment while still moving forward (Ghosh and Gurunathan, 2015). Cooke *et al.,* (2005) investigated the HRM practices of firms in declining industries. They found that most high performance firms adopted SHRM measures. Conversely, low performance firms tended to employ conventional methods. Various researchers (Appelbaum *et al*., 2000; Guest *et al*., 2000; West *et al*., 2002; Purcell *et al*., 2007) have found a positive relation between HRM practices and firm financial performance. They found that the strategic orientation of HR in high productivity firms differed obviously from that in low productivity firms. Developments in SHRM thinking explored through the best-fit, best practice and configurational approaches which have a profound impact in the understanding of the contribution SHRM can enhance organizational performance through increased competitive advantage and benefit (Delery and Gupta, 2016). Indeed, it becomes clear that whether the focus of SHRM is on alignment with the external context or on the internal context of the firm, the meaning of SHRM is understood in the context of organizational performance (Delery and Gupta, 2016). Whether that be in terms of economic value added and increased shareholder value; customer value added and increased market share or people added value through increased employee commitment and reservoirs of employee skills, knowledge and talent. According to Guest (2001), theoretical research shows that SHRM practices are not standardized and as such, researchers tend to select a set of SHRM practices depending on the theoretical perspective used. Regarding which HR practices are relevant, the literature often focuses on bundles of HR practices as determinants of firm performance (Lepak *et al*., 2005; Saridakis *et al*., 2017). The bundle of HRM practices for this study is adopted from the study by Ahmad and Schroeder (2003) and includes selective resourcing, training and development, use of teams and decentralization, sharing information and incentives on performance.

2.4.5 Strategic Human Resource Management and Firm Performance

According to Armstrong and Baron (2004), people and their collective skills, abilities and experience, coupled with their ability to deploy these in the interests of the organization they work for, are now recognized as making a significant contribution to organizational success and as such, constituting a major source of competitive advantage (Armstrong and Baron, 2004; Onyango, 2016). The practices of SHRM such as resourcing, training and development, employee relations and reward management are concerned with how people are employed and managed in organizations so as to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce (Zehira *et al*., 2016). Cole (2004) emphasizes the need for HR function to bring in the strategic value of people in the organization by making contribution to level of value added and contribution to competitive advantage (Onyango, 2016). Most organizations rely on HR as its employees, therefore, effective HRM strategy is expected to systematically organize the entire individual HRM measures to directly influence the attitude and behaviour of employees in a way that enables the organisation to achieve its desired competitive strategy (Onyango, 2016; Yaseen and Afghan, 2016). In view of this fact, the management of HR function of the organisation is expected to be aligned with the overall corporate strategy of the organisation to achieve its desired goals and objectives. By doing this, the organisation can achieve competitive advantage and superior performance (Kelliher and Perret, 2001; Calicchio and Marcondes, 2016). Several researchers have documented the debate of whether SHRM links to organisational performance. These researchers argued there is a general HRM best practice that influences organisations' performance (Lau and Ngo, 2004; Naranjo-Valencia *et al*., 2016). There are other researchers that hold a different view to this argument and believe that the assumptions underlying the HRM strategy-performance link are applicable only under high externally fit conditions, regarded as the ‘best fit’ school (Boxall and Purcell, 2000; Bamberger and Meshoulam, 2000; Naranjo-Valencia *et al*., 2016).

Delery and Doty (2000) proposed the notion of the configurational perspective which focuses on how unique patterns or configurations of multiple independent variables are related to the dependent variable by aiming to identify ideal type categories of not only the organizations but also the HR strategy (Delery and Shaw, 2001; Delery, and Roumpi, 2017). In most organisations today, it is the employee skills and commitment that create competitive advantage for the organization, therefore, making it important for the organization to leverage on the workforce as a competitive weapon to develop a competitive advantage. Majority of the studies in this field supports the view that SHRM practice does lead to superior performance (Delery, and Roumpi, 2017). However, Edwards and Wright (2001) stated that this view was a one-way line of causation is unsatisfied (Edwards and Wright, 2001). The key critique of the SHRM influence on organizational performance is that it lacks sound theoretical development that explains clearly how such HR practices operates (Guest, 2001; Delery and Gupta, 2016). In an effort to address the needed theoretical developments in this area, researchers have proposed further studies to consider intermediate linkages between SHRM and organizational performance (Delery, and Roumpi, 2017). In view of this, a better understanding of the role of SHRM in creating and sustaining organizational performance and competitive advantage can be achieved through further theoretical advancement and empirical evidence.

2.5 The Idea of Competencies

Boyatzis, (2009) defined competency as a "*capability or ability*", and further stated that it is a set of related but different sets of behaviour organized around an "*underlying construct*", which is called the "*intent*". These behaviours are alternate manifestations of the "*intent*", as appropriate in various situations or times (Boyatzis, 2009). He went on to suggest that the underlying "*intent*" of a more subtle competency like "*emotional self-awareness*" is "*self in-sight*" and "*self-understanding*". According to Boyatzis (2009) the construction of both these competencies are required for action (i.e., a set of both alternative behaviours) and intent called for measurement methods that make room for reassessment of both the presence of "*behaviour and inference of intent*". Hoffmann (1999) analysed past literature and summarized three key points in defining a competency: (a) underlying qualification and attributes of a person, (b) observable behaviours, and (c) standard of individual performance outcomes. This research defines competency as:

"A competency is a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that affects a major part of one's job (a role or responsibility), that correlates with performance on the job, that can be measured against well-accepted standards, and that can be improved via training and development" (Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999, p. 5).

This study makes use of this definition of competency as it best describes the idea. In most cases, job description only presents a list of responsibilities or expected results of the job, competencies on the other hand, are viewed broadly and include many other factors that influence job success but are not included in the job description. For example, optimism and pessimism are considered attitudinal terms and are not listed in job descriptions (Herd *et al*., 2016). In the same way, personal traits are also different from competencies. People bring their underlying physical and mental traits into the workplace; these traits include qualities such as diligence, which researchers consider inherent or learned early in life and not at work (McWilliams and Nahavandi, 2006; CIPD, 2016).

Similarly, researchers have documented the distinction between competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities (Cetin *et al*., 2016; Rutledge *et al*., 2016). According to these researchers, knowledge refers to the body of information about the theoretical and practical understanding of a subject, acquired by a person through experience or education. Skills on the other hand, refer to the application of data or information with manual, verbal, or mental proficiency. The skills of an individual can be tested to measure the quantity and quality of an individual's performance. This is usually achievable within an established time limit (Cetin *et al*., 2016; Rutledge *et al*., 2016), while ability refers to the sufficiency of strength to accomplish a task, especially the physical and mental quality to perform these activities (Hsieh *et al*., 2012; Cetin *et al*., 2016; CIPD, 2016; Rutledge *et al*., 2016; Vaishya *et al*., 2016). These KSAs are fundamental aspects of the individual's competencies; however, the competencies are more behaviour-based rather than skill-based. To sum this up, each competency requires several KSAs, while KSAs can be the cause of competencies just as personal traits may be the cause of competencies, the KSAs are not exactly competencies. That is to say, having the KSAs does not automatically mean that one has a certain competency (Hsieh *et al*., 2012; Vaishya *et al*., 2016). What Hsieh *et al*., (2012) meant by this is that an individual may know how to carry out a certain task, however, may lack the proficiency to carry out the task excellently (Hsieh *et al*., 2012; Vaishya *et al*., 2016).

The alignment of competency management has played a pivotal role in many organizations as it drives the organizations' core competitive advantage by mobilizing all of its resources available, monitoring performances and shaping strategies. According to the behavioural approach to emotional, cognitive and social intelligence competencies, competence falls within the domain of human talent that can be developed (Boyatzis, 2009; Almatrooshi *et al*., 2016). The concept of competency has become a persistent topic of discussion in the management literature since David McClelland (1973) first proposed the term some 40 years ago (McClelland, 1973; Almatrooshi *et al*., 2016). It has evolved from a new way of thinking to a commonly accepted practice world-over in terms of critical differentiator of performance. Nevertheless, the concept remains indefinable, as there is hardly any consensus on the conceptualization of competency. Various other authors have sparked debates about the conceptual and terminological differences supported by the various management schools of thought mainly from the west. However, one unquestionable consensus by every literature reviewed by the researcher is on the importance and the relevance of competency to the performance of an individual and the organizations (Boyatzis, 2008, 2009; Winterton, 2009; Lester *et al*., 2017). Furthermore, the literature revealed that the focus of most of the competency research in recent times seems to have focused on the identification and validation of competencies (CIPD, 2016). Robert W. White (1959) is arguably one of the earliest advocates that were critical to the existing tendency to relate cognitive intelligence with outstanding job performance (Almatrooshi *et al*., 2016). He specified that an individual's effectiveness could be predicted from his or her "*interaction with the environment*". However, it was not until 1973 when David McClelland introduced the concept of "*testing for competence*" (McClelland, 1973) that it was clear to him that the "context-free testing" for aptitude could not predict effective job performance and was methodically biased. This concept however, later became the new "*critical differentiator of performance*" (Boyatzis, 2008, p.5). In addition, the research by Goleman (1990) went on to suggest that traditional testing for cognitive intelligence tells us only a little about what it takes to be successful in life and in business because cognitive and non-cognitive abilities are very much related (Sternberg, 2000).

Having a well-defined and understandable definition for competencies is important for both the organization and the employees, because they are forward-looking (CIPD, 2016). Competencies describe the skills and attributes staff and managers will need in order to build a new organizational culture and meet the future challenges of the organisation (Almatrooshi *et al*., 2016; CIPD, 2016). In addition, they help organizations clarify expectations, define future development needs, and achieve a more focused recruitment and development process in the organisation. Competencies also provide the organisation with the luxury of a sound basis for a consistent and objective performance standards by creating shared language about what is needed and expected in an organization (Almatrooshi *et al*., 2016; CIPD, 2016).

Conceptual difference

The variance in the competing definitions of competence as a concept has also created a conflict with the terminology used. These differences in the understanding of competence believed to be due to the context and perspective surrounding the previous studies carried out by the previous researchers in this area (Garavan and McGuire, 2001; Goldman and Scott, 2016). There are three distinct perspectives documented by researchers that have dominated the literature namely: individual competencies, organizational competencies and competency as a mode of discourse (Garavan and McGuire, 2001; Goldman and Scott, 2016).

Terminological difference

The presence of the terminological differences is believed to surpass the argument found in the linguistic-divide (Winterton, 2009, p. 684). According to Garavan and McGuire (2001), there are various meanings integral to their definitions, which attribute to the different standpoints and approaches led by mainly researchers from the US and the UK. For the purpose of this study, the explanation provided by Tate (1995) and Winterton (2009) are used to explain the terminological difference in the following Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Terminological differences

	Singular	*Plural*
Used as an adjective	Competent	Competent
Used as a noun to denote what a person needs to know and be able to do to perform the required task.	(Demonstrates) Competence	(Demonstrates) Competences
Used as a noun to denote characteristics associated with superior job performance.	(Has) competency	(Have) competencies

2.5.1 The Approaches to Understanding Competence

The US Approach

The American approach to understanding competence generally subscribes to what is known as the worker-oriented approach. The US researchers have described competence as the abilities possessed by an individual, which exhibits the individual's knowledge, skills and personal traits. In this regard, the US approach to competence tends to focus heavily on behaviors. This is why Boyatzis (1982) defined competency as "an underlying characteristics of a person that it can be the aspect of motive, trait, aspect of one's self-image or social role, or a body of knowledge which he or she uses" (Boyatzis, 1982, p. 21). Superior managers irrespective of their positions, share this broad profile of competencies (Spencer and Spencer, 1993, p.9). Researchers like Sandberg (2000) and Garavan and McGuire (2001) criticize this context-independent approach because it presents an overly general and abstract list of competencies that has little or no value in providing the foundation for developing managerial competence. The most common rationalistic and positivist approach applied by US based researchers is to predefine the performance criteria and then use the criteria to validate the data from the behavioral event dialogue (Garavan and McGuire, 2001; Goldman and Scott, 2016).

Based on this approach, Holms (1995) and as quoted by Garavan and McGuire (2001) stated that the competency frameworks represent everything "developmental humanism is not" as employees may be forced to redefine their personal characteristics in order to be perceived as competent employees (Garavan and McGuire, 2001; Goldman and Scott, 2016).

The UK Approach

The UK approach to competence on the other hand, is work-oriented (Stuart and Lindsay, 1997; Marinakou *et al*., 2016) this is because it centers on achieving the required performance standard specified by the job requirements (Management Charter Initiative, 1990). According to the Training Commission (as cited in Mitchell and Boak, 2009, p. 702), competence is defined by the UK approach, as the ability for an individual to perform a job related task required by the job description and achieve the expected minimum required standard for that job. The key criticism for this approach is that the models neglect knowledge and cognitive processes; as a result, it lacks dynamism, which leads to its incapacity to focus on developing managerial competencies in a fast changing business environment. Other researchers have also documented that organizations that adopt the UK approach will have to provide different training for every identified role (Elkin, 1990; Elkins *et al*., 2016).

The Holistic Approach

Giving the above documented limitations of the US and UK approaches to competence, Cheetham and Chivers (1996b, 2005) acknowledged the usefulness of both approaches in the articulation of their holistic approach towards the professional competence model called the "*Revised Model"*(Cheetham and Chivers, 1996b, 2005; Ng *et al*., 2017). They presented the two different approaches to competence as what they called "*different facets of the same gemstone*". These "*facets*" include personal competence, functional competence, technical-rational approach, reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983), knowledge or cognitive competence, ethical competence and meta-competencies. Nonetheless, it is highly unlikely that the model will represent a wide range of professionals or if the description of the model is a characteristic of any one profession (Ng *et al*., 2017). Above all, this model does not properly address the part of acquiring competence and the significant contextual factors that influence the acquisition process of competencies (Ng *et al*., 2017).

2.5.2 Key debates in the Competency-based Research

Two significant studies emerged to "*update of our understanding*" of the concept of competence (Boyatzis, 2008, p. 5). The first was a review of eight original studies from the US based researchers consistent in their findings that identify the importance of emotional, cognitive and social intelligence competencies as predictors of outstanding performance (Ng *et al*., 2017). The key points of their argument is that these competencies can be developed in adulthood via workplace learning (Dreyfus, 2008) or graduate management program (Boyatzis and Saatcioglu, 2008; Wheeler, 2008 and Rhee, 2008). The effect of their contextual factors on competence development was further deliberated in some cases: gender (Hopkins and Bilimoria, 2008), organizational environment and local social contexts (Koman and Wolff, 2008; Dreyfus, 2008 and Wheeler, 2008; Morone *et al*., 2016).

The second review consists of a European collection of original studies from diverse backgrounds. The research focused on knowledge workers from European firms (Ryan *et al.,* 2009), managers and leaders from Italian organizations (Boyatzis and Ratti, 2009; Almatrooshi *et al*., 2016), managers and non-managers from medium-sized Spanish organizations (Guillén Ramo *et al*., 2009) and the officers and leaders in the British Royal Navy (Young and Dulewicz, 2009). The key findings from these two significant studies suggest that the competency-based approach in the field of management is more context-dependent. In addition, most of the US based researcher adopted a multi-method approach in their data collection (Morone *et al*., 2016). This discovery could suggest a sign of withdrawal from the traditionalistic approaches that Sandberg (2000) was critical about. On the other hand, the particular studies identified only represented an empirical research on the American, British and European shores. The focus of this research is to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks.

2.5.3 The Process of Competence Acquisition

The foremost observation on competencies emphasize on the developmental aspect of the competencies (Sandberg, 2000; Boyatzis, 2008, 2009; Pruis, 2011; Garavan *et al*., 2012) In addition, Williams (2003), cited by Boyatzis (2008) revealed in their findings that competencies can be developed through experimental learning.

2.5.4 The Theories Surrounding Learning

Researchers in the past have conceptualized individuals as social learners, and admitted the learning process can also take place within the workplace (Eraut, 2007; Cheetham and Chivers, 2005; Ferrari and Chivers, 2011; Kyndt *et al*., 2016). The idea of informal learning in the workplace has gained enormous attention from researchers in an attempt to understand the idea from different perspectives (Kyndt *et al*., 2016). This has also led to the debate for a more employee-oriented approach. Billet (1994) and Mansfield (1990) studied the problems associated with the development of knowledge that represent the outcomes. However, Cunningham (1998) argued in favor of a more social-interaction between co-workers. On the other hand, other researchers have argued in favor of a more practitioner-oriented approach to learning (Cunningham, 1998; Preston-Cunningham *et al*., 2017). Levy (1987) emphasized the need to have a structured process that provides a link between knowledge and skills development (Levy, 1987; Ahmed, 2016). Smith (2003) identified all the different ideas as a complementing factor of each individual approach, therefore, providing an insight into the bigger picture in terms of informal learning at the workplace (Smith, 2003).

In spite of the numerous research conducted in the area of understanding the conflict of informal learning within the workplace, there is still little appreciation that does take place at workplace (Cheetham and Chivers, 2005; Ng *et al*., 2017). Chivers (2011) identified the lack of research to identify or improve informal learning at work (Chivers, 2011). Previous researchers from an empirical perspective involving the informal and incidental learning by Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1997) and Watkins and Marsick (1992) have developed informal learning as an idea. They defined the concept as a contrast from the traditional classroom-based learning, which have a tendency to be very organized and well planned. However, the idea of informal learning fails to cover both the unstructured as well as the structured type of learning (Watkins and Marsick, 1992; Kyndt *et al*., 2016). Cheetham and Chivers (2001) further identified a number of informal learning strategies that include among others, self-directed learning, social learning, networking, coaching as well as mentoring (Kyndt *et al*., 2016).

The concept of social learning theory has its foundations in the behavioral aspect of human nature, which supports the view that individuals model their behavior based on the behaviors of others that achieve valued outcomes (Bandura, 1977; Hankin *et al*., 2016). This is because the social learning theory deals with the mutual relationship of behavioral, cognitive and environmental factors. Vygotsky (1978) argued that social interactions played a vital role in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978; Lipponen *et al*., 2016). When studying language learning in children, Vygotsky (1978) suggested that in the social engaging behavior, the extent to which adults are closer to children, the higher the potential for the children to develop their cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978; Lipponen *et al*., 2016). The same approach is applicable to the broader situations involving informal learning at the workplace where coworkers help each other through teamwork, coaching or mentoring (Vygotsky, 1978; Lipponen *et al*., 2016). The continuous process of socialization enables this learning process. Situated learning theory has its history traced back to the work of Bandura in social learning. As seen in the social learning theory, social interaction is a key factor of the learning process, which generally involves the acquisition knowledge as much as social participation. This is usually accidental rather than deliberate.

Lave and Wenger (1991) carried out an empirical research, studying situated learning in five different backgrounds (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Taha, 2016). According to their findings, the novices who were originally on the boundary of the community moved on to the center of the community of practitioners as their competences increased (Lave and Wenger, 1991). The participants' development was marked by an improvement in the level of their active participation in the socio-cultural practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Taha, 2016). As a result, the development of the learners within the community must be valuable to the community as a whole. Additional understanding of this idea can be found in the learner-network theory (Poell *et al.*, 2000; 2016). In these sittings, the individuals and their ability to interact, which facilitated their negotiation power within the vertical, horizontal, external and liberal dimensions, proved to achieve learning. Marsick *et al*., (2008) suggested that individuals are more hands-on as well as free in planning their own learning strategies to support their performances and personal agendas (Marsick *et al*., 2008; Sequeda *et al*., 2015). This researcher believes that banking professional in the Nigerian banking industry can develop their competencies through daily activities and formal training.

2.5.5 Potential benefits of the Competency approach

Researchers have documented performance benefits promised by the various definitions, which include the causal or instrumental relationship of competencies and job performance (Boyatzis 1982; CIPD, 2016) and competencies and organisational performance (Organ, 1988; Hamel and Prahalad, 1989; Sypniewska, 2013; CIPD, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016). In addition, Sparrow (1995) has observed that the competency literature includes a huge range of claimed benefits specific to HR processes in organisations. The CIPD, (2016) documents also supported this view, and the benefits are as follows:

> *Improved recruitment and selection practices through a focus on required competencies; improved individual, organisational and career development programmes; improved performance management processes due to improved assessment; and lastly improved communication on strategic and HR issues through a common language.*

Competency is believed to be the glue that links the aspiration of making people competitive and seeing these assets with the reality of the business, which enables organisations to measure, monitor and plan with it. If these banks are able to get the competency profile right it will help achieve sustainable competitive advantage for the banks which could lead to performance with a possibility of impacting the economy as banking success is critically linked to the economic futures of any economy. McClelland (1973) supported the use of criterion-referenced assessment (CRA). The CRA involves analysing key characteristics of an individual's behaviour that distinguishes effective and less effective performance (Hsieh *et al*., 2012; Vaishya *et al*., 2016). The high interest found in the competency modelling as an approach to recruitment and performance management attributed to a variety of factors. Firstly, a significant amount of employees, which includes banking professionals in the workplace are engaging in knowledge-based work, Secondly, the understanding of competencies and their operation is increasingly rising in direct response to cost and competitive pressures in industries and organizations (Vaishya *et al*., 2016). McLagan (1996) stated that competent employees will always be productive no matter the work they do (McLagan 1996; Hsieh *et al*., 2012; Vaishya *et al*., 2016). Simonsen and Smith, (2008) suggested that as organizations evolve and come up with new strategic plans to meet their ever-changing business challenges, they must also define their ideal talent profile. They further recommended that talent profile must be future-focused, and provide answers to questions such as "What will people need to do to be able to achieve business goals?", "What kind of leadership is needed to achieve the targeted growth and profitability? The talent profile is based on competencies, therefore, recruitment interviews and selections process must be aligned accordingly (Simonsen and Smith, 2008; CIPD, 2016). By doing this correctly, Nigerian banks will be able to achieve the competency profile right which will help achieve sustained advantage over competitors and the influence on the performance of these banks.

2.5.5.1 Talent Management

Researchers have an ongoing disagreement concerning the ideal definition for talent, and this is seen in the many definitions presented by researchers in the field of talent and talent management (TM) and its conceptual boundaries (Collings and Mellahi 2009; McDonnell *et al*., 2017). In addition to this disagreement in definitions, is how organisations can best utilise these talents as resources to create value for the organisation (Sirmon *et al*., 2007; Cai *et al*., 2016), and the different approaches to talent management practices that influences organisations. The lack of clarity in the definition of talent and talent management, has led to some researchers to suggest the existence of a disagreement between the academic researchers and practitioners (Lewis and Heckman 2006; Mäkelä *et al*., 2010; Finkelstein et al., 2017). The literature on talent and talent management suggest that people as individuals, are currently characterised as a key to achieving sustained advantage over competitors to the organisations they work for (Lewis and Heckman 2006; Collings and Mellahi 2009; Tafti *et al*., 2017), and therefore, maximizing the organization's performance (Tafti *et al*., 2017). The literature also document that talents are typically difficult to copy, imitate and to substitute (Lewis and Heckman 2006; CIPD, 2016). However, the literature also documents the difficulties in achieving a working definition for talent or talent management, therefore, the term has been defined in many ways in an organizational setting (Lewis and Heckman 2006; Tafti *et al*., 2017). This has made it difficult to define the word 'talent' (Tansley 2011; Tietze *et al*., 2017).

In order to provide a proper definition for 'talent' and 'talent management' in an organizational setting, and in harmony with the objective of this research, the researcher has presented three definitions recognized as appropriate, and they as follows:

> *"The sum of a person's abilities - his or her intrinsic gifts, skills, knowledge, experience, intelligence, judgement, attitude, character, and drive. It also includes his or her ability to learn and grow"* (Michaels *et al*., 2001).

> *''Talent refers to systematically developed innate abilities of individuals that are deployed in activities they like, find important, and in which they want to invest energy.*

It enables individuals to perform excellently in one or more domains of human functioning, operationalized as performing better than other individuals of the same age or experience, or as performing consistently at their personal best'' (Nijs *et al.*, 2014, 182).

"Talent consists of those individuals who can make a difference to organisational performance either through their immediate contribution or, in the longer-term, by demonstrating the highest levels of potential" (CIPD, 2016).

The rationale behind 'talent management' is to attract, identify, develop, engage, retain and deploy workers who are regarded as valuable to the organization (CIPD, 2016). Therefore, when managed strategically, organizations are able to build a highly performing workforce, promote organizational learning, add value to the brand, and contribute to the management of diversity. This is why HR professionals all over consider talent management as a key priority (CIPD, 2016). Zhu, X., Iles, P., Shutt, J., (2011) highlight the struggle of organizations in terms of managing talent. These barriers are experienced in achieving cultural diversity, establishing global-consistent HR practices, and talent-evaluation processes (Zhu, X., Iles, P., Shutt, J., 2011). They suggest that organizations that are able to achieve global TM practices are most likely to report a strong financial performance. This makes the management of talent very significant and is classed as a priority for HR professional (CIPD, 2016). However, many companies lack commitment to develop a comprehensive leadership development strategy, or expertise to implement successful talent management practices (Zhu, X., Iles, P., Shutt, J., 2011).

2.5.6 Types of Competencies

Carrol and McCrackin (1988) suggested three types of competencies; the first is the core competency proposed by Prahalad and Hamel (1990). The core competency forms the basis for strategic direction; it is something a company does well relative to other competitors (Schaupp and Virkkunen 2017). This is because the workforce of the organization is crucial in terms of creating strategic value and organizational performance in the organization, the concept has influenced the HRM practices. Core competencies refer to the elements of behaviour that are important for all employees to possess (Schaupp and Virkkunen 2017). The second category is leadership / managerial competencies. This category involves competencies relating to leading an organization and people to achieve an organization's objectives that relate to managing, supervising, and developing people. Leadership competencies are leadership skills and behaviors necessary for effective and superior performance (Burgoyne *et al*., 2004; Verle *et al*., 2014). The application of competency-based approach to leadership enables organizations to better identify and develop the organizations next generation of leaders. Researchers and practitioners have identified the essential leadership competencies and global competencies required for superior performance. Nonetheless, future business styles and strategy drive the development of new leadership competencies. Although some leadership competencies are important to all organizations, each organization defines what leadership attributes are distinctive to their organization to create competitive advantage. Some examples include "*visionary leadership*", "*strategic thinking*", and "*developing people*". The third category is functional (job-specific) competencies, those that are required to perform a particular job role or profession (Ozcelik and Ferman, 2006; Delima, 2016). For the purpose of this study the researcher will focus on core competencies because the core competencies of the case study, banks, forms the basis for strategic direction, and is crucial in terms of creating strategic value and organizational performance in the selected case study as supported by the SHRM literature.

2.5.6.1 Core Competencies

From the period, researchers started investigating competencies; almost all the researchers have suggested the existence of a positive relationship between competencies and successful performance. In 1982, Boyatzis stated in his book competency and performance, that "*Goal and Action Management*", "*Leadership*", and "*Human Resource Management*" is the most important competency clusters for successful performance (Lakshminarayanan *et al*., 2016). In addition to this, Prahalad and Hamel (1990) highlighted the difference between technological and management competencies and suggested that only the fit of both competencies can lead to organisational success (Husain *et al*., 2016). Subsequent to these findings, the assessment centre movement only concentrated on organisation-specific bundles of competencies to explain success and failure (Woodruffe, 1993; Haladay *et al*., 2017). Consequently, in their research, Bartlett and Goshal (1997) attempted to identify the typical competency clusters for any hierarchical level (Bartlett and Goshal, 1997; Beaverstock, 2017), while McCall (1998) focused on the relationship between competency and corporate strategy as the crucial factor for success. In the last decade, researchers like Heyse and Erpenbeck (2004), Erpenbeck and von Rosenstiel (2007), Mühlbacher (2007), and Kauffeld *et al*., (2009) have presented multiple-job-models to emphasise the fact that competencies are strongly focused on successful performance. Based on the findings of these studies, individuals and organisations are able to tackle upcoming performance challenges. However, most of these models with the exception of Boyatzis (1982) failed to offer any empirical evidence relating to the relationship between competency management and corporate performance. Other researchers have focused their research on functional areas of competencies and have suggested that the functional areas could become the core competencies of the organization through the combination of skills and resources (Snow and Hrebiniak, 1980; Hitt and Ireland, 1985; Parnell, and Crandall, 2016).

Researchers have acknowledged and documented the significance influence of core competence on sustained competitive advantage (Petts, 1997; Hafeez *et al*., 2002; Schaupp and Virkkunen 2017). Some schools of thought have suggested that core competencies are at the foundation of all competitive advantage (Srivastava, 2005; Mappigau and Maupa 2015).

Banerjee (2003) described core competency as the knowledge on successes or failures in endorsing knowledge resources (Banerjee, 2003; Kabue and Kilika 2016). Other researchers define core competence as the ability to function proficiently within the work environment and to effectively respond to challenges (Kabue and Kilika 2016) Organisations are believed to be different in terms of their capability to select, build, deploy, and protect their core competencies. These dissimilarities are likely to produce different results in terms of organisational performance (Hamel, 1994; Kabue and Kilika 2016). The notion of core competence established to support the organisation in its desire to achieve a more efficient identification and utilization of an organization's strength. This view hinges on the belief that core competencies change more slowly over time than products and markets are cumulative (Gupta *et al*., 2009; Subari1 and Riady 2015).

Core competence as an idea, is thought to have strategic implications if the organisation is able to systematically identifying their core competencies and develop them to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Srivastava, 2005; Mappigau and Maupa 2015). It has also been documented that the theory of competence-based competition maintains that core competencies are a major source of sustainable competitive advantage to the organisation (Kabue and Kilika 2016). This is because the core competencies are valuable capabilities that are collective and unique in their characteristics, as well as strategically flexible, therefore, contributing toward the success of organisation (Hafeez *et al*., 2002; 2017).

Leonard-Barton (1992) defined core competency as the diverse factor that differentiates a firm from its competitors. According to Sanchez and Heene (1997), core competencies are usually the outcome of "*collective learning*" processes and are revealed in the organisations' activities and processes (Kirui *et al*., 2016). Hafeez *et al*., (2002) stated that core competencies are the unique capabilities possessed by the organisation, which is seen in several products or markets (Hafeez *et al*., 2002; Kumar 2016). Javidan (1998) argued that core competencies are a collection of competencies that are wide-ranging in the organisation, and it results from the interaction between different competencies (Javidan, 1998; Rezaee and Jafari 2016). Prahalad and Hamel (1990) proposed, "*Core competencies are the collective learning in the organizations, and the coordination of diverse production skills and integrated sources of technologies.*" They further argue that core competence is communication, involvement, and a deep commitment to working across organizational boundaries (Gupta *et al.,* 2009; Subari1 and Riady 2015). Researchers have recognised the significance of core competence by progressing the concept in multiple directions by linking it to theoretical ideas of learning (Lei *et al*., 1996; Kumar 2016), by proposing core competence models to sustain competitive advantage (Petts, 1997; Hafeez *et al*., 2002; Kumar 2016). Building on the concept's rudimentary ideas to create similar concepts (Eden and Ackermann, 2000; Sanchez, 2004; Kumar 2016), and by developing processes for its identification (Javidan, 1998; Eden and Ackermann, 2000; Rezaee and Jafari 2016). The significance of the idea is also recognised when testing the application of core competence as strategy (Clark, 2000; Clark and Scott, 2000; Kabue and Kilika 2016). Researchers have documented that in addition to the identifying competencies, the critical task is to assess the core competencies in relation to those of rival organisation. Although the organisation may recognise the entire competence that it performs better than its rival organisations, not all competences are "core". Core competences are those competences, which allow the organisation to achieve a superior advantage. According to Hamel and Prahalad (1994; 1990) they consider "core" as the competence which meets three key criteria and are as follows:

> ***Customer Value:*** *It must make a significant contribution to Customer perceived value.*
>
> ***Competitor Differentiation:*** *Cannot be defined as core except the organisation's level of competence is superior to all its rivals and it's difficult for the rivals to imitate.*

Extendibility: *It must be capable of being applied to new product arenas.*

Many researchers have focused their studies on these three key areas of core competence, and they are as follows: Shared vision, Cooperation and Empowerment (Sanchez, 2004; Hafeez *et al*., 2002; Javidan, 1998; King and Zeithaml, 2001; Hafeez and Essmail, 2007; Kabue and Kilika 2016). As a result, this research will focus on these three key areas of core competence in understanding the influence of competencies on performance in the selected case study banks. Santos-Vijande *et al*., (2005) defined shared vision as the organisation's interest in sharing the views of the organisational goals, objectives, policies, priorities, and expectations (Santos-Vijande *et al*., 2005; 2016). They also emphasized the importance to guarantee learning and to make sure that learning really takes place. This is because organisations with greater shared vision are more likely to achieve superiority and success. In addition, the shared vision can be utilized in building customer focused innovative products and services and meet the needs of the market (Ussahawanitchakit, 2008; Muangkhot and Ussahawanitchakit, 2015). Cooperation is another key factor that is significant in the development of core competence. Cooperation is the combined behaviour in the direction of a specific goal or common interest that involves interpersonal relationships (Croteau *et al*., 2001; Carañana *et al*., 2016). Cooperation in relation to core competence recognises when and how to attract, reword, and utilize teams to optimize results. It helps to build trust, motivates, inspires others and helps resolve conflicts and develop agreement in creating high performance (Kabue and Kilika 2016). Empowerment is a process or psychological state manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self- determination, and impact. In detail, the meaning has to do with a sense of feeling that the individual's job is personally important (Huang *et al*., 2015). Empowering enhances the feeling of importance towards the employee's job by helping an employee understand the importance of his or her contribution to overall organizational effectiveness.

2.5.6.2 Core Competence, Competitive Advantage and Organizational performance

Literature on the concept of core competencies has offered a wide range of explanations concerning the notion of core competencies and its role in enhancing the competitive advantage of an organisation (Srivastava, 2005; Mappigau and Maupa 2015). Bogner *et al*. (1999) proposed that academics, executives in businesses, and consultants are in the key position to further develop the normative and theoretical propositions of core competencies that will enhance the understanding of competence and dynamic competitive advantage (Bogner *et al*. 1999). As a result, competitive advantage and core competency cannot be said to be the same, however, can be narrowly related because a successful competitive strategy is built upon the organisation's core competencies and competitive advantages *(*Javidan, 1998; Rezaee and Jafari 2016). Therefore, core competencies are the set of knowledge that distinguishes an organisation and provides a competitive advantage over its rivals (Leonard-Barton, 1992). Srivastava (2005) suggested that when core competencies are viewed as a unique knowledge for defining and solving problems in the organisation, can form the basis of the organisation's competitive advantage and can also be leveraged in a wide-ranging variety of markets for future products and services (Srivastava, 2005; Mappigau and Maupa 2015). Calantone *et al*. (2002) discovered that shared vision has a positive influence on an organization's innovativeness, which also influences the organizational performance. Bani-Hani and AL-Hawary (2009) pointed out that there is a significant positive relationship between core competences and competitive advantage.

2.5.7 Competency Frameworks for Organisational Managements

An organisation's technological tools and advancement are only useful to the organisation if their employees can effectively utilize the technology to the organisation's advantage. Therefore, a key to achieving competitive advantage is the ability of the organisation's workforce to maximize the advantages of their state of the art technology, superior products, and steady source of capital to enter into the marketplace (McLagan, 1989; Kabue and Kilika, 2016).

Trying to find out whether or not an organisation's workforce has the competencies critical to their success is a difficult task (Kabue and Kilika 2016). This is because the behaviours and roles necessary for effective performance vary from business to business. Various organisations have developed their own competency frameworks to help them identify the essential knowledge, skills and attributes needed for successful performance in a particular job role, aligned with the strategy and integrating it to the HR strategy (CIPD, 2016). This is why the CBN has decided to introduce a competency framework for Nigerian banks, and this is what the CBN hopes to achieve with the competency framework. The competency framework describes the combination of knowledge, skills and characteristics needed to effectively perform the job related tasks in an organisation and is used as a human resource tool for selection, training and development, appraisal and succession planning, identifying and mapping these competencies which is rather complex (CIPD, 2016; Kabue and Kilika 2016). A collection of competencies constitutes a competency framework that is applicable to the positions in the organization, thus, is at the heart of every competency-based human resources management application (Sanghi, 2007; Idrissi *et al*., 2016). Accordingly, in this study, competency is interpreted as a set of behaviours, skills, knowledge, ability and personal characteristics needed to implement the strategic goals of the organization. In addition, it needs to be emphasized that the term "*competency model*" and occasionally used "competency framework" has the same meaning and will be used as synonyms.

Organisations adopting a competency approach are expected to create or utilise a competency framework, at least a simple list or catalogue of specific desirable competencies (Idrissi *et al*., 2016). The structure of the competency framework is expected to support the use of competencies across the selected HR functions (CIPD, 2016). In addition, frameworks designed for the selection and educational purposes usually describe the technical competencies in terms of their skills and knowledge, at a detailed level. Those designed to promote behavioural repertoires and citizenship behaviours or organisational competencies typically describe competencies at a much higher level (Idrissi *et al*., 2016). Irrespective of the approach, the competency framework is expected to provide an operational definition for each competency and sub-competency, in addition to the measurable or observable performance indicators or standards against which individuals are evaluated. As pointed out by Shippmann *et al*., (2000) competency frameworks are hugely trendy in HR practices. Despite the fact that job analysis focus mainly on the individual level, inspecting the specific knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes required for individual job performance, most competency framework represents an attempt to identify dimensions of performance applicable to many different roles and situations (Shippmann *et al*., 2000; White and Moore 2016).

2.5.7.1 Applications of Competency Frameworks

The benefits of using competency-based management systems are enormous to organisations in terms of performance objectives (Boam and Sparrow, 1992; Ali, 2017). In addition, the effective implementation of the competency framework is expected to provide an organization with a system for hiring, measuring performance and providing feedback for developing competencies and rewarding superior performance for top-level talent (Santo, 1998; Ali, 2017). Since the 1990s, competencies have formed the basis for human resources and strategic management practices in terms of recruiting, selecting, placing, leading people, training employees and evaluating employee performance (Dubois, 1993; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999; Ali, 2017). Competency frameworks have also been effective in the classification of jobs in both the private and public sectors. When engaging in succession planning, competency frameworks are used by the organisation to prepare and advance top-level incumbent talent to vacant positions of leadership. In order to be used successfully in an organization or other professional network, competencies are expected to be inclusive or integrated throughout all of the human resources practices of the organisation (Montier *et al*., 2006 and Rothwell and Wellins, 2004; Shet *et al*., 2017). Accordingly, competency frameworks are not to be used in isolation but integrated with other HR activities in the organisation.

Another benefit for using competency framework to develop behaviourally based interview protocols and assessment tools is that it makes sure the right candidate fit for the job is selected during the selecting and hiring phase for a position (McClelland, 1998; Yusof, 2017). It also prepares incumbent top-level talent for succession into specific positions through development plans and training, and guidance received through the performance review system of the organisation (Gangani *et al*., 2006; White and Moore, 2016). It has been documented that developing the relevant competency framework for each position within the organization can create the appropriate capacity for the human resources to meet the goals of the organization. According to Le Deist and Winterton (2005) competency frameworks describes what each individual employee must do consistently to achieve or exceed the strategic goals of the organization (Le Deist and Winterton, 2005; Ploum *et al*., 2017). In other words, there are competencies required in a job role and both average and top-level talent can hold these. In addition, there are also competencies held by only the top-level talents in the organisation (Dubois, 1993; Vaishya *et al*., 2016). This definition has to do with the aligning of people and their performance to the organisations' strategic goals, organizational strategy and success, business competitiveness and profit.

Furthermore, it has also been documented that developing and utilizing competency frameworks has been equated with running a profitable and successful organization through strategic management of the professional talent within the organization. In simple terms, an individual's characteristics and attributes must fit with the organisational culture in order to achieve the desired success on the job. Devoid of these attributes or competencies, the individual is not considered qualified for the job, however, if in possession of the desired qualities the individual is assumed to qualify because it will lead to expected or desired performance (Rothwell, 2002; Quinones and Leon, 2016).

Assessing and evaluating the performance of the organisation's workforce through a competency-based appraisal system and providing opportunities based on the competency framework is necessary for organizational success (Egodigwe, 2006). From a human resources perspective and strategic business model, the competency framework is believed to be effective if used to assist the redeployment of employees in an organization or industry to benefit an organization (CIPD, 2016). Competencies do not only exist for the purpose of individual performance but also for work related functions that require team collaboration. This is because organizational success is also dependent on team performance and not individual performance (Margerison, 2001; Basmawi and Usop, 2016). Since competency frameworks describe the qualities required of employees to be successful in their individual position, on a team, and within an organization, the competency framework is expected to be robust, dynamic, fluid, and flexible to change with technological, economic, and other changes (Dubois, 1993; and Lucia, and Lepsinger, 1999; Herd *et al*., 2016). In addition, the competency framework is expected to be evaluated and refined frequently, along with the selection and other human resource practices developed and used with the competency framework (Egodigwe, 2006; Lucia, and Lepsinger, 1999; Herd *et al*., 2016).

2.5.8 The Competency Frameworks in other sectors and other countries

The competency approach is considered an established feature in most public and private organisations all over the world. This approach is being driven by the new business and human resource agendas to deliver business performance in an increasingly competitive or resource limited business environment, and the key to achieving this is to improve the performance of individual managers and employees. Organisations have come to the conclusion that the need to develop the future skills required by the business is the reason for introducing competencies (Strebler and Bevan, 1996; RJ Scott, 2016) and they are of the opinion that competencies will provide a common language and enable cultural change (Strebler *et al.*, 1997; Ali, 2017). Human resources are now viewed upon as the key to achieving organisational success and the development / effective management of these resources is progressively more concerning for organisations and the management education industry. The competency approach has taken centre stage and is looked to for direction on how to develop and manage human resources. In the UK, the Institute of Personnel and Development (IPD) and the British Institute of Management (BIM) have completely accepted the competency approach and as lead bodies, they have set down measures and a competency framework which is used for professional development and award of professional status to both individual employees and senior managers. As lead bodies they also circulate what they believe to be good practice and the latest thoughts on employees and management issues. Both bodies have been predominantly active in endorsing performance management and see competencies as the core of performance. Similar bodies such as the American Management Association, American Institute of Public Personnel Management, US based International Personnel Management Association and the Australian Human Resources Institute has also been promoting competency management in their countries and across many countries. The researcher is aware of the use of competency frameworks in other countries and sectors, however since the researcher is based in the UK and is familiar with the use of competency framework in the UK, the researcher has focused his attention to the use of competency framework in the UK's NHS.

2.5.8.1 The NHS Leadership Competency Framework

According to the NHS (2010) their Leadership Competency Framework (LCF) is built on the concept of shared leadership where leadership is not restricted to people who hold designated leadership roles, and where there is a shared sense of responsibility for the success of the organisation and its services. Acts of leadership can come from anyone in the organisation, as appropriate at different times, and are focused on the achievement of the group rather than of an individual. Therefore shared leadership actively supports effective teamwork.

The NHS LCF is a key tool which can be used to:

- Help with the design of training curricula and development programmes
- Highlight individual strengths and development areas through self-assessment and structured feedback from colleagues
- Help with personal development planning and career progression.

The delivering of services to patients, service users, and stakeholders is expected to be at the heart of the Leadership Competency Framework. This is particularly similar to banking as banking professionals work hard to improve services for their customers.

According to the NHS there are five domains highlighted in their LCF which are listed below. To deliver appropriate, safe and effective services, it is essential that leaders are competent in each of the five domains. Within each domain there are four elements and each of these elements is further divided into four competency outcomes. This Leadership Competency Framework can be used in service based organisations like banks to inform the design of development programmes, appraisal and recruitment.

1. ***Demonstrating Personal Qualities***

Leaders showing effective leadership capabilities are expected to draw upon their values, strengths and abilities to deliver high standards performance. This requires leaders to demonstrate competence in the areas of:

1.1 Developing Self Awareness

1.2 Managing Yourself

1.3 Continuing Personal Development

1.4 Acting with Integrity.

1.1 Developing Self Awareness

Leaders show leadership capabilities through developing self-awareness: being aware of their own values, principles and assumptions and by being able to learn from experiences.

Competent leaders recognise and articulate their own values and principles, understanding how these may differ from those of other individuals and groups; identify their own strengths and limitations, the impact of their behaviour on others, and the effect of stress on their own behaviour; identify their own emotions and prejudices and understand how these can affect their judgment and behaviour; obtain, analyse and act on feedback from a variety of sources.

1.2 Managing Yourself

Leaders show leadership through managing themselves: organising and managing themselves while taking account of the needs and priorities of others.

Competent leaders manage the impact of their emotions on their behaviour with consideration of the impact on others; are reliable in meeting their responsibilities and commitments to consistently high standards; ensure that their plans and actions are flexible, and take account of the needs and work patterns of others; plan their workload and activities to fulfil work requirements and commitments, without compromising their own health.

1.3 Continuing Personal Development

Leaders show leadership through continuing personal development: learning through participating in continuing professional development and from experience and feedback.

Competent leaders actively seek opportunities and challenges for personal learning and development; acknowledge mistakes and treat them as learning opportunities; participate in continuing professional development activities; change their behaviour in the light of feedback and reflection.

1.4 Acting with Integrity

Leaders show leadership through acting with integrity: behaving in an open, honest and ethical manner.

Competent leaders uphold personal and professional ethics and values, taking into account the values of the organisation and respecting the culture, beliefs and abilities of individuals; communicate effectively with individuals, appreciating their social, cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds and their age, gender and abilities; value, respect and promote equality and diversity; take appropriate action if ethics and values are compromised.

2. Working with Others

Leaders show leadership qualities by working with others in teams and networks to deliver and improve services. This requires leaders to demonstrate competence in:

2.1 Developing Networks

2.2 Building and Maintaining Relationships

2.3 Encouraging Contribution

2.4 Working within Teams.

2.1 Developing Networks

Leaders show leadership qualities by developing networks: working in partnership with customers, stakeholders and colleagues within and across systems to deliver and improve services.

Competent leaders identify opportunities where working with patients and colleagues in the clinical setting can bring added benefits; create opportunities to bring individuals and groups together to achieve goals; promote the sharing of information and resources; actively seek the views of others.

2.2 Building & Maintaining Relationships

Leaders show leadership qualities by building and maintaining relationships: listening, supporting others, gaining trust and showing understanding.

Competent leaders listen to others and recognise different perspectives; empathise and take into account the needs and feelings of others; communicate effectively with individuals and groups, and act as a positive role model; gain and maintain the trust and support of colleagues.

2.3 Encouraging Contribution

Leaders show leadership qualities by encouraging contribution: creating an environment where others have the opportunity to contribute.

Competent leaders provide encouragement and the opportunity for people to engage in decision-making and to challenge constructively; respect, value and acknowledge the roles, contributions and expertise of others; employ strategies to manage conflict of interests and differences of opinion; keep the focus of contribution on delivering and improving services to customers.

2.4 Working within Teams

Leaders show leadership qualities by working within teams: to deliver and improve services.

Competent leaders have a clear sense of their role, responsibilities and purpose within the team; adopt a team approach, acknowledging and appreciating efforts, contributions and compromises; recognise the common purpose of the team and respect team decisions; are willing to lead a team, involving the right people at the right time.

3. Managing Services

Leaders showing effective leadership are focused on the success of the organisation(s) in which they work.

This requires that leaders demonstrate competence in:

3.1 Planning

3.2 Managing Resources

3.3 Managing People

3.4 Managing Performance.

3.1 Planning

Leaders show leadership by planning: actively contributing to plans to achieve service goals.

Competent leaders support plans for services that are part of the strategy for the wider organisational system; gather feedback from patients / customers, stakeholders and colleagues to help develop plans; contribute their expertise to planning processes; appraise options in terms of benefits and risks.

3.2 Managing Resources

Leaders show leadership by managing resources: knowing what resources are available and using their influence to ensure that resources are used efficiently and safely, and reflect the diversity of needs.

Competent leaders accurately identify the appropriate type and level of resources required to deliver safe and effective services; ensure services are delivered within allocated resources; minimise waste; take action when resources are not being used efficiently and effectively.

3.3 Managing People

Leaders show leadership by managing people: providing direction, reviewing performance, motivating others, and promoting equality and diversity.

Competent leaders provide guidance and direction for others using the skills of team members effectively; review the performance of the team members to ensure that planned service outcomes are met; support team members to develop their roles and responsibilities; support others to provide exceptional customer services.

3.4 Managing Performance

Leaders show leadership by managing performance: holding themselves and others accountable for service outcomes.

Competent leaders analyse information from a range of sources about performance; take action to improve performance; take responsibility for tackling difficult issues; build learning from experience into future plans.

4. *Improving Services*

Leaders showing effective leadership make a real difference to people's service experience by delivering high quality services and by developing improvements to services. This requires leaders to demonstrate competence in:

4.1 Ensuring Customer Satisfaction

4.2 Critically Evaluating

4.3 Encouraging Improvement and Innovation

4.4 Facilitating Transformation.

4.1 Ensuring Customer Satisfaction

Leaders show leadership by ensuring patient / customer satisfaction: assessing and managing the risk to customer associated with service developments, balancing economic considerations with the need for customer satisfaction.

Competent leaders identify and quantify the risk to patient / customers using information from a range of organisational sources; use evidence, both positive and negative, to identify options; use systematic ways of assessing and minimising risk; monitor the effects and outcomes of change.

4.2 Critically Evaluating

Leaders show leadership by critically evaluating: being able to think analytically, conceptually and to identify where services can be improved, working individually or as part of a team.

Competent leaders obtain and act on customers and stakeholders feedback and experiences; assess and analyse processes using up-to-date improvement methodologies; identify product improvements and create solutions through collaborative working; appraise options, and plan and take action to implement and evaluate improvements.

4.3 Encouraging Improvement and Innovation

Leaders show leadership by encouraging improvement and innovation: creating a climate of continuous service improvement.

Competent leaders question the status quo; act as a positive role model for innovation; encourage dialogue and debate with a wide range of people; develop creative solutions to transform services and products.

4.4 Facilitating Transformation

Leaders show leadership by facilitating transformation: actively contributing to change processes that lead to improving the organisation.

Competent leaders model the change expected; articulate the need for change and its impact on people and services; promote changes leading to systems redesign; motivate and focus a group to accomplish change.

5. Setting Direction

Leaders showing effective leadership contribute to the strategy and aspirations of the organisation and act in a manner consistent with its values. This requires leaders to demonstrate competence in:

5.1 Identifying the Contexts for Change

5.2 Applying Knowledge and Evidence

5.3 Making Decisions

5.4 Evaluating Impact.

5.1 Identifying the Contexts for Change

Leaders show leadership by identifying the contexts for change: being aware of the range of factors to be taken into account.

Competent leaders demonstrate awareness of the political, social, technical, economic, organisational and professional environment; understand and interpret relevant legislation and accountability frameworks; anticipate and prepare for the future by scanning for ideas, best practice and emerging trends that will have an impact on organisational outcomes; develop and communicate aspirations.

5.2 Applying Knowledge and Evidence

Leaders show leadership by applying knowledge and evidence: gathering information to produce an evidence-based challenge to systems and processes in order to identify opportunities for service improvements.

Competent leaders use appropriate methods to gather data and information; carry out analysis against an evidence-based criterion set; use information to challenge existing practices and processes; influence others to use knowledge and evidence to achieve best practice.

5.3 Making Decisions

Leaders show leadership by making decisions: using their values, and the evidence, to make good decisions.

Competent leaders participate in and contribute to organisational decision-making processes; act in a manner consistent with the values and priorities of their organisation and profession; educate and inform key people who influence and make decisions; contribute a clinical perspective to team, department, system and organisational decisions.

5.4 Evaluating Impact

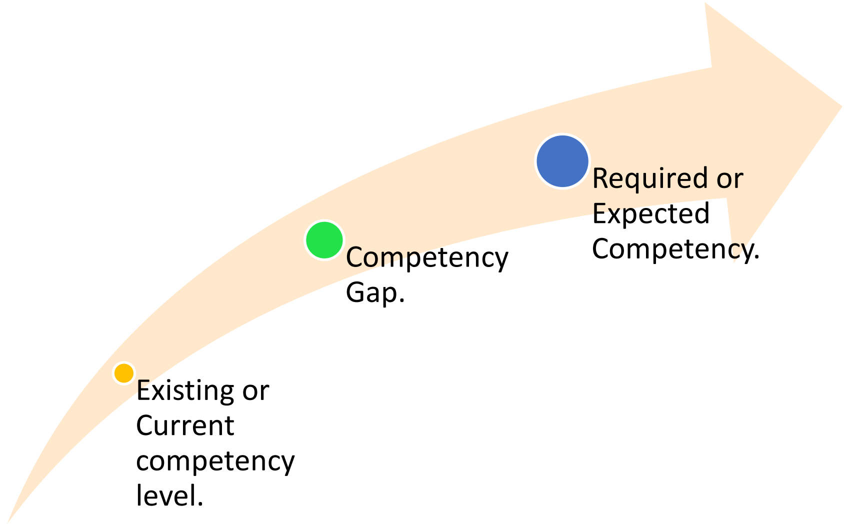
Leaders show leadership by evaluating impact: measuring and evaluating outcomes, taking corrective action where necessary and by being held to account for their decisions.

Competent leaders test and evaluate new service options; standardise and promote new approaches; overcome barriers to implementation; formally and informally disseminate good practice.

2.5.9 Competency Mapping

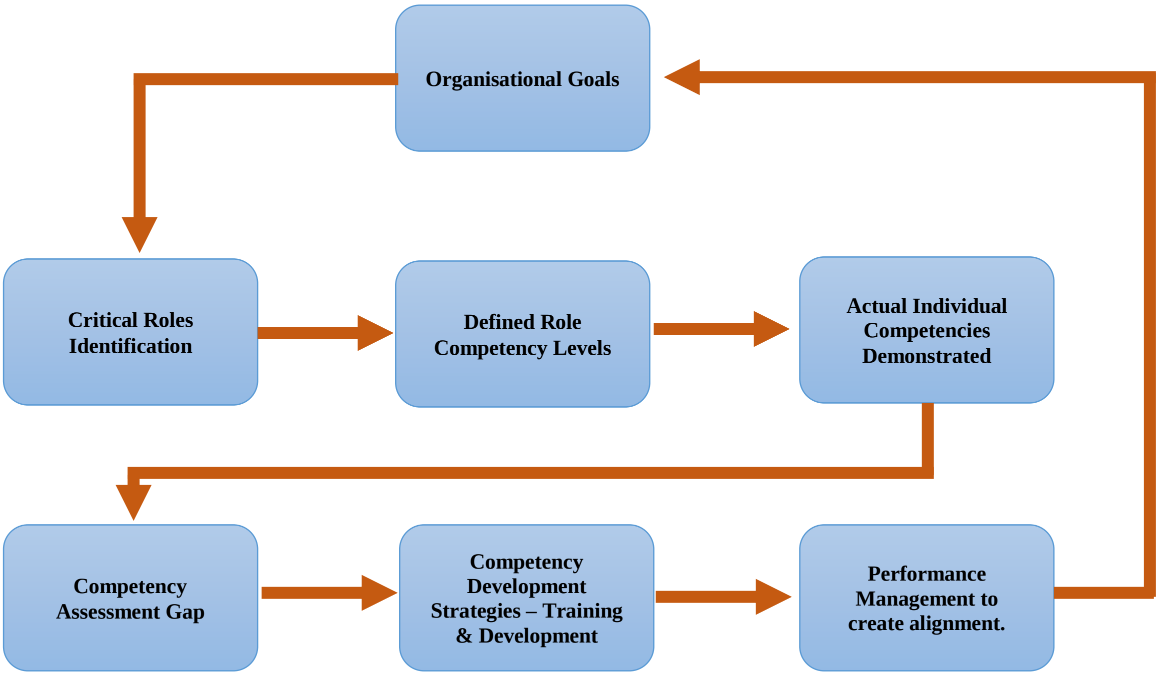
Competency mapping is the process used by HR professionals to identify and list the required competencies considered most relevant and significant to the organisation in carrying out a specific job role in an effective manner (CIPD, 2016). It also defines the degree to which the individual possesses the various competencies related to a job. Although the definition of competency mapping presented above refers to individual employees and jobholders, however, organisations also map competencies form a different perspective (Garrett, 2015). The most common strategy used by organisations to map competencies is the core competencies, which is required for organisational success, business unit competency sets, job specific competencies and competencies defined for each job role. Once the required competency is identified, competency profiling is prepared presenting the key expected competencies for the particular job role (CIPD, 2016). Once this is achieved, the expected or required competencies are then matched against the actual competencies of the employee. The process of identifying the gap between expected and actual competencies is referred to as Competency Mapping (CIPD, 2016). Various researchers believe that every individual has some basic competencies but could be different from the desired competencies have documented it by the organisation in terms of combination and degree of competencies. Therefore, it is significant for the organisation to identify the critical basic competencies required for each individual to be effective in a particular job role and add to the organisational success. Therefore, the need for mapping competencies proves significantly important to the organisation. The process is designed to consistently measure and assess individuals and team performance in relation to the expected organisational outcomes.

Figure 2.5 Competency Gap Approach



Competency mapping is used to identify key features (knowledge, skills, and behaviour attributes) that the organisation considers significantly important to effectively perform in a particular job role or an identified process. Competency Mapping juxtaposes two sets of data as follows. The first set of data is based on the organisational processes and procedures, and it begins with having a clear understanding of the process and procedures of the particular job, as well as all quality and quantity requirements, inputs and outputs, decision qualities, and most importantly, internal and external customer requirements. The second set of data on the other hand, is based on individual and group performance proficiencies. The data is acquired with a variety of assessment tools and processes to measure the extent to which individuals and teams are consistently demonstrating the required competencies over time to meet the specific job expectations. This can be achieved through a robust 360- degree feedback process. In spite of the growing level of awareness, competency-based Human Resource (HR) remains an uncharted process in many organisations (CIPD, 2016). The fundamental principle of competency mapping is not only about finding the right persons for the right job. Finding the right persons for the right job is much more complicated than it appears, and most HR practitioners have struggled to formulate the right framework for their organisations (CIPD, 2016).

Figure 2.6: A Competency Assessment Flow Model



This model outlines the process to assessing competencies in order to achieve organisational goals. This study also adopts this approach in assessing the competencies in the selected Nigerian banks, in order to understand its influence on performance. This approach provided the researcher with a structured framework for investigating the research question during the interviews, therefore, informing some of the interview questions.

2.6 Performance Management

Performance management is the entire process of making sure that staff performance contributes to the overall business objectives both individually and collectively as a team. This is achieved by bringing together the various elements of a good people management system, which includes learning and development, measurement of performance, and organizational development. Armstrong and Baron (2005) defined performance management as a process designed to contribute to the effective management of employees as individuals and teams, in order to achieve high-level performance outcomes in the organization. As such, it creates a shared understanding between the employees and the organization, on what is to be achieved and the approach to leading and developing people to ensure the achievement of the desired organizational outcomes (Armstrong and Baron, 2005; CIPD, 2016; Armstrong and Taylor, 2017). They suggest that performance management is an effective strategy which transmits to every activity of the organization, in terms of its human resource policies, culture, style and communication systems (Armstrong and Baron, 2005; CIPD, 2016; Armstrong and Taylor, 2017). In addition, they further state that performance should be strategic in terms of the broad organizational issues and long-term goals and have integrated links between various aspects of the business, people management, individuals and teams (Armstrong and Baron, 2005; CIPD, 2016; Armstrong and Taylor, 2017). In order to meet the organizational objectives, the performance management system must incorporate the following key structures. Performance improvement is expected to be incorporated throughout the organization, in respect of individual, team and organizational effectiveness. Development, individual and team performance will not improve unless there is continuous development of individuals and teams. Managing behaviour ensures that individuals are encouraged to behave in a way that allows and fosters better working relationships (Armstrong and Baron, 2005; CIPD, 2016; Armstrong and Taylor, 2017).

The increased focus on performance expectations and performance management in all organisations has risen from the pressures of globalisation and the associated requirement to create competitive advantage in order for the organisation to survive. Elias and Scarbrough, (2004) argued that human recourse, competencies, talents and the core competencies of the organisation’s employees are parts of the key components in creating such competitive advantage for the organisation (Elias and Scarbrough, 2004; Gupta and Bhasin, 2014). Tahvanainen, (2000) argued that performance management has a key role in the development of the organisations human resource as key sources of competitive advantage (Tahvanainen, 2000; Buchelt 2015). Performance management, as a concept, has developed over the past twenty years as a strategic, integrated process that incorporates the goal setting of the organisation. The performance appraisal and development system of the organisation unites into a coherent framework with the specific aim of aligning individual performance goals with that of the organisation’s wider objectives (Williams, 2002; Dessler, 2005, 2013; Buchelt 2015). As a result, it is concerned with the way people work, the way they are managed and developed to improve performance and ultimately, ways to maximise the employee’s contribution to the organisation (Armstrong and Baron, 2005; CIPD, 2016). This is reinforced by the idea that sustained organisational success can be achieved through a strategic and integrated approach to improving the performance and developing the core competencies of individuals and teams (Armstrong and Baron, 2005; CIPD, 2016). Although competitive pressures have driven the increased interest in performance management, organisations have been able to use performance management processes to support or drive cultural change and shift the emphasis to individual performance and self-development (Fletcher, 2001; Ibeogu, and Ozturen, 2015). In addition, literature has documented several underlying principles that support this idea. Firstly, performance management is a strategic process that aligns employees to the organisation’s key objectives and long-term goals. Secondly, performance management is integrative in nature; it does not only align employees with the organisational objectives but also brings together the different characteristics of human resource management such as the development of human resource, staff reward and organisational development, in a coherent method to effectively management and developing people. Thirdly, performance management is concerned with the enhancement of employee performance, in order to achieve both individual and organisational efficiency (Fletcher, 2001; Ibeogu, and Ozturen, 2015). As a result, performance enhancement is supported by two additional principles and they are as follows: firstly, employee effort should be goal-oriented and the organisation's performance improvement mechanism must support the development of employee competence. Another key feature is the communication and understanding that performance management is based on an agreement between managers and employees, a shared understanding of the continuous discussion concerning the expected performance outcomes of the employee, standards of the performance and the competencies needed to achieved desired outcomes, in connection with the understanding of the organisation's shared values and business objectives. This links directly to the final point, which suggests that performance management process, unlike performance appraisals, are owned and driven by line managers and not the organisations HR function (Fletcher, 2001; Ibeogu, and Ozturen, 2015).

2.6.1 The theoretical basis for performance management

The fundamental theoretical underpinning for performance management hinges on the motivation theory and, in specific, the goal-setting theory and expectancy theory (CIPD, 2016). Locke and Latham (1984) suggested that the Goal-setting theory assessment of specific goals does not only result in enhanced performance but also assume goal acceptance, therefore, increasing the challenges of goals can lead to increased motivation and performance (Locke and Latham, 1984; Ferreira, 2017). The Expectancy theory on the other hand, assumes that employees change their behaviour according to their expected satisfaction in achieving specific goals (Petty *et al.*, 1984; Shoraj, and Llaci, 2015). Both theories are believed to have a significant implication on the design of performance management processes. Clark and Salaman (1998) propose that both goal setting and expectancy theory were established on the foundation that individuals think in a sensible, calculative and distinctive way (Clark and Salaman, 1998; CIPD, 2016). In addition, Clark and Salaman (1998) stated that performance management is based on an extremely rationalistic, commanded view of the organisation, which suggests that strategy cannot only be clearly expressed, but also, the outcomes of the HR processes can be designed in a way that creates a clear direction to the organisation's strategic objectives. Further to this, he also argued that the approach assumes a vital connection between different portions of the process that can be easily identified, and enable underperforming individuals in one or more aspects of the process to be managed, and ensure superior functioning of the organisations performance management system. However, such expectations do not only disregard the arguments concerning the scope of strategy and its formulation (Mintzberg, 1994; Whittington, 2016), but also fail to recognise the context in which performance management systems operates.

2.6.2 Measuring Performance

As discussed earlier in section 2.5 of this chapter, it is undeniable that competencies are significant for organizations in terms of producing a sustainable source of competitive advantage. On the other hand, the traditional system of organisational accounting has failed to meet the challenges of measuring non-financial performance (Juni and Eckstein, 2015). Historically, the development of employee competence has always been considered to be a financial drain to the organisation's resources during times of recession (Siegel *et al*., 2012; Juni and Eckstein, 2015).The bulk of investments on staff development has failed to meet the accounting standards for recognising talent in the organisation (Canibano *et al*., 2000; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). Consequently, even though the organisation invests in the development of employee skills and competence in order to achieve success in future. Most often than not, these investments in employees development are not revealed in the balance sheet of these organisations (Canibano *et al*., 2000; OECD, 2006; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). Therefore, these traditional financial reports are inadequate in terms of reporting non-financial performance because they fail to provide the true reflection of the firm’s performance (Canibano *et al*., 2000; Mahmood Toorchi *et al*., 2015). There is a growing need for organisations to have some other ways of measuring and accounting for non-financial performance like knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviours. Over the past three decades, researchers and practitioners have proposed a divers amount of performance evaluation frameworks to the incessant increasing indicators for measuring different competencies. The next section will discuss the reasons for measuring non-financial performance.

2.6.2.1 The Motivations for Measuring Performance

In general, the implementation of the measurement system must serve some management purposes (CIPD, 2016). Since the 1990s, studies on the evaluation of competencies have developed tremendously. In addition, various researchers have developed models for evaluating non-financial performance due to the request of practitioners (Bontis, 1999; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). Although the primary reason for developing these models is to solve specific problems within the organisation, it is often difficult to identify the precise complications the model expects to resolve (Andriessen, 2004; Hejazi *et al*, 2016). As such, there is the risk that many models tend to be "solutions in search of a cause" (Andriessen, 2004; Hejazi *et al*, 2016). Based on this belief, some researchers have suggested that before investigating non-financial performance, it is necessary to find out the need for measuring them (Andriessen, 2004; Hejazi *et al.*, 2016).

Kannan and Aulbur (2004) suggested that the primary motive for measuring non-financial performance in organisations is to enable them identify hidden talents and purposefully improve these talent in order to achieve their business goals and objectives (Kannan and Aulbur, 2004; Li *et al*., 2016). Therefore, successful non-financial performance assessment can offer the business a substantial benefits in influencing their strategic business approach, their process for planning and creating value for advantage over competitors (Kannan and Aulbur, 2004; Li *et al*., 2016). Kannan and Aulbur (2004) revealed the internal reason for assessing non-financial performance. Hunter *et al*., (2005) argued that businesses intending to assess their non-financial performance do so due to external and internal reasons. Firms that measure their non-financial performance are inspired to do so due to internal reasons that enable the organisation manage and develop their internal resources efficiently to produce more income and cost effectiveness (Hunter *et al*., 2005; Shaikh and Aktharsha, 2016). In addition, these organisations are also inspired by other external factors of exploiting the sustainability of their suppliers and relationship they have with their customers, or reducing their capital cost. Marr *et al*., (2003) carried out a methodical study of measuring non-financial performance to understand the reasons and intentions for measuring non-financial performance (Marr *et al*., 2003:443). Based on a review of over 700 research documents, they came up with five key explanations why businesses seek to measure their non-financial performance:

> Firstly, they are measured to help the organization formulate their business strategy; secondly, to assess their strategy execution; thirdly, to assist in diversification and expansion decisions; fourthly, to use these competencies as a basis for compensation; and finally, to communicate to external stakeholders.

From the above stated reasons, it can be seen that the first four motivations for measuring non-financial performance relates to internal management and decision-making within the organisation whereas the final reason regards the external purpose that influences their communication with external stakeholders. The non-financial measures are closely related to the formulation and assessment of the organisational strategy (Marr *et al*., 2003; Marr, 2004; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015). Andriessen (2004) revealed that the evaluation and measurement of non-financial performance methods are intended to improve the internal management system of the organisation by constructing a resource-based approach, observing the results from development actions, and transforming their business approach into accomplishment. In addition, organisations also strive to make good use of their human resources, mergers, acquisitions, and creating joint ventures, (Marr *et al*., 2003; R. Zamecnik and R. Rajnoha, 2015). Gupta and Roos (2001) argue that organisations' core competencies have also become key motivating factors for many mergers and acquisitions (Gupta and Roos, 2001). In their research, they argued that the organisations core competencies need to be embedded into the core of the business high value collaborations by recognizing and assessing the non-financial performance to achieve performance goals. Additionally, they suggested that using non-financial performance assessment method to improve or substitute traditional method of measuring performance could resolve some of the problems caused by the traditional financial measures (Ittner *et al*., 1997; Ittner and Larcker, 2002; Marr *et al*., 2003; Ahmad and Zabri 2016).

Besides the identified internal motivations, non-financial performance methods are used to interact with the external investors and shareholders (Marr *et al*., 2003; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015). Andriessen (2004) suggests that organisations measuring their non-financial performance can be attributed to the motivation derived from improving their external reporting and business activities (Andriessen, 2004; Shaikh and Aktharsha, 2016). The measuring and reporting of non-financial performance information can increase the stock evaluation of the business, decrease information asymmetry, and increase the business capability to raise capital (Andriessen, 2004; Lev, 2001; Marr *et al*., 2003; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015; Shaikh and Aktharsha, 2016). Therefore, the measurement of non-financial performance can lead to certain organisational benefits for improving their internal and external management communications. Additionally, Sveiby (2007) reveals that the utmost motivating reason for measuring non-financial performance is due to the motive of learning and not for the purpose of management. Non-financial performance measures are used for exploring value creation opportunities (Sveiby, 2007; Maji and Goswami, 2017).

2.6.2.2 The Measurement Systems of Performance

By focusing on the various purposes and use of the diverse non-financial methods, a few non-financial performance evaluation frameworks have emerged over the past three decades. After reviewing significant literature in the field, Svieby identified 34 methods and categorised them as follows: firstly, the Direct Intellectual Capital methods (DIC); secondly, the Market Capitalization Methods (MCM); thirdly, Return on Assets methods (ROA); and lastly, the Scorecard methods (SC), (Sveiby, 2007; Vargas *et al*., 2016; Maji and Goswami, 2017).

According to Sveiby (2007), these various methods can support different resolutions to the organisation (Sveiby, 2007; Vargas *et al*., 2016; Maji and Goswami, 2017). The market capitalization methods (MCM) suggest that an organisation's non-financial performance can be measured as the difference between the MCM and the stockholders' equity (Sveiby, 2007; Maji and Goswami, 2017). The ROA also offers a monetary valuation to the organisation. This ROA assumes that an organisation above the industry average annual earnings results from its non-financial performance. Therefore, suggesting that the value of the organisation's non-financial performance can be derived by dividing the above-average earnings of the organisation by the average cost of capital of the organisation or the interest rate (Sveiby, 2007; Vargas *et al*., 2016; Maji and Goswami, 2017). According to Sveiby, (2007) the ROA model and MCM model for measuring performance are useful to the organisation because they evaluate the stock market valuation. This is useful to the business especially during times of mergers and acquisitions (Sveiby, 2007). This is because the models are based on actual financial figures and can be used for the evaluations of organisations within the same industry (Sveiby, 2007; Maji and Goswami, 2017). Some of the measurement models are based on methods, such as EVA™, providing a mutual language and standard for managers to deliberate the value-creation of the organisation (Bontis *et al*., 1999; Toorchi *et al*., 2015), and have a tendency to to get more responsiveness from senior executives (Sveiby, 2007). However, these approaches have some noteworthy weaknesses, and are criticised based on these flows as an unsuitable assessment measure for non-financial performance (Bontis, 2001; Caddy, 2002; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). The key underlying problem with these methods is that these methods find it difficult to support managers in the understanding and managing of non-financial performance (Andriessen, 2004; Chan, 2009). By interpreting everything in financial terms, these methods often suggest that no precise measures for non-financial performance are needed (Bontis, 2001; Sveiby, 2007; Mahmood Toorchi *et al*., 2015). In addition, the approach limits managers in terms of getting key information concerning the core competencies that exist in the organisation and how they can contribute to the organisation's process of creating value (Bontis, 2001; Chan, 2009). Furthermore, these methods are founded on the accounting model of cost and therefore, provide little or no suggestion to existing market value (Bontis, 2001; Chan, 2009). Based on these limitations, they are therefore inadequate to nonprofitmaking organizations, in-house assessment of department performance and government organizations (Sveiby, 2007). Besides the above stated limitations, they also have a few particular problems. For example, the ROA model like the EVA™ adopts the belief that the business superior performance is derived only results from their intangible assets. Nevertheless, this notion can be uncertain (Chan, 2009). As discussed in section 2.4 of this chapter, according to the RBV, the firm's tangible resources could also fund the firm's competitive advantage. In addition, Sveiby (2007) argued that the ROA systems are very sensitive in assuming the rate of interest and discounting.

The above stated methods to measuring non-financial performance are suggested to be as non-theory-based intellectual capital metrics by Caddy (2002). He argued that the unassuming metrics are essentially questionable. As a result, more models that are refined are required in order for organisations to achieve more accurate and complete measure on non-financial performance. The DIC approach and the SC technique are said to be a more inclusive measurement systems and form the foundation for the development of the theory-based intellectual capital model (Caddy, 2002).

The DIC method evaluates the financial value of non-financial performance by recognizing numerous components and calculating them either individually or in an accumulated level

(Sveiby, 2007). Similarly, the scorecard approach (SC) can also be used to generate indicators and indices ground on different modules of the non-financial performance measure. However, they may not have need of the assignment of a financial value to the non-financial components (Sveiby, 2007; Maji and Goswami, 2017). When equated with the MCM and ROA procedures, the DIC and SC approaches have more advantages to the organisation. This is because they provide a more complete picture of the organisation's wellbeing, easily applicable at any level of the organisation internally, and are very suitable for public sector organisations and non-profit companies (Sveiby, 2007; Maji and Goswami, 2017). As a result, the DIC and SC approaches are more supportive in terms of refining internal management systems. However, the DIC and SC approaches also have their identified weaknesses. This is because the methods normally recognises and measure various components of non-financial performance in a qualitative method, and they are argued to be extremely subjective (Chan, 2009). However, in the absence of a mutual theoretical framework non-financial performance measures, these approaches tend to make use of diverse definitions and grouping of non-financial performance, and the metrics vary for each organization (Caddy, 2002; Chan, 2009; Sveiby, 2007). For that reason, it is difficult to have a common means to make judgment between organizations (Sveiby, 2007; Maji and Goswami, 2017). Furthermore, the qualitative nature of this approach makes it difficult to interact with stakeholders (Chan, 2009).

2.6.2.3 Models used to Measure Performance

This section presents some significant models that are applicable to the measurement and management of performance, their advantages and weaknesses.

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC)

The BSC is a performance management and assessment model developed by Kaplan and Norton (Kaplan and Norton 2004). The BSC was not originally designed to measure non-financial performance. However, it was later recognized as a method for measuring and managing non-financial performance (Bontis *et al*., 1999; Johanson *et al*., 2001a; Kaufmann and Schneider, 2004; Sveiby, 2007; Maji and Goswami, 2017).

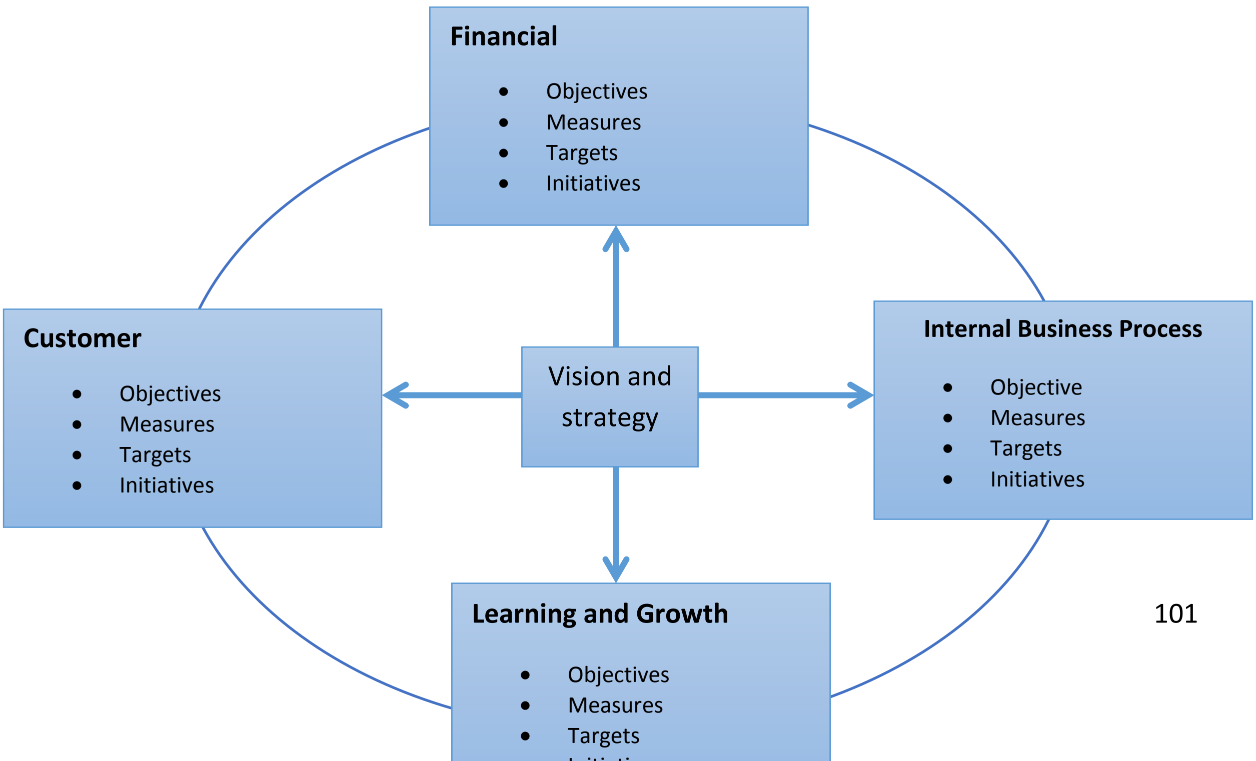
The BSC framework permits managers to measure performance from four significant viewpoints:

> *Firstly, the long-term intentions of the business; Secondly, the customer viewpoint; thirdly, the internal business process; and fourthly, learning and growth viewpoint, this viewpoint centres on internal skills and capabilities, of the employees and management systems (Kaplan and Norton, 1992, 1996; Mooraj et al., 1999).*

Significantly, the BSC is not just a group of four diverse types of assessment system; it provides a link to all the four measures simultaneously through a cause-and-effect association (Mooraj *et al*., 1999; Gurd *et al*., 2016). As a result, the BSC helps as an assessment framework that expresses the organisation's strategy and interprets the strategy into actions (Kaplan and Norton, 2001a; Malmi, 2001; Speckbacher *et al*., 2003; Gurd *et al*., 2016). Figure 2.7 indicates the manner in which the BSC interprets strategy into operational themes through four diverse viewpoints.

Since the early 1990's when it was introduced, the BSC has been regarded as one of the most widely held performance assessment and management systems by HR practitioners (Speckbacher *et al*., 2003; Gurd *et al*., 2016). This was initially revealed in Silk (1998) study that estimated 60% of the top companies in the US have had some sort of experience with the BSC (Speckbacher *et al*., 2003). In 2001, Rigby investigated the use of the BSC tools in organisations globally, and revealed that the application percentage of the BSC was nearly 44% globally in 1999. The literature documents a variety of reasons for applying the BSC in practice (Speckbacher *et al*., 2003; Gurd *et al*., 2016), and the foremost motive for using the BSC is to communicate and evaluate organisational strategies. The BSC pays attentions to the development of strategy, interpreting the strategy into action, and receiving response in order to make improvements on the strategy (Kaplan and Norton, 1996; Speckbacher *et al*., 2003; Gurd *et al*., 2016). As a result, this study has made use of the BSC model to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks as the model provides a reliable means to measure and assess non-financial performance of banking professionals in Nigeria.

Figure 2.7: The Balanced Scorecard Framework



Source: Kaplan and Norton (1996)

It is important to note that the BSC is not the first performance measurement system that encouraged organisations to observe both the financial and the non-financial performance (Toorchi *et al*., 2015). However, it does provide a fresh idea that lets managers and organisations to measure and manage their financial and non-financial performance in a special way (Bontis *et al*., 1999; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). Firstly, the BSC connects all the processes of measuring the organisation's financial and non-financial performance collectively through a cause–and-effect logic (Bontis *et al.*, 1999; Bose, 2004). Kaplan and Norton (2001a) stated that intangible assets like competencies are valueless on their own, as a result, the BSC does not endeavour to "value" competencies. Instead, what the BSC does is to measure competencies in units and then evaluate the manner in which intangibles and tangibles resources work together to produce over and above financial performance outcomes. In addition, a well-developed BSC does not only communicate the organisation's strategy, but used to implement the organisation's strategy at different levels (Speckbacher *et al*., 2003; Ahmad and Zabri 2016). In addition, the BSC provides the organisation with the means of recognizing priorities in the midst of different aims and initiatives (Zizlavsky, 2014).

Concurrently, literature reveals that the BSC also have some intrinsic weaknesses in the theoretical approach and practical implementation. The first weakness identified by researchers and practitioners, is that the BSC is relatively inflexible and stationary (Rodov and Leliaert, 2002; Wu, 2005; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). According to Bontis *et al.*, (1999), the standpoint and main achievement of the BSC are limiting. Therefore, it is possible for supervisors and organisations to overlook key significant features that fail to fall into any of the identified classifications of the BSC. The second weakness identified by researchers and practitioners, is that the BSC can be unsuccessful in identifying the contributions of staffs and other key external stakeholders (Atkinson *et al*., 1997; Bontis *et al*., 1999; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). The third identified weakness by researchers and practitioners is that as an internal management tool, the BSC has a habit of being organisation-specific, and provides no means of a possible comparison between organisations externally (Rodov and Leliaert, 2002; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). The fourth identified weakness is that the BSC is qualitative; therefore, it can be difficult control accurately (Eisenberg, 2016).

Besides the identified problems, several studies have highlighted the problems organisations face when implementing the BSC to their business practice. Marr and Adams (2004) stated that in actual practice, the knowledge and development standpoint of the BSC is believed to be a "black hole" (Marr and Adams, 2004; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015). Speckbacher *et al*. (2003) supported the view by presenting similar findings to their research on BSC in Germany that revealed a third of the organisations using BSC lacks a knowledge and development viewpoint (Speckbacher *et al*., 2003; Ahmad and Zabri 2016). In addition, Malmi (2001) argued that the impression of connecting procedures together based on the presumed cause-and-effect associations of the BSC by the early founders of the BSCs in Finland was misunderstood.

It is important to note that the identified disadvantages of the BSC did not influence the validity of the research findings. This is because the researcher only used the BSC to identify what needs measuring, the objectives, initiatives and target, while the RBV, SHRM and competency literature provided the empirical process for investigating the influence of competencies on organisational performance.

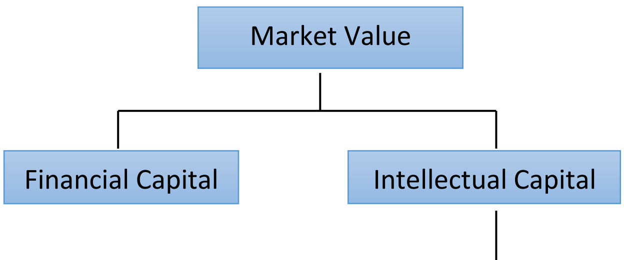
The Skandia Navigator

The Skandia Navigator is another dimension of assessing and reporting performance model of intellectual capital (IC). This model was developed in the mid-1980s by the Skandia AFS, a financial service company based in Sweden as an IC reporting structure and later became the first company to report their IC as a complement to their traditional financial (Bontis, 2001; Chen *et al*., 2004; Ahmad and Zabri 2016).

The drive for formulating the Skandia Navigator was to envisage and bring to reality the resources that determine performance and in so doing create environments for long-term effectiveness (Roy, 1999:59). According to the literature, the Skandia Navigator served more than a few in-house management commitments, such as enabling numerous viewpoints and scopes of the business to communicate and implement strategy that provides a link between the business strategies and their target outcome (Roy, 1999; Mosconi and Roy, 2013).

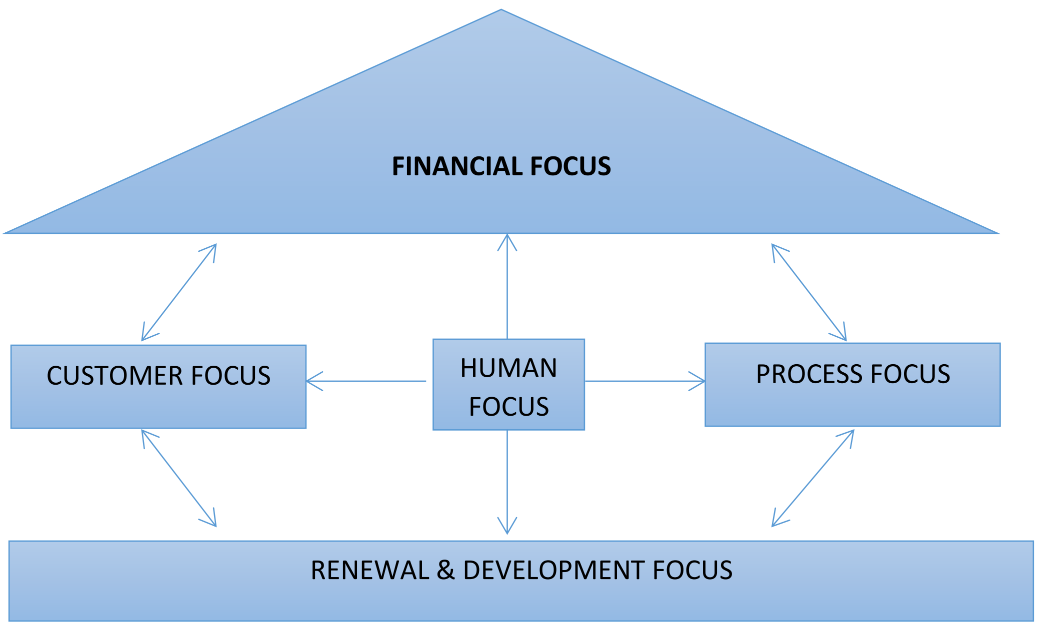
By using the Skandia Navigator approach, the organisations can measure their market value consisting of two key components: the intellectual capital and financial capital. They further stated that the Intellectual capital is also divisible into structural and human capital. In addition, the structural capital is then divided into innovation capital, customer capital, and process capital (*see Figure 2.8*). The Skandia Navigator measure pays attentions to five key areas, namely; human capital, financial capital, innovation (renew and development) capital, customer capital, and process capital. For each of these areas, the particular business unit supervisors, appraises the diverse features of competencies (Bose, 2004), define both financial and non-financial metrics locally. See Table 2.2 for a visual presentation of some examples of measures used by Scandia Navigator measure.

Figure 2.8: Skandia's value scheme



Source: Bontis, (2001); Edvinsson, (1997).

Figure 2.8: **Skandia Navigator**



Source: Ax and Bjørnenak (2005)

Table 2.2: **Examples of Skandia Navigator IC measures**

Focus Area	Example of Measures
Financial Capital	• Revenue / Employee • Revenue from new customers / total revenue • Profit resulting from new business operations.
Customer Capital	• Days spend visiting customers; • Telephone accessibility; • Satisfied customer index.
Human Capital	• Training days per year; • Managers with advanced degree; • Annual turnover of staff.
Process Capital	• PCs per employee; • IT capacity; • Process time.
Innovation Capital	• Increase in premium income; • Satisfied employee index; • Average age of patents.

Literatures has also documented some robust resemblances between the Skandia Navigator and the BSC approaches (Fincham and Roslender, 2003; Nielsen and Roslender, 2014). Both methods tend to use both non-financial and financial metrics to measure the performance of the business, whereas the numerous ideas of the IC in the Skandia Navigator model are narrowly consistent with the four viewpoints of the BSC (Ax and Bjørnenak, 2005; Nielsen and Roslender, 2014). However, the presentation of human capital as a key feature of the Skandia Navigator believed to be not as important in the BSC (Ax and Bjørnenak, 2005). Additionally, the Skandia Navigator pays less attentions to the cause-and-effect relationship than the BSC (Ax and Bjørnenak, 2005; Madsen and Stenheim, 2015).

The Skandia Navigator model has significantly contributed to the creation of several taxonomies to measure organisational non-financial performance like competencies (Bontis, 2001; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). It is particularly important for the Skandia Navigator model to recognize organizational process factors, which is yet to be attempted (Petty and Guthrie, 2000; Bontis, 2001; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). Nonetheless, the Skandia Navigator model also has its own inherent problems. This could be because the design was specifically structured for a particular organisation (Marr, *et al*., 2004b). Firstly, some of the metrics used in the Skandia Navigator offer reasonable alternative explanations concerning what might be represented to the management of the business (Bontis, 2001; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). Therefore, it presents a challenge for other organisations who try to comprehend and recognize suitable metrics. Secondly, Skandia Navigator follows a balance sheet approach to measuring non-financial performance. As a result, it makes it difficult to epitomize the dynamic movements of the organization (Bontis, 2001; Toorchi *et al*., 2015), and may possibly neglect some key components such as organizational learning and culture (Chen *et al*., 2004). Thirdly, the five capital components of the Skandia Navigator model lack clarity in terms of their relationship with one another (Marr *et al*., 2004b).

The Intangible Assets Monitor

Sveiby (1997) developed the Intangible Assets Monitor (IAM) with the aim of measuring non-financial performance like competencies in a meek manner (Sveiby, 1997a; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). According to Sveiby (1997a), the foremost reason for measuring non-financial performance is to provide the senior management of the organisation control in terms of improving the monitoring of external and internal performance. By combing both financial and non-financial measures to performance, the IAM will not only assist organisations in communicating itself more precisely to stakeholders externally, creditors, customers and shareholders, and to also help supervisors to observe progress in performance and take appropriate actions (Bontis, 2001; Sveiby, 1997a; Toorchi *et al.*, 2015).

According to the IAM, an organisation's intangible assets are measured in three different ways. Firstly, employee intangible abilities that include the capacity of the employees; secondly, internal systems that may consist of copyrights, ideas, models, computer and managerial systems; thirdly, external systems that includes relationship with suppliers, customers, brands, reputation and trademarks. The creation of both the external and internal structure of the organisation is possible because of the employee competency. In every aspect, supervisors can make use of three different forms of indicators: indicators of efficiency, indicators of growth and renewal, indicators of stability to measure and report non-financial performance (Sveiby, 1997a; Toorchi *et al.*, 2015). Table 2.5 presents an example of the intangible measures of the three dimensions.

Table 2.3: Example of the measures of intangibles in the Intangible Asset Monitor

	Employee Competence	Internal Structure	External Structure
Growth and Renewal	1) Number of years in the profession; 2) Level of education; 3) Training and education costs.	1) Investment in the internal structure; 2) Investment in information processing systems.	1) Profitability per customer; 2) Organic growth.
Efficiency	1) Proportion of professionals in the company; 2) Leverage effect; 3) Value added per employee.	1) Proportion of support staff; 2) Sales per support person; 3) Values and attitude measurements.	1) Satisfied customer index; 2) Win/loss index; 3) Sales per customer.
Stability	1) Average age;	1) Age of the organization; 2) Support staff turnover;	1) Proportion of big customers; 2) Age structure;

	2) Seniority (the number of years employed in the same organization); 3) Professional turnover rate.	3) Rookie ratio (the number of people with less than 2 years of employment.	3) Devoted customer ratio (sales come from customers who have been with the company for more than 5 years).

Source: Sveiby (1997a)

Just like the BSC, the IAM approach also suggests that the non-financial performance measures must match the financial measures. Furthermore, both approaches suggest that the non-financial indicators must be high from the strategic level to the operational to the level of the organisation (Sveiby, 2001; Toorchi *et al*., 2015). However, the literature identifies some significant differences between these two models. The IAM is fundamentally based on the impression that individuals are the only source of revenue generation for the organisation (Sveiby, 1997a, 2001; Gogan *et al*., 2016), while the BSC, presents the idea that human capital is insignificant. In addition, the external relationships in the BSC approach only lay emphasis on customers and ignore the presence of other stakeholders. However, the IAM, model considers the external structures to comprise of suppliers, customers, and other external stakeholders (Sveiby, 2001; Gogan *et al*., 2016).

The IAM model attempts to overcome some of the identified problems of the BSC, by presenting a number of important indicators in a simple manner so that the external stakeholders can understand it better (Sveiby, 1997a). Nevertheless, the IAM is also believed to be excessively qualitative, and the main indicators have to be attuned to the reality of the individual organisation (Rodov and Leliaert, 2002; Kaufmann and Schneider, 2004). Additionally, Pike and Roos (2004) stated that the IAM does not actually endeavour to combine diverse scopes of non-financial performance or even to combine tangible and intangible resources to offer an estimation of the market value (Pike and Roos, 2004; Gogan *et al*., 2016).

Intellectual Capital Index

According to Neely *et al*., (2003) the models discussed earlier, such as the BSC, Skandia Navigator and the IAM, are believed to fit into the "first generation" of non-financial performance assessment measurements that attempt to support the traditional financial measures with that of non-financial measures (Neely *et al.*, 2003; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015). The Intellectual Capital Index (IC-Index) is considered to fit into the "second generation" approach to financial measure that started investigating the dynamics of the value creation process of competencies. This was created in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the measurement procedure rather than just focusing on individual dimensions (Roos *et al*., 1997; Ditillo, 1998; Bontis, 2001; Rodov and Leliaert, 2002; Neely *et al*., 2003; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015).

The IC-Index method also functions on a comparable classification with the Skandia Navigator approach, that suggests intellectual capital could be split into structural capital and human capital (Marr *et al*., 2004b; Pike and Roos, 2004; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015). However, the IC-Index intends to merge all the diverse IC measures into a single index. Based on this approach, the most significant IC measures are recognized and recorded and further conveyed as numbers and given weight to each of the measure. Finally, the creation of a single index by consolidating all the different indicators in the IC measures (Ditillo, 1998; Marr *et al*., 2004b; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015). The selection procedures of diverse indicators and assigned weights are influence by numerous features, such as: the organisation's business strategy, the importance of each individual capital, the features of the organisation, and the nature of the business the organisation operates (Bontis, 2001; Marr *et al*., 2004b).

When comparing the IC-Index with the first generation models (BSC, Skandia Navigator and the IAM), the IC-Index has some important advantages. The first advantage is that it brings together all the diverse IC measures into a single system, and it provides a complete picture of the organisation's IC (Bontis, 2001; Marr *et al*., 2004b; Rodov and Leliaert, 2002). The second advantage is that it enables organisations to assess the relationship between the changes in the market and the IC index, and other performance indicators (Bontis, 2001; Marr *et al*., 2004b). The third advantage is that it is important for supervisors to comprehend the significance of the existing relationship between the different IC measures (Rodov and Leliaert, 2002; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015). Nevertheless, this approach also has its own flaws. By utilizing a single index, it provides the approach some key advantages; however, applying a singular index has made it difficult to recognize the main drivers for the business (Marr *et al*., 2004b; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015). In addition, the model uses subjective judgment that bases the choices for indicators and weights, yet, the index might not fully reflect the real IC of the organisation (Marr *et al.,* 2004b; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015). Furthermore, the difficulty of making comparison between organisations based on their IC-Index, as each organisation's IC indicator will differ from the other in terms of their indicators and assigned weights (Marr *et al*., 2004b; Zamecnik and Rajnoha, 2015).

Literature regarding the IC-Index and the other methods discussed refers to "*qualitative methods*" of measuring non-financial performance (Levy and Duffey, 2007; Zahedi *et al*., 2016). The qualitative ability of this approach has resulted in the lack of a uniform and consistent approach (Chan, 2009; Zahedi *et al*., 2016). In general, this models believed to be too qualitative, therefore, cannot inform the users which non-financial index are most significant index to the organisation's strategy. Furthermore, it is nearly impossible to make comparisons between different organisations based on the performance assessment models. This is not only because they are limited to specific organisational features in terms of the information it contain but also, these systems are mostly used for internal purposes and the bulk of information are not reported to the public (Kaufmann and Schneider, 2004; Zahedi *et* *al*., 2016). As a result, researchers have suggested the need to create what they called the "quantitative models" in order to allocate arithmetic importance to non-financial performance (Levy and Duffey, 2007; Zahedi *et al*., 2016).

Although, we have witnessed the creation of numerous models that measure non-financial performance behaviours, the fact remains that there is no singular appropriate model that is applicable to the measurement and manage non-financial behaviours to achieve both the internal and external purposes of the organisation. Qualitative methods such as BSC and the IC-index have a tendency of being too qualitative and differ occasionally when comparing organisations. In addition, methods tend to focus largely on a number of private figures that external stakeholders may not be able to access. Furthermore, quantitative techniques, like the VAIC™, in contrast, are believed to consist of too many challenging suppositions and might fail to attain the complete nature of non-financial performance behaviours in the organisation (Levy and Duffey, 2007; Ozkan *et al*., 2016). In addition, it can also fail to support managers and supervisors in assessing the interactions between the various modules and their influence in the process of creating value (Ozkan *et al*., 2016). The performance management literature has documented several models used for measuring and managing performance. The models all have their advantages and disadvantages in terms of how they measure and report performance. The importance of the performance management systems is expressed in the constant improvement to the organisational performance that is achieved through enhanced individual staff performance (Timperley and Robinson, 1998; Macky and Johnson, 2000; Metasebiya and Lelissa, 2016). In the same way, Lawler (2003) suggested that the objectives of performance management systems often include the motivation of staff performance, assisting individual employees to develop their skills and abilities, creating a performance based culture, performance based promotion, identifying and eliminating poor performance, and supporting the implementation of the organisations strategy. As a result, performance management systems are designed to ensure that: the duties performed by the originations workforce achieve the goals of the organisation; the employees have a faultless understanding of their performance expectations; the employees receive continuous information on improving the effectiveness of their performance and what is expected of them; employee rewards commemorate employee performance; identifies developmental needs.

According to Coens and Jenkins (2002), employee performance as an idea is understood through the assessment and management of their general performance. The evaluation of performance a practice that categorises specific results within a defined period (Coens and Jenkins, 2002; Mandere, 2016; Christopher *et al*., 2017). The quest of measuring and managing the complete performance in organisations has led to the development of the performance management system like the Balance Scorecard (BSC) and others. These models enabled organisation to connect performance measures throughout the organisation in order to transform the organisational goals into daily activities. In order to achieve this, measures are prescribed on each employee to observe their performance (Platts and Sobotka, 2010; Heinicke *et al*., 2016). O'Donnell and O'Brien, (1999) suggest that performance measures must be explicit, clearly defined, relevant to the duties of the employees and achievable. In addition to this, the measure must not include features outside the control of each employee, and managers must be competent to provide consistent, significant and productive feedback to the employees. Similarly, employees should receive suitable training and development to improve on their weaknesses that were identified through the appraisal process. Furthermore, the employee performance assessment should focus on evaluating their behaviour and performance (O'Donnell and O'Brien, 1999; Halligan, 2005; CIPD, 2016). Huselid (1995) stated that the employees of an organisation contribute to general performance of that organisation, and the HRM practices of the organisation can affect employee performance. Therefore, the HRM practice of the organisation must influence employees positively (Huselid, 1995; Delery and

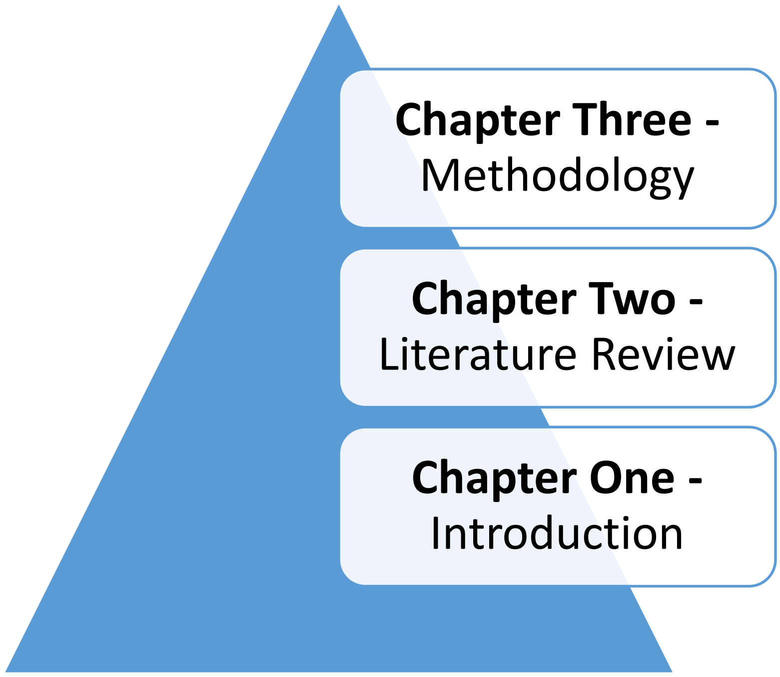
Gupta, 2016; Hancock *et al*., 2017). According to Qureshi *et al*., (2007), efficiency is a performance measure incorporating productivity and effectiveness (Qureshi *et al*., 2007; Wu *et al*., 2011). Labour productivity on the other hand refers to the output of an employee per unit of time. This is a generally used and direct measure of productivity (Gust and Marquez, 2004; Conti and Sulis, 2016). The growth rate of labour productivity is approximately equal to the difference between the growth rate of output and the growth rate of the number of hours worked (Gust and Marquez, 2004; Conti and Sulis, 2016). Organisations recording high-level effectiveness and performance usually have a culture that supports high employee involvement. As a result, employees are more eager to involve themselves in the decision-making process of the organisation, setting of goals and problem solving. This subsequently will result to a high-level performance of the employees. Therefore, it is important for organisation to measure not just their financial performance but non-financial performance.

Due to the problems identified in the literature, and the extent of non-financial performance measurement models, some researchers have suggested the need to develop new measures or new models for non-financial performance measures (Catasús and Gröjer, 2006; Sillanpää *et al*., 2010). Sillanpää *et al*., (2010) recommend that impending research on non-financial performance behaviours in the not-for-profit organisations should try to find appropriate means to manage and assess IC elements. Nevertheless, in recent times, some researchers have questioned this view (Nielsen and Madsen, 2009; Dumay and Rooney, 2011; Dumay, 2016). Dumay and Rooney (2011) conducted a research that explored the necessity of measuring IC for effective management. Their finding revealed that implementing an IC practice is possible in an organisation even without an actual IC measures (Dumay and Rooney, 2011; Dumay, 2016). This finding was because of a study on a single organization and may have some significant imitating factors. As an important source of competitive advantage, non-financial performance behaviours like competencies should be measured. However, due to the difficulties in measuring these non-financial performance behaviours and the discouragements of reporting the outcomes, the continuing information asymmetry of competencies remains high (Holland, 2009; Dumay, 2016).

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the key literature critical to the understanding of the research topic. The chapter reviewed the key literatures that underpin the research topic, considered critical to the researcher in understanding the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks. This enabled the researcher to demonstrate how this research fits into the larger field of study. The researcher also identified the gap in the competency literature in the context of influencing performance in Nigerian banks. The chapter revealed the CBN rationale for introducing the competency framework for Nigerian banks, which the 2008 GFC influenced. Once established, the researcher then explained the relationship between the CBN and Nigerian banks using the stakeholder and agency theory. This was necessary because it explained the CBN's authority over banks in Nigeria, and the reason why banks in Nigeria will have to adhere to the CBN directive. The chapter then presented the theoretical underpinning for this research, using the RBV and SHRM theory to the influence of competency on performance. The researcher traced the intellectual progress in the field of competencies, the major debates by previous researchers, defined the term competency and the terminology differences. In addition, the chapter outlined the strategic models for measuring performance, the challenges with this models and the rationale for selecting the balance scorecard model. The researcher identified some key issues pertinent to answering the research question. Firstly, it was important to understand the nature and scope of competencies, the use of competencies and competency frameworks. Secondly, it was important to understand the consistent management of the competency framework in organisations, and who within the organisation the competency framework applies to. Thirdly, the researcher needed to know the extent of the alignment of the competency framework with other HR systems and processes in other organisations captured by the competency literature. Fourthly, the researcher needed to understand the relationship between competencies and performance in documented in the competency literature. By reviewing these key literatures and understanding the concept of competency, the researcher is able to identify the data necessary to answering the research question presented in this study.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology that underpins and informs the empirical competency research presented in this thesis, detailing the selection of the qualitative approach. This enabled the researcher achieve the research aim and objectives of this study.


Chapter Three -
Methodology
Chapter Two -
Literature Review
Chapter One -
Introduction

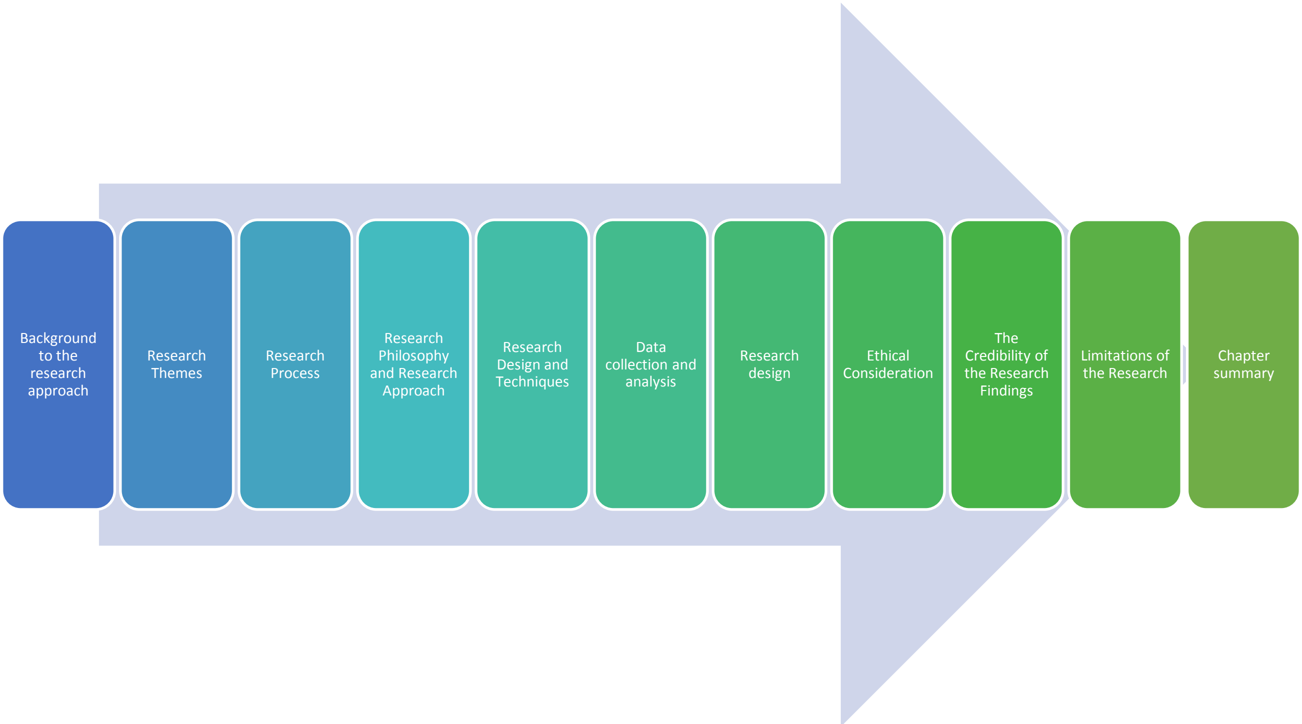
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher reviewed the academic underpinning and literatures that directed this research. This contextualised the competency research, and enabled the researcher to investigate the length and breadth of the research topic in order to understand the key themes critical to the research. In this chapter, the researcher discussed the methodological choice that underpins this study, based on the research aim and research objectives derived from the literature. By incorporating various theoretical and empirical approaches, the study on the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks presents significant challenges in terms of the choice of research methodology for the collection and analysis of data. This chapter describes the approach adopted for designing the research tool, conducting the thematic interviews, the data analysis strategy, the data analysis method, and the justification for the approach. The structure for the rest of this chapter is as follows:

Figure 3.1 Chapter Structure



3.1 Background to the research approach

This section presents the background to this research and the rationale for conducting this study, the research aim and objectives, and the data needed to answer the research question.

3.2 Definition of key terms

This section defined the key terms in the study.

3.3 Research Themes

This section discusses the generated research themes for this study, the rationale for selecting each method or approach, and how the researcher analysed the interview data.

3.4 Research Process

This section discusses the process for this research and the justification for selecting the process.

3.5 Research Philosophy and Research Approach

This section discusses the research philosophy and approach of this study. It also provides the justifications for selecting each approach.

3.6 Research Design and Techniques

This section presents the research design and techniques for this study and their justification, the research strategy, research methods (case study approach), and the Nigerian banking industry as a case study.

3.7 Data collection and analysis

This section discusses the data collection process, analysis of the data, and data sources.

3.8 Research design

This section presents the process of selecting a testing method (qualitative method), the interview procedure and selection of interviewees, the rationale for using Nvivo.

3.9 Data Analysis Techniques

This section discussed the technique for analysing the research data.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

This section discusses the ethical consideration possible ethical concerns of this study.

3.10 Value of the research

This section discusses the primary value of this thesis to the contribution of existing literature.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

This section discusses the ethical issues considered for this research.

3.12 The Credibility of the Research Findings

This section discusses the credibility of this research, using reliability and validity.

3.13 Limitations of the Research

This section discusses the possible limitations of the research.

3.14 Chapter summary

This section concludes the chapter and provides a summary of the entire chapter.

3.1 Background to the research approach

The motivation for this research progresses from the need for Nigerian banks to be more competitive both at home and overseas, in addition to being able to perform their banking duties effectively, through lending activities.

As discussed earlier in section 2.2 of Chapter 2, the 2008 global financial crisis (GFC) exposed the lack of executive capacity of banking professionals in Nigeria in terms of skills and depth. These inadequacies as identified by the central bank of Nigeria (CBN) necessitated the need for an obvious reform programme in the Nigeria banking industry, therefore, giving rise to the bank wide competency framework. The expectation of the CBN competency framework is to address the competency challenges in the Nigerian banking industry, explore growth opportunities as well as critically facilitate improvement in the quality of banking professionals in the Nigerian banking industry. The reform is driven by the need to develop banking competencies which has become significant in addressing the inadequacies, underscoring the need to train a new generation of banking professionals that are knowledgeable, skilled and competent to develop and deliver satisfactory banking products and services to the consumers

(CBN, 2012). Nigerian banks, to an extent do have the same problem as suggest with other international banks whereby was implied to be as a result of unethical practice, excessive risk taking, poor moral of banking executives, failure of the supervisory and regulatory ability, oversight, failure on the management system, and leadership. Based on this notion, it is possible to say that the problem with Nigerian banks is relatively the same with other international banks. However, as opposed to sales and revenue, there is no evidence to suggest that Nigerian banks experienced these problems. Based on the CBN (2012) report, the CBN has revealed there is a lack of clarity in terms of oversight function, control and responsibility. Therefore, the CBN competency framework is also about checks and balancing on the fulfilment of banking functions, and their needs for clarity in their systems and processes.

The researcher has developed the primary research question and objectives needed to investigate the problem and collected the critical data to answering the research question and objectives by carrying out semi-structured interviews with banking professionals in 10 Nigerian banks using qualitative methods.

The researcher investigated what the CBN exposed as deeper underlying problems in the systems of oversight and the quality of executive capacity in Nigerian banks. To enable the researcher achieve this, the researcher looked at the leadership support and favourability of the competency framework in Nigerian banks, how the HR systems that support these capabilities in the banks are being mobilised and used, and how effective they are in order to effectively answer the research questions. The researcher's contribution to knowledge is around the systems and structure in these banks, the strategic process of embedding these systems and process, how they align with the banks people management system to influence performance in the banks.

The overarching aim of this research is to investigate the uptake and use of competency profiling in a strategic HR context to support the advancement of business performance in Nigerian banks. By focusing on Nigerian banks, the researcher will be looking at the uses of SHRM to support business competitiveness and response to internal and external change in the banking business environment of Nigeria.

In order to achieve the aim of exploring the role of competency based management systems in Nigerian banks, the central research question investigated in this study is "Have competencies influence the performance of Nigerian banks?" To answer this research question, the researcher created four key research objectives using the qualitative studies. The four key research objectives that underpin the above research questions are as follows:

- **Research Objective 1:** To investigate the existing frameworks in the selected Nigerian banks and their similarities with the CBN competency framework.
- **Research Objective 2:** To examine the management consistency of the framework, and whom the framework apply to within the banks.
- **Research Objective 3:** To examine the alignment of the framework in the banks HR systems and processes.
- **Research Objective 4:** To investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of the selected case study banks.

Table 3.1 Justification for the research Question and Objectives

Research Question and Objectives	Justification

Research Question: Have competencies influenced the performance of Nigerian banks?	Although, international studies have documented the influence of competency on performance (Spencer, 1998; Sypniewska, 2013; CIPD, 2016; Delima, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016). However, there is hardly any study investigating the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks. These lack of empirical evidence, have created the need to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks.
Research Objective 1: To investigate the existing frameworks in the selected Nigerian banks and their similarities with the CBN competency framework.	The opportunities of using competency framework is enormous (CIPD, 2016), and the proper introduction of competency framework can provide an organization with a system for hiring, measuring performance and providing feedback for developing competencies and rewarding superior performance for top level talent (CIPD, 2016). Since the researcher is yet to identify any study that documents Nigerian banks already having and using competencies, it is important to find out what systems and infrastructure are in place in the selected banks, and how inline are they with the CBN framework. Therefore, identifying the nature and scope of the framework in the selected banks is very relevant to this study.
Research Objective 2: To examine the management consistency of the framework, and whom the framework apply to within the banks.	The concept of competency lies at the heart of Human Resource Management. Therefore, providing the basis for a horizontal integration of key HR activities, such as selection, performance assessment, training, career development, and reward management. As well as vertical integration with organizational strategy, values, business processes and performance outcomes among others (Soderquist and Papalexandris, 2010). The CIPD (2016) also emphasized the

	importance of having a competency framework that covers all employees, therefore, the need to investigate this view.
Research Objective 3: To examine the alignment of the framework in the banks HR systems and processes.	Competency-based management systems hinges on the conviction that it is possible to recognize and separate the desired performance behaviours consistently displayed by excellent performing employees than average performing employees. Once identified, it is then possible to transfer these competencies to the entire workforce of the organisation through training and coaching interventions. Competencies have the potential to align and integrate all HR systems, if the behavioural standards of excellent performers underpin the foundation of recruitment, selection, performance management, pay, training and development and promotions (Misra and Sharma, 2016). Therefore, it is significant to investigate the level of embedding of the competency framework in the other HR systems and processes in the selected banks.
Research Objective 4: To investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of the selected case study banks.	Competency research in other jurisdictions has repeatedly demonstrated the links between the people management systems of the organisation and improved business performance (Spencer, 1998; Sypniewska, 2013; CIPD, 2016; Delima, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016). It is, therefore, significant to investigate this relationship in Nigerian banks in order to answer the research question identified in this study.

Research objective one investigated what competencies banks have in place, how it is defined, check the formality, application, and implementation of competency frameworks. The researcher achieved this by analysing both primary and secondary data from the case study.

The researcher also made use of secondary sources to check the availability of the competency framework to see whom they cover, how they are implemented, and what the SHRM coverage is within the case study. This helped in triangulating the findings from the primary study, and also informs the research in order to know if it is consistent with the literature. Furthermore, the researcher investigated the similarity between the competency frameworks in the banks to that of the CBN. By doing this, it enabled the research to know how the CBN framework is being used, how it is applied within the banks and how the banks are responding to the CBN framework.

Research objectives two and three investigated the consistency of the application and management of the competency framework and embedding of the competency framework in the HR systems of the case study. This enabled the researcher to determine the length and breadth of the coverage of the competency framework in the case study, who they cover, how wide the cover is in terms of operating personnel, the embedding of the framework in other HR systems of the banks in terms of performance, evaluation, training, development, and career progression.

Research objective four investigated the influence of competencies on the performance of the case study in order to understand the interactions between competency and performance in the selected banks. To understand this relationship, the researcher investigated the position of reporting and evaluation of the competency framework, how they measure and assess leadership competencies, workforce competencies, and improvement because of intervention on resource and development. This highlighted whether or not it is being applied, the extent to which it is being done, the time, and the range of issues the framework covers. To effectively analyse the competency – performance relationship in the case study, the researcher studied other similar empirical research in this field to understand the best mode of evaluation and how it has been done. This helped inform the researcher on what data he wants to get, what data he needs to get, and the reasons behind that research. The literature review for this study covers the broad areas of performance, competencies, and the strategic human resource management that is rooted in the resource based view theory. Generally, the research explored the existence of competency in the case study banks, where they come from, how are they published, communicated, and how they are being used in the banks. This was necessary because the researcher could not find any empirical research to support the view that Nigerian bank already had competencies in place. Therefore, before investigating the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks, it was imperative for the researcher to establish the existence of a competency based management system in the selected banks. Furthermore, the researcher explored the HR systems and policies in place that support the framework, the models of evaluation that exist, strategic application, and the leadership awareness and favourability of the competency framework. In order to answer the key research objective identified above, the researcher targeted the data identified in figure 3.2 below during the interview.

Figure 3.2 Target Data

This data enabled the researcher to assess the vision of where the Central bank is going with the competency framework, what the reality of the travel is and where the banks are with the framework, the leadership support, awareness and favourability of the framework, the bank's SHRM strategy and how it links to performance. The researcher investigated these objectives and collected the necessary data using the qualitative semi-structured interviews with banking officers, senior managers, HR manager, and a CBN executive. This research investigated and expressed clarity at what the CBN competency reform has exposed as a deeper underling problem in the systems of oversight and the quality of executive capabilities in Nigerian banks.

3.2 Definition of key terms

As earlier explained, the overarching aim of this research is to investigate the uptake and use of competency in a strategic HR context to support the advancement of business performance in Nigerian banks. The theoretical evidence found in the strategic human resource management (SHRM) and the resource-based view (RBV) underpins this research as explained in Chapter 2. The resource-based view (RBV) to strategic human resource management (SHRM) focuses on the difficulty to copy attributes of the firm as the fundamental drivers of performance and competitive advantage (Díaz-Fernández, 2014). In relation to the understanding of the resource-based view of the firm, Barney (1991) described competitive advantage as "*The point where a firm is implementing a value creating strategy not at the same time being implemented by any current or potential competitors*". The idea is to maintain this competitive advantage in such a way that competitors' efforts to copy that advantage are frustrated and eventually terminated (Barney, 1991; Kumar and Pansari, 2016). The resource-based view focuses on the promotion of sustained competitive advantage through the development of the human capital rather than merely aligning human resources to current strategic goals (Torrington et al 2005; Kaufman, 2015). This research investigates the role of competency, which is rooted in SHRM and backed by the beliefs of the resource-based in driving performance in Nigeria banks.

According to Cania (2014), SHRM is the process of using an overarching approach in developing the banks HR strategies, which are integrated vertically with the banks' business strategy and horizontally with one another. These strategies define the banks' intentions and plans relating to the overall business considerations, such as the banks' effectiveness and people management (resourcing, learning and development, reward and employee relations). Generally, SHRM focuses on the actions that differentiate the bank from its competitors. The study then defines competency as the behaviours that individuals must possess, or must acquire, to perform effectively at work (CIPD, 2016). This focuses on the personal attributes or inputs of an individual at work and the competency framework is a structure that sets out and defines each individual competency required by individuals working in an organization or part of an organization (CIPD, 2016).

Performance on the other hand, is a lot more difficult to define, as researcher's world over still cannot agree on what performance mean. Stephen and Mary (2002) define performance as the accumulated results of all the organization's work processes and activities. It is about how effectively an organization transforms inputs into outputs (Thursby, 2000; Chatzimichael *et* *al*., 2016) and comprises the actual output or results as measured against its intended outputs. According to Richard *et al*., (2009), organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of firm outcomes: financial performance, product market performance and shareholder return but Liptons (2003) proposes that organisational performance is the ability of the organisation to prevail. There is hardly a consensus about its definition, dimensionality and measurement and this limits advances in research and understanding of the concept (Santos and Brito, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the researcher has adopted Campbell's (1999) theory, which defines performance as the behaviour, or action relevant to the attainment of an organisation's goals that is measurable. The performance management literature has documented several models used for measuring and managing performance. The models all have their advantages and disadvantages in terms of how they measure and report performance. The importance of the performance management systems is expressed in the constant improvement to the organisational performance that is achieved through enhanced individual staff performance (Timperley and Robinson, 1998; Macky and Johnson, 2000; Metasebiya and Lelissa, 2016). In the same way, Lawler (2003) suggested that the objectives of performance management systems often include the motivation of staff performance, assisting individual employees to develop their skills and abilities, creating a performance based culture, performance based promotion, identifying and eliminating poor performance, and supporting the implementation of the organisations strategy. As a result, performance management systems are designed to ensure that: the duties performed by the originations workforce achieve the goals of the organisation; the employees have a faultless understanding of their performance expectations; the employees receive continuous information on improving the effectiveness of their performance and what is expected of them; employee rewards commemorate employee performance; identifies developmental needs.

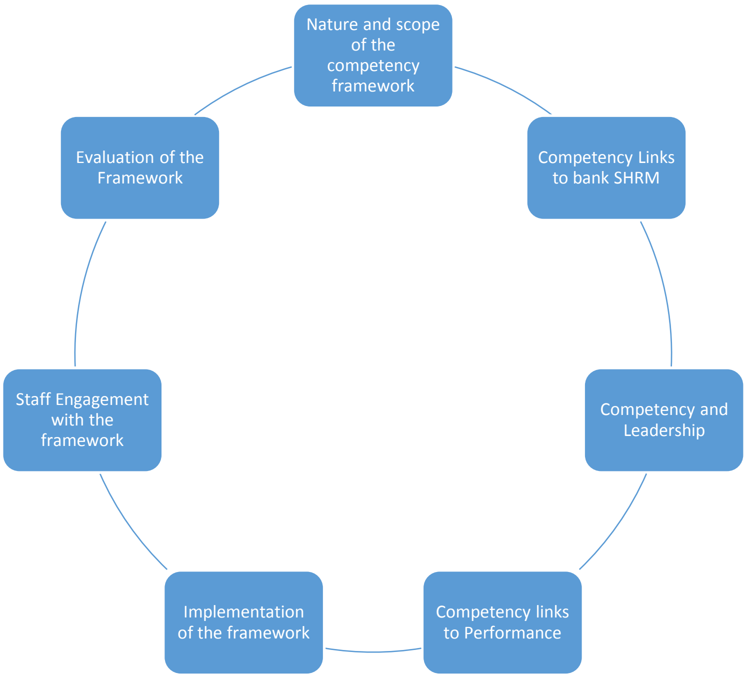
This study supports the necessity for banks to achieve their business objectives and to do so the management of the human resources of the bank has to be strategic. By being strategic, the human resource management is integrated in the overall bank strategy in the context of achieving the required performance objectives, and as explained in the literature review chapter of this study. The competency framework serves as glue that links the aspiration of making people competitive and seeing these assets with the reality of the business, which enables organisations to measure, monitor and plan with it.

3.3 Research Themes

To acquire the targeted data or information needed from the identified interviewees, covering the broad area of this research, themes were created by the researcher to enable the researcher create a link between the competency framework and what the researcher aims to achieve. Each theme encompasses insightful findings relevant to the research. Within each theme, the researcher carried out an analysis to demonstrate the relationship with the competency approach and the findings. The generated research themes for this study are as follows:

> *Nature and scope of the competency framework; Competency Links to bank SHRM; Competency and Leadership; Competency links to Performance; Implementation of the framework; Staff Engagement with the framework; Evaluation of the framework.*

Figure 3.3 Generated Themes



These generated themes informed the primary data targeted by the researcher in order to answer the researcher question. The data provided the researcher with clarity on what the competency framework hopes to achieve, where it is at the moment, and the reality of what the banks are currently experiencing. This information also enabled the researcher to create a link between the data acquired from the interviews and the literature review, by arguing what competency means to the banks, what is making it successful, what is important about them in terms of driving it through and implementing them.

To achieve a deeper insight into the data, the researcher made use of measure questions besides the usual open-ended probing questions based on the interviewee's perception and knowledge regarding the competency framework,. The intention for the measure questions was to highlight the level or degree of importance to each theme and the factors driving the framework to enable the researcher the comfortably analyse banks, managers and HR managers. Each theme had several measure questions framed around it, to ensure the researcher covered the required data for each theme and get a great understanding of the interviewee's perspective.

In qualitative research, finding the "right person" to interview is a critical concern. This is because the information provided by the interviewees determines the extent to which the researcher can acquire valuable data that is relevant to the answering of the research question. Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested that the participants for the research interview should be knowledgeable and experienced in topic the researcher is investigating. This is because knowledgeable and experienced interview participants provide rich and convincing information about the research topic (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Schultze, and Avital, 2011; Oltmann, 2016). In this study, the researcher considered senior managers, HR managers, banking officers and a CBN executive as the "right persons" because they are experienced and knowledgeable in the area of study the researcher is investigating.

Earlier researchers in the field of competencies have embraced interview-based qualitative case study method to investigate the managed and measurement of competencies in various organisational settings. These researchers mostly focused their research on one type of interviewees, where managers inside the case study organizations are interviewed (Johanson *et al*., 2001a; Chaminade and Roberts, 2003; Boedker, *et al*., 2005; Beattie and Thomson, 2010). Since the objective of this study is to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks, by talking to employees from a range of perceptions, the prospective to enrich the integrity of outcomes is improved (Parry, 1998; Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Oltmann, 2016). As a result, the researcher interviewed senior managers, HR managers, banking officers and a CBN executive in order to provide a comprehensive picture of competencies in Nigerian banks. Rubin and Rubin (2005) maintained that it is difficult to know beforehand how much valuable information the interviewees can provide prior to the interview. For that reason, the researcher's best option is to select people who are knowledgeable and experience in the research topic (Rubin and Rubin, 2005: 66; Oltmann, 2016). The researcher selected senior level managers because they are experienced and knowledgeable about the strategies of the banks, their internal policies, and business practices. In addition, they are also likely to be involved with the implementation of the competency systems of the banks they represent. In order to get the necessary data for this study, the researcher travelled to Nigerian to carry out face-to-face interviews. The benefit of having face-to-face interviews provided the researcher the opportunity to read the body language of the respondents, and use probing and follow up questions appropriately.

3.4 Research Process

Generally, the purpose of every investigative study is to gain and advance knowledge in the field of study. A research is a systematic, formal rigorous and precise process employed to gain solutions to problems in order to discover and interpret new facts and relationships (Saunders *et al*., 2009). The purpose of research is to identify problems that can be resolved in a systematic manner, through investigations, analysis and observes the angle of appropriate conclusions. Therefore, undertaking a research is a process that organises and facilitates analysis of a complicated research investigation.

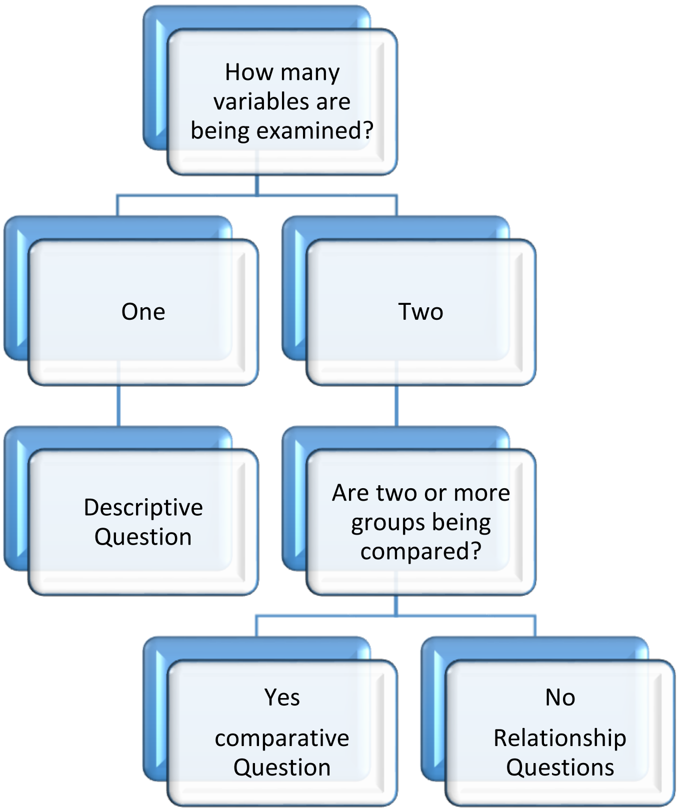
When undertaking a research, it is important to understand the entire research process in order to plan effectively through all the stages of the research (Saunders *et al*., 2009). The stages may vary from one research to another and also between researchers and the type of research. However, most formal research follows a general process (Saunders *et al.,* 2009). Saunders *et al*., (2009) created a flow chat for the research process; therefore, this study follows a systematic process similar to the one identified by Saunders *et al*., (2009) in order to examine and assess the research problem stated in this chapter and the introductory chapter.

The first stage in the research process identified by Saunders *et al*., (2009) is the identification of the research problem (Saunders *et al*., 2009). This is a formal statement, identifying the objective of the study and a clarification of what needs investigating. The main research question for this study is “Have competencies influenced the performance of Nigerian banks?”

As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks. A major factor in choosing the appropriate research design depends on how the researcher intends to answer the main research question. In order to answer the main research question effectively, four key research objectives were formulated to give focus and direction to the research and to clarify and support the main question. The research objectives concentrate on areas that are essential to the understanding and development of the study. The researcher answered each of the research objectives specifically in chapter five, descriptive analysis, as appropriate throughout the progression of the study.

According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2006), the research question provides direction and focus for the researcher to undertake the investigation (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006; Onwuegbuzie and Weinbaum, 2017). The nature of the research question is very important because it indicates which research methods are best suited to answering the research questions (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006; Onwuegbuzie and Weinbaum, 2017). Onwuegbuzie and Leech, (2006) suggested that the type of research question determines which research strategy, approach, methods, data collection and analysis techniques to employ. Most qualitative research questions fall into three categories: descriptive; comparative and relationship (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006, p.481). Figure 3.4 below displays the three types of quantitative research questions.

Figure 3.4 Typology of the Qualitative Research Question



Source: Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006, p481

According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech, (2006), qualitative research questions are non-numerical and tend to address "what" and "how" questions (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006; Onwuegbuzie and Weinbaum, 2017). Accordingly, the research question for this study examines two variables, yet, since the researcher is not comparing the two variables it classes the research question for this study as relational. The researcher answered the qualitative research question using the suitable research design. The fourth stage in the research process addressed the research design and methods most appropriate to answering the research question. This study asks just qualitative question, therefore, it employed a mono-method research design to answer the questions.

The second stage of this research was to review prior literature critical to the study and identify gaps in the literature that contributed to knowledge. Majorly, competencies are used to shape the nature of organisations vision, their values and their key success methods. In addition, competencies serve as the glue that links the aspiration of making people competitive and seeing those assets with the reality of the business that enables the business measure, monitor and plan with it. Key concepts from theoretical and empirical literature review, and relevant background of competencies were discussed at length in Chapter 2 of this research. Based on the literature reviewed, there is a lack of empirical studies investigating the influence on competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks. This lack of empirical data has created a gap in the competency literature in the context of Nigerian banks that the researcher intends to fill.

3.5 Research Philosophy and Research Approach

The third stage in designing an appropriate research methodology relates to the research's belief system and views on what the researcher considers acceptable knowledge. The research methodology therefore refers to "*the entire approach taken by the researcher to investigate the research process, including the academic underpinning, the collection of data and analysis of that data*" (Collis and Hussey, 2003:55; Anwar, 2016; Adhariani *et al*., 2017). In general, this whole approach is employed by the researcher in order to investigate the research phenomenon (Silverman, 2000; Scrabis-Fletcher *et al*., 2016; Scrabis-Fletcher and Silverman, 2017). In addition, Collis and Hussey, (2003) suggest that the methodological choice adopted by the researcher is determined by the researchers philosophical assumptions on ontology, epistemology and the research question investigated (Collis and Hussey, 2003:55; Anwar, 2016; Adhariani *et al*., 2017).

3.5.1 Ontology and human nature

The ontological assumption of a researcher and human nature, which focuses on the views held by the researcher on human nature and the world in general, provides the basis for social theorization and embraces the different epistemological and methodological position of the researcher (Morgan and Smircich, 1980; Decker, 2016; Endres and Weibler, 2016). According to Creswell (1994), the researcher must be able to understand the nature of his/her research reality in order for the researcher to understand his/her ontological supposition. (Creswell, 1994) The researcher's supposition on human nature focuses on the role of the researcher reality (Laughlin, 1995; Parvaiz *et al*., 2016; Thomson, 2017). Some researchers mostly treat human nature as a part of the researchers' ontology. Researchers like Eriksson and Kovalainen, (2008) described research ontology as "*the philosophies concerning the presence of, the relationship between people, the society they live in and their view of the world in general*" (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008:13; Aljamal *et al*., 2016; Koskinen *et al*., 2016). Consequently, the main point to understanding ontology is whether the researcher is objective and whether humans are subject to their external reality, or maybe the researcher's reality is independent and human influence the world by their knowledge (Morgan and Smircich, 1980; Decker, 2016; Endres and Weibler, 2016). The first belief talks about objectivism and the second talks about subjectivism or constructivism. The objectivist perception on ontology relates to the notion that social reality exists independent of social actors (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). This belief provides a firm, tangible, factual and impartial phenomenon that relates to accurate, observed measures (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). As a result, both organization and culture can be discussed as a social entity in the similar manner that physical scientists approach the investigation of physical phenomena (Bryman, 2004; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Johnson *et al*., 2016). The objective perception believes that human are subject to their external reality they have been exposed to (Morgan and Smircich, 1980; Endres and Weibler, 2016). In contrast, the subjectivists' or constructivists' perception rejects the objectivist interpretation, and treats social reality as a prediction of the imagination of human (Morgan and Smircich, 1980; Endres and Weibler, 2016). These researchers' suggests that, "*reality is concealed by individual human practices which evaluate and give meaning to the phenomenon in awareness prior to a full understanding of the construction of the implication it expresses*" (Morgan and

Smircich, 1980:494). The subjective conservatives are of the opinion that the social world exist separately from the natural world. As a result, individuals are capable of attaching imports to the happenings and phenomenon experienced in their daily lives. Therefore, they are able to influence their world with their observations and knowledge of the world (Gill and Johnson, 2002; Morgan and Smircich, 1980; Endres and Weibler, 2016).

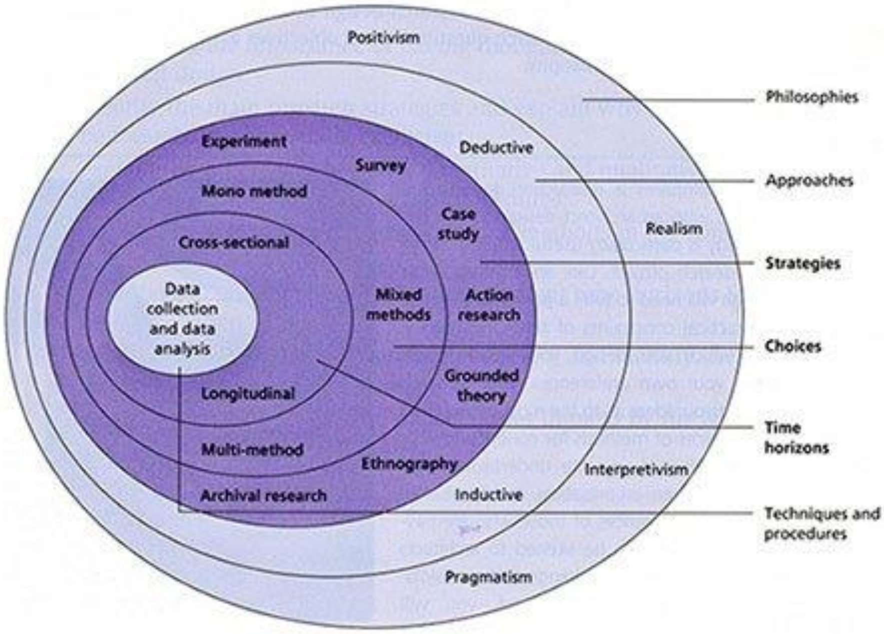
Alternatively, human beings and the social world they live in are not just objective or subjective as proposed by Morgan and Smircich (1980). There is the existence of different other ontological beliefs beginning from the very objective view to the very subjective view. In the subjective-objective continuum, researchers have observed six different suppositions concerning the human world, and they are as follows: reality as a prognosis of human imagination (the subjectivist approach), social construction, realm of symbolic discourse, a contextual field of information, as a concrete process, and reality as a concrete structure (objectivist approach). Accordingly, at one end of the spectrum, is the objectivist approach that inspires an epistemological position of positivism while the contrasting end of the spectrum holds the subjectivist approach that is in favour of the phenomenological epistemology.

3.5.2 Epistemology

According to Creswell (1994), epistemology always seeks to investigate the relationships that exist between the researcher and the researched (Creswell, 1994; Patterson *et al*., 2016). By seeking to understand this truth, epistemology focuses on the understanding of knowledge and what is accepted as relevant knowledge (Collis and Hussey, 2003; Adhariani *et al*., 2017). Epistemology defines the process of producing, including the conditions through which knowledge is conceivable, the type of scientific knowledge obtainable, and the limits for the knowledge (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Aljamal *et al*., 2016). The two contentious suppositions of ontology and the nature of humans, the subjective and objective ontology has led to the two separate epistemological beliefs that is recognized to be the phenomenological and the positive epistemology sometimes referred to as the normative, interpretive (Morgan and Smircich, 1980; Collis and Hussey, 2003; Bryman, 2004; Adhariani *et al*., 2017). A researcher with objective ontology who believes that the social and the natural world are the same would support the epistemological beliefs of the positivist. The positivist perception highlights the importance of studying the relationships between the components constituting that belief (Morgan and Smircich, 1980; Adhariani *et al*., 2017). In addition, they are also of the opinion that scientists cannot have understanding of anything, apart from observing the phenomena and the relations that exist between them. Consequently, they contend that scientific researchers ought to retain an independent and objective standpoint (Keat and Urry, 1982; Collis and Hussey, 2003; Cooke, 2016). Bryman (2004:11) and have suggested several features of positivism in this research. Firstly, only the phenomena and knowledge established by the minds can truly be acceptable as knowledge. Secondly, the importance of theory is to produce hypotheses that can be scientifically tested and lead to explainable laws to be assessed. Thirdly, knowledge is achieved through collecting of facts that make available the basis for laws and finally, the research must be carried out in a manner that is value free (Bryman, 2004:11; Thumburmung *et al*., 2016). The subjective ontology on the other hand, assumes that the society will be in support of the phenomenological epistemology (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). Phenomenological epistemology highlights the significance of understanding and knowing the methods through which people conceptualize their relationship and understanding to their world (Morgan and Smircich, 1980; Motta and Sharma, 2016). Unlike positivism, phenomenology maintains the view that the phenomenon under investigation is fundamentally dissimilar to that of the natural science. As a result, researchers are required to understand the subjective connotation of social action from a diverse reasoning of research process (Bryman, 2004; Thumburmung *et al*., 2016) and they interact with the researched, reducing the distance between the researched and the researcher (Creswell, 1994; Collis and Hussey, 2003; Adhariani *et al.*, 2017).

Accordingly, the researcher's point of view regarding his research philosophy and research approach is an influencing factor in the selection and design of the research methodology critical to answer the research question. This is because the researcher's predisposition contains important assumptions for the direction of the research. Figure 3.5 depicts the research 'onion' and contains the layers for choosing, time horizons and data collection techniques and procedures (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

Figure 3.5 the research 'Onion'



(Sourced from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2008)

According to Saunders *et al*., (2009) there are four basic research philosophies, and they are as follows: positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism (Saunders *et al*., 2009). They further state that each of the identified research philosophy, in context considers the relevant branch of philosophy. Epistemology is "a branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge and constitutes knowledge in a field of study" (Saunders *et al*., 2009 p.591). It centres on what the researcher considers acceptable knowledge whereby the researcher uses objective, observable phenomena, subjective interpretations of people or somewhere in-between to undertake value free of value-laden research. On one end of the spectrum, is the positivist researcher who is objective and independent of the research investigation. Positivism centres on external, objective and observable phenomena to provide credible data and facts (Saunders *et al*., 2009, p.119). The positivist researcher generally uses quantitative data collection techniques.

In contrast, the interpretive researcher is subjective, and the researcher becomes part of the research to explain differences in humans and tends to use qualitative data collection techniques. Realism has two forms: direct realism and critical realism. Direct realism suggests, "What we experience through our senses portrays the world accurately", while the critical realism supports, "*what we experience are sensations, the images of things in the real world, not the things directly*" (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, pp.590-91). The realist may use either quantitative or qualitative methods. Pragmatists are a cross between positivism and interpretivist. The pragmatist researcher answers the research question using either objective observable data or subjective meanings or both because each has value in interpreting the results (Saunders *et al.,* 2009, p.119). Pragmatists often use a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. According to Easterby-Smith *et al.,* (2008), social constructivism promotes opinion of the world constructed socially; therefore, to understand the world, the researcher uses interpretivist (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008; Bach, 2016; Kevill *et al*., 2017). Interpretivist centres on the understanding of humans and their roles as social actors as the best means of getting the truth. Positivism on the other hand, produces general law-like assumptions by working with observable social reality through realism. This researcher adopts the interpretivist standpoint concerning value position and what constitutes acceptable knowledge, because the researcher believes that the understanding of humans and their roles as social actors as the best means of getting the truth. As a result, the research design, research strategies, data collection and analysis techniques for this study followed the interpretivist research point of view.

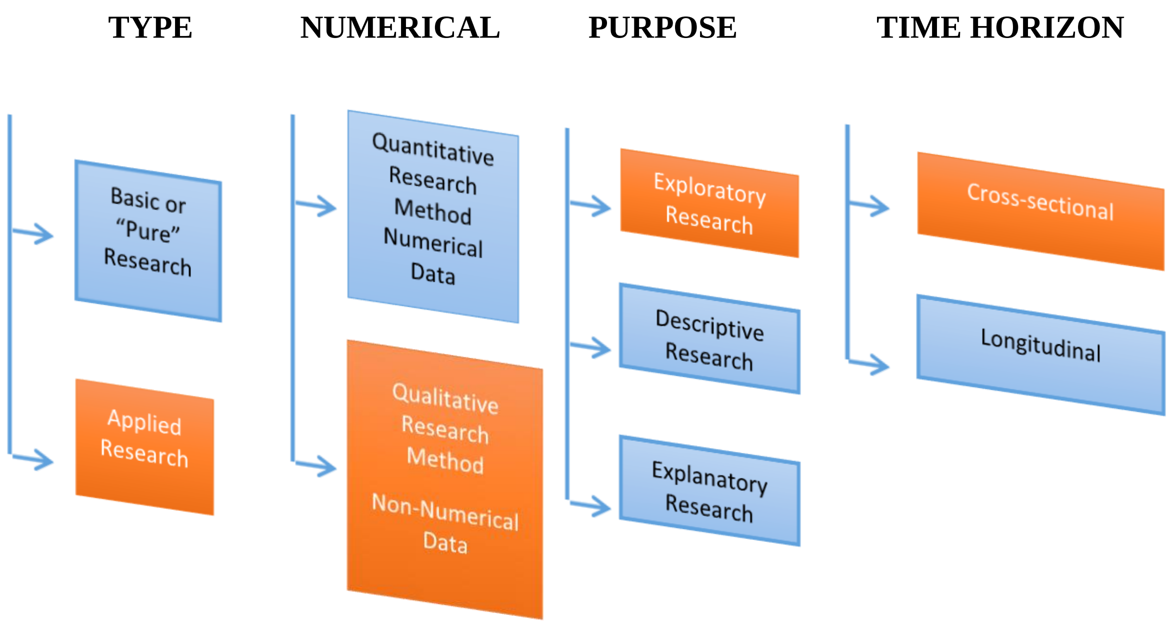
Another key influence in the selection of research methods and design is the particular research approach adopted by the researcher in order to answer the research question. There are two major research approaches, and they are the deductive and inductive approach. The inductive approach centres on the development of theory from collection and analysis of empirical data where the researcher is part of the research process. Whereas the deductive approach centres on testing of operationalized hypothesis from theory to explain the relationship between variables in order to generalise results and where the researcher is independent of the research process (Saunders *et al*., 2009, p.124-27). The key to understanding and effectively utilising the inductive or deductive approach to any research is to understand the research purpose and the methods that best fits the research. This researcher understands that the main difference between the inductive approach and the deductive approach to research is that the deductive approach is best suited for testing theories, while the inductive approach is best suited for the developing of new theory evolving from the data. In addition, this researcher also understands that the deductive approach typically begins with a hypothesis, but this is not the case for the inductive approach because it usually begins with a research question which narrows the scope of the research. Based on this reason, this researcher favours the use of the inductive approach since the study make's use of research questions and not hypothesis. This is because the current research is aimed at exploring new phenomena and looking at previous research from a different point of view. To achieve this, the research makes use of qualitative research which is generally associated with the inductive approach. However, the research is aware there are no set rules governing the use of the inductive and deductive approach for any qualitative or quantitative research.

The most appropriate approach to answer the main research question for this study is the inductive approach. This is because the inductive approach centres on the development of theory from collecting and analysing of empirical data where the researcher is part of the research process. Against the backdrops of these belief, the primary data collection of this study is through the use of semi-structured interviews since it is this method that allows the researcher human contact with the subjects so that conclusion can be drawn on the influence of competency on the performance of Nigerian banks.

3.6 Research Design and Techniques

The construction of an appropriate research design is critical to achieving valid research results. This is because the appropriate research design defines the methodology, provides the methods used for gathering, measuring and analysing the data, allows for the interpretation of results in order to draw general conclusions. This research seeks to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigeria banks. Therefore, an appropriate research design is required to investigate the research question such that accurate depth of the relationship between the two variables is established. Furthermore, the research design identifies the variables and control for extraneous factors to enhance internal validity and allow for generalisation or external validity (Smith, 2003; O'Hara *et al*., 2016). Research designs fall under different grouping, depending on the nature of the research. Figures 3.6 illustrate the different classification of research methods and designs.

Figure 3.6 Classification of research design based on type, numerical, and purpose and time.



Source: Adapted from Gabel 2007

There are two types of research, basic or pure research and applied research. Basic research is a research that advances knowledge of fundamentals of how the social world works and develops general theoretical explanations (Gabel, 2007; Xu, Z., 2016). The purpose of basic research is to expand knowledge in business and management in general within an academic context (Saunders *et al.*, 2009, p.6). Applied research attempts to solve a concrete problem or address a specific policy question. It has a direct, practical application and is used to support decision-making (Gabel, 2007; Xu, Z., 2016). Therefore, the researcher considers this research study an applied research because the study aims to address a specific policy problem in the Nigerian banking sector.

There are three classifications of research purpose: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Exploratory research "aims to seek new insights into phenomena, to ask questions, and to assess the phenomena in new light" (Saunders *et al*., 2009, p.592). This type of research focuses on interviewing experts or focus group interviews. Descriptive research "paints a picture" with words or numbers, presents a profile, outlines stages, or classifies types. It describes the status at a given time and can use quantitative research, such as data collection via questionnaires, case reports and case series, survey research or quantitative research methods (Gabel, 2007; Xu, Z., 2016). Exploratory or analytical research tries to find casual relationships such as in experimental clinical trials, whereas the non-experimental method focuses on observational primary research. The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigeria banks, therefore using exploratory research.

According to Saunders *et al*., (2009), there are two types of research methods, the quantitative research method and qualitative. Quantitative research uses numerical data to answer the research questions, whereas qualitative research uses non-numerical such as, information in the form of words, pictures, sound, visual images, or objects.

In the process of conducting a management science research, there are two key methodological approaches applicable to the research. They are the qualitative and quantitative methods (Saunders *et al.,* 2012). The qualitative research method is mainly word based or images rather than numbers (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Johnson and Harris, 2002; Saunders *et al*., 2012). In addition, the qualitative method mostly deals with small numbers of participants who are thoroughly investigated in their natural environment (Berg, 2009; Saunders *et al*., 2012). Silverman (2010) further stated that the qualitative method is popular amongst researchers because of its ability to obtain in depth data, and supports the involvement of the researcher in the natural setting in which the research occurs (Silverman, 2010). Furthermore, it has been documented that the qualitative method is the preferred option when not much is known about the phenomenon (Sarantakos, 2005; Saunders *et al*., 2012). This is because the qualitative method enables the researcher to explore and discover meanings people ascribe to their understanding of the phenomenon (Sarantakos, 2005; Saunders *et al.,* 2012).

On the other hand, the quantitative method uses measurements and numbers to explain key factors concerning the phenomenon (Sarantakos, 2005; Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, researchers using the quantitative method are independent of the study in most cases and aim to collect large samples of number-based data to search for statistical significance (Neuman, 2003; David and Sutton, 2004; Saunders *et al*., 2012). The quantitative methods favour the use of survey questionnaires, laboratory experiments, simulation, mathematical modelling, and econometrics (Neuman, 2003; Myers, 2009; Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Several researchers have explained the key differences between qualitative and quantitative methods (e.g. Maxwell, 2004; Corbetta, 2003; Bryman and Bell, 2007; Saunders *et al*., 2012).

Table 3.2: Differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches

Orientation	Quantitative	Qualitative
Assumption about the world	An instrument, can measure a single reality.	Multiple realities
Research purpose	Establish relationships between measured variables.	Understanding a social situation from participants' perspectives
Research methods and processes	✓ procedures are established before study begins; ✓ a hypothesis is formulated before research can begin; ✓ Deductive in nature.	✓ flexible, changing strategies; ✓ design emerges as data are collected; ✓ a hypothesis is not needed to begin research; ✓ Inductive in nature.
Researcher's role	The researcher is ideally an objective observer who neither participates in nor influences what is being studied.	The researcher participates and becomes immersed in the research/social setting.
Generalizability	Universal context-free generalizations	Detailed context-based generalizations

Justifications for adopting a Qualitative Method

In most cases, the qualitative research method centres on the understanding of a particular phenomenon, which is studied in the natural settings of the phenomenon through social processes involving human experience and behaviours. This study investigates the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks, which requires the acquisition of in-depth data through semi-structured interviews to enable the research answer the research question. Several researchers have suggested the use of qualitative methods to enable the researcher understand the views of participants and explore the in-depth meaning they give to the phenomenon (Thorogood, 2009; Saunders *et al*., 2012). Since the intention of this researcher was to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks, which lacks empirical knowledge, the qualitative method becomes appropriate. Corbin and Strauss (2008) argue that qualitative research methods is best used to understand any phenomenon which little is yet known, to gain new perspectives on issues about which much is already known, or in order to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to express quantitatively (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Urquhart, 2016). This study employs the qualitative research methods, therefore using non-numeric data.

3.6.1 Research Strategies

When constructing the appropriate research design, deciding on which research strategies adopted by the researcher is key because the data collected can best allow the testing and analysis of variables as well as the interpretation and generalization of results. Explaining in simple terms, how the data is obtained is very important as different research strategies produce different results. For example, data collected from an in-depth face-to-face interview would produce a different result from data collected through an online survey. Based on the objectives of the research, the research strategy expected to be consistent with the accepted practice in the field of study.

There are various strategies a researcher can adopt in order to achieve the research aim and objectives of the study. However, the most appropriate strategies allow the researcher to answer the research question systematically. It is expected that the research strategies adopted by the researcher is consistent with the nature of the research. This research is an applied research in business with an interpretivist view, and adopting an inductive approach. Therefore, some strategies are more appropriate than others are and not appropriate to this particular research. Saunders *et al*., (2009) identified several research strategies as follows: experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research. In order to answer the research question this research adopts the case study strategy.

3.6.2 Research Strategy - Case Study Approach

The case study approach to research is used to generate in-depth, different aspects or features of understanding an intricate issue in its real-life environment (Crowe *et al*., 2011). This is a recognised research design that is extensively used in a lot of disciplines, predominantly in the social sciences. Case study approach is simply defined as the need to have an in depth investigation of an event or phenomenon in its normal environment (Crowe *et al*., 2011). According to Yin (2009), case studies have the potential to be used to describe, explain or investigate events or phenomena in their normal environments as they occur (Yin, 2009). Therefore, helping researchers to understand and explain pivotal links and conduits resulting from developing a new services or new policy initiative (Yin, 2009). Unlike the experimental designs, which try to find or test a specific hypothesis through intentionally manipulating the environment, the case study approach captures information using a more explanatory 'how', 'what' and 'why' questions. The case study approach also offers further understandings into the gaps that exist in its delivery, and why one strategy application might be selected over another. By doing this, it can help develop or refine theory (Pearson *et al*., 2010; Crowe *et al*., 2011). The case studies approach can be appropriate in different ways depending on the epistemological standpoint of the researcher. While such a plan can be practically helpful, it is appropriate to draw on more than one approach in any case study. This is because the context of undertaking an interpretative case study, researchers are able to draw from a critical, reflective viewpoint which seeks to take into consideration the wider social and political situation that has formed the case (Crowe *et al*., 2011).

In order to investigate the introduction of the CBN competency framework in Nigerian banks and how it influences performance, the researcher has defined the cases as Nigerian banks that are subject to the CBN competency framework. The researchers focus is on how the CBN competency framework was being implemented and its impact on the banks performance. The banks selected for this study are selected not because it is a representative of other banks, but because of its uniqueness, which is of genuine interest to the researchers. The rational for choosing these banks was based on their size and coverage but most importantly, the selected case study banks are major national banks with branches in every major town and cities in Nigeria, carrying out both retail and commercial banking activities. Therefore, assisting the researcher in understanding and explaining pivotal links and conduits resulting from the CBN competency framework and how it relates to the banks performance.

3.6.3 History of Banking in Nigeria

The federal republic of Nigeria, popularly known as Nigeria, is a country in West Africa. Nigeria shares her borders with countries like Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. The coast of Nigeria lies on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. Nigeria is a democratic nation with and elected president, and comprises of 36 states and the federal capital territory, where the capital of the country is located in Abuja.

Historically, Nigeria was a series of numerous kingdoms and tribal states existing for many years before the merging of the Southern Nigeria Protectorate and Northern Nigeria Protectorate in 1914. Nigeria as a country originated from the British colonial rule in the 19th century. The British colonial rulers established administrative and legal structures, however, practiced indirect rule through traditional and religious rulers. Nigeria officially became an independent state in 1960, however, struggled between military rule and democratic rule from 1967 – 1999 when the country achieved a stable democracy. Nigeria is considered the most populous country in Africa and the seventh most populous country in the world. With approximately 184 million inhabitants, Nigeria is often referred to as the "Giant of Africa", owing to its large population and economy. Nigeria is also considered a multinational state because of its 500 plus ethnic groups inhabiting it. The three largest ethnic groups are the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. These ethnic groups speak over 500 different languages and are identified with wide variety of cultures. As a result, the official language spoken in Nigeria is English, which is borrowed from the colonial era. In addition, Nigeria is unevenly divided in two, the Christians who are mostly located in the southern part of Nigeria, and the Muslims in the northern. However, a minority of the population still practice religions local to Nigeria.

In 2015, Nigeria was considered the 20th largest economy in the world, worth more than $500 billion and $1 trillion in terms of nominal GDP and purchasing power parity respectively. The World Bank considers Nigeria to be an emerging market in the world economy, and is identified as a regional power in the African continent, a middle power in international affairs, and an emerging global power (World Bank, 2016). Nigeria is an active member of MINT group, which is an acronym referring to the economies of Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Turkey. Nigeria is also listed among the "Next Eleven" economies set to become among the biggest in the world, and a founding member of the African Union. Furthermore, Nigeria belongs to other international organizations like the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nation and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

History of Banking in Nigeria

Banking in Nigerian has progressed tremendously since it was first founded and the historical development of the Nigerian banking industry is classified into three key eras namely, 1892-1952 Era, 1952-1985 Era, and 1986-date. It is important to note that there has never been a definite division between the historical development and the evolution of Nigerian banks. Therefore, the Nigerian banking evolution can be summarised in the above format. The 1892 – 1954 Era is regarded as the period of free and monoculture banking, while the 1952 – 1986 eras is regarded as the classical liberalism period and finally, we have the 1986 – the present (Chibuike, 2010).

The 1986 – present era has experienced a series of structural adjustment programmes, reforms and consolidations to reinforce the viability and confidence of the Nigerian banking industry. This was imperative to make sure a firm stop was put to the banking failures of the past. The early part of the first era was predominantly a monopoly by the foreign banks before the entrance of indigenous banks (Chibuike, 2010). However, majority of the banks in this era failed, therefore, necessitating the declaration of the Banking Ordinance of 1952. This was the first step at regulating banking activities in the Nigerian banking industry. The Banking Ordinance of 1952 took care of was fundamental issues like the minimum paid-up capital, banking supervision, maintaining reserve funds and capital, unsecured and secured loans (Oluduro, 2015). The decree also introduced the classification of banks into indigenous and expatriate banks. The banks were ordered to maintain a minimum paid-up capital of £12, 500 (₦25,000) for indigenous banks and £100,000 (₦200,000) for expatriate banks. In addition, all new banks were required to get a license from the Minister of Finance before they were allowed to operate (Oluduro, 2015).

In 1958, the Central Bank of Nigerian decree was introduced but was later annulled in 1969. Before the annulment, the 1958 banking regulation further increase the authorised paid-up capital to £200,000 for foreign banks, however, leaving the indigenous banks to pay the same old rate. The banking regulation introduced a credit limit, prohibiting banks from trading or beneficially acquiring real estate. The Banking Act of 1969, which annulled the 1958 decree, came with an objective of reinforcing the banking system while increasing the authorities of the Central Bank of Nigeria on the Nigerian banking industry and on overall economy of Nigeria (Oluduro, 2015).

The decree emphasized that banks established in Nigerian must have a minimum paid-up capital including ₦600,000, while foreign banks must have ₦1,500,000. The decree also emphasized that the paid-up capital and the required reserve of the bank must not be less than

10 per cent of the bank's total capital. In addition, opening and closing of bank branches must be subject to prior approval by the CBN. The period of 1969 to 1991 saw a flood of amendments to both the CBN Act and the Banking Act. The Acts and Decrees that was introduced brought about new innovations into the regulation of the Nigerian banking industry to improve the standard of service and monitoring of the banks (Oluduro, 2015). The advancement of the Nigerian economy at the time ushered in the necessity for the banking sector to diversify its services. The era saw different types of specialised banks being established in the country to serve different purposes. In 1960, the Merchants Banks were introduced to the Nigerian banking industry, while the 1970s unveiled the Development Banks; the late 1990s produced the Community banks and Mortgage Banks (Oluduro, 2015).

In the 1990s, the Nigerian banking industry went through a series of reforms and consolidations designed to reintroduce stability in the banking sector due to a high number of distressed banks and failed banks. There was an estimate of 29 commercial banks and 12 merchant banks in 1986, which by 1994 had risen to 66 commercial banks and 54 merchant banks. There were equally752 registered finance houses, 879 community banks, 252 primary mortgage institutions and 271 People’s Bank branches across the country, leading to unhealthy and unethical banking practices, which caused destabilisation in the industry with devastating consequences (Olukotun, 2013). Subsequently, there was a second reform program in July 2004, which brought about a considerable level of stability in the Nigerian banking sector. The 2004 reform led to a huge sectoral overhaul, therefore, further reducing the 80 commercial banks to just 24 stronger and reliable banks that could compete internationally (Oluduro, 2015). The reform enabled Nigerian banks attract an estimated 34.8 per cent of the net funds inflow into Africa from 2004 to 2007. In 2010, Nigerian had the second highest number (three) of the top 20 banks in Africa, and most (18) of Africa’s 200 largest banks (Oluduro, 2015). The plan to put an end to the era of distressed banks and failed banks in Nigeria was governed by the various monitoring and regulatory institutions put in place by the Nigerian government including the Central bank of Nigeria (CBN), established in 1958. The Federal Ministry of Finance (FMF), the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) established in 1988. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) established in 1979, the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) established in 1997. The National Board for Community Banks (NBCB), and the Financial Services Regulation Coordinating Committee (FSRCC), which coordinates the activities of the various regulatory bodies and agencies (Oluduro, 2015).

In 2009, the CBN insisted that a special examination to ascertain the wellbeing of all the banks operating in Nigeria, with particular focus on liquidity, capital adequacy, risk management and corporate governance be carried out. The examination was carried out by the CBN in conjunction with the NDIC. The examination revealed that ten out of the twenty-four banks had huge non-performing loan and nine of the banks were in a grave situation due to shortage in capital. These banks were also found to have significant deficiencies in liquidity, risk management practices and corporate governance (CBN, 2012). The CBN has since taken a number of steps to improve the Nigerian-banking sector by outlining four key areas that the reform will focus on and include areas such as enhancing the quality of banks, establishing financial stability, enabling healthy financial sector evolution and ensuring the financial sector contributes to the real economy (CBN, 2012). In addition, the recent global financial crises also exposed the inadequacy of skills and depth of executive capacity in the banking industry as stated in the literature review chapter. From the foregoing, the development of staff competencies has become important in addressing these inadequacies, underscoring the need to train a new generation of banking professionals that are knowledgeable, skilled and competent to develop and deliver satisfactory banking products and services to the consumers (CBN, 2012).

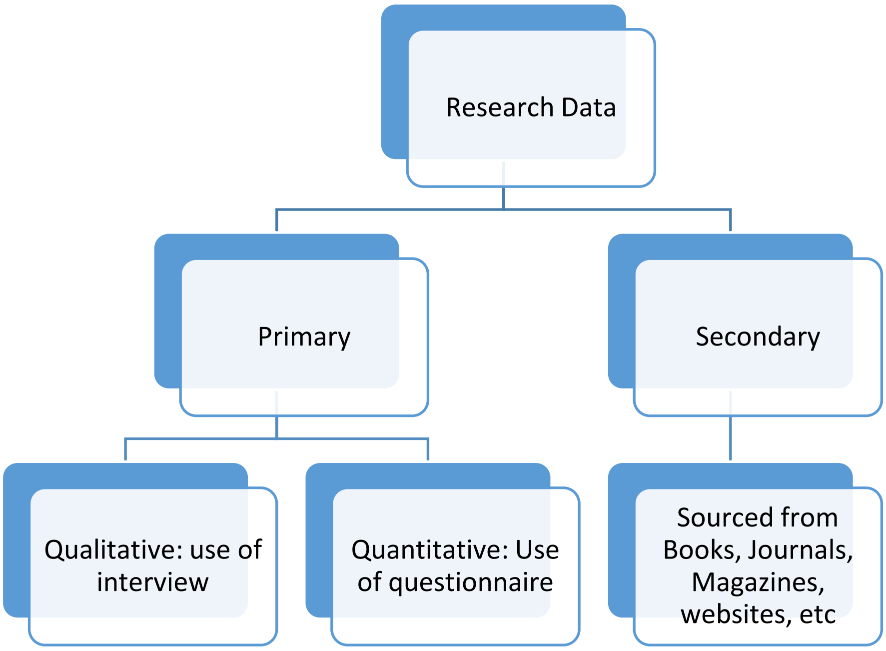
3.7 Data collection and analysis

This study attempted to collect as rich and varied data set as possible. The data required for this study was collected by in depth semi-structured interviews with banking professional from the selected Nigerian banks and the CBN; internal organisation specific documents and website information; field notes and observations recorded.

3.7.1 Data sources

In business researches, the data used for the study are classified Primary or Secondary, depending on the source of the data (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Secondary data is sourced from other alternate sources other than the research currently done. This data is originally collected for a different purpose but can be used to supplement the data from the actual research (Easterby-Smith *et al*, 2008; Kevill *et al.*, 2017). Secondary data is considered to be information gathered from books, journals, websites, etc. Primary data, on the other hand, refers to data collected for the sole purpose of research currently done. This makes it is original, and first-hand to the research. Primary data can either be classified as quantitative or qualitative depending on its quantification (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Qualitative data is the kind of data that is not readily quantifiable as they are non-numeric in nature. Qualitative data is not targeted at statistical reliability and is mainly obtained through the use of interviews. (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008; Kevill *et al.*, 2017) It is worth mentioning, that there are various types of interviews; email-interviews, telephone interviews, and face-to-face interviews. On the other hand, quantitative data is targeted at achieving statistical reliability and are mainly obtained through the use of qualitative questionnaires.

Figure 3.7: A graphical description of data



Adapted from Easterby-Smith et al, 2008

3.7.2 Process to qualitative data collection

According to Creswell (2009) it is important for researchers to collect the necessary data for their research from relevant multiple sources, rather than relying on a single source of data (Creswell, 2009; Urquhart, 2016). Researchers employing a qualitative research approach have the capability of finding a deeper understanding of the outcome from the qualitative research process. The subjective nature of the qualitative approach means that information collected from the interviews can be misinterpreted or biased. This bias can come from a personal belief or preconceived notions, which may significantly affect the validity of the study. In addition, when analysing the interview data, subjectivity can also be an issue when interpreting the data. There is the possibility that the research qualitative data can be unwittingly interpreted in a way that suggests what the researcher wishes to show, however, this may not be easily achievable with quantitative research. Qualitative research can explore several areas such as human behaviour, and the aim of this study is to explore the influence of competency on the performance of Nigerian banks by speaking with individuals in the selected banks. This system of research investigation also allows the researcher to be critical of the process and decisions, which provides the researcher yet another viewpoint and the potential to open up a range of new information (Creswell, 2009; Urquhart, 2016). In this study, the researcher employed in-depth semi-structured interview as the key method to collecting the qualitative data, and supplemented the interview data with data such as performance reports and policies supporting the competency framework in the selected banks to verify the findings of the data. Stemming from an interest in the thorough understanding of human behaviour, researchers tend to use qualitative research aiming to gather a detailed account of human behaviour and beliefs within the contexts they occur in (Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Rubin, 2016). In addition, with the use of non-numerical data, this line of investigation seeks to explore and describe the 'quality' and 'nature' of how people behave experience and understand. Therefore, the qualitative research method is very appropriate for the particular research where the scientist intends to acquire rich and in depth data concerning the research area from the participants' perspectives. According to Bryman (2004) qualitative interview questions can either be semi-structured or unstructured (Bryman, 2004; Wilson, 2016). For the purpose of this study, the researcher designed the interview questions to be semi-structured in nature, since the researcher was observing multiple banks in this study. According to the literature, the semi-structured qualitative interview process is more suitable for this research because it ensures and achieves "cross-case comparability" better than the unstructured interview method (Bryman, 2004:324; Wilson, 2016). The process of the qualitative data collection for this research embraced the stages recommended by previous researchers in order to achieve the research objectives, which includes targeting the potential interviewees for the research, creating interview guides, obtaining access and consent of the interviewees, and interviewing the targeted participants (Arksey and Knight, 1999; Bryman, 2004; Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Rubin, 2016).

3.7.3 Targeting potential interviewees

Finding potential interview participants is a very important concern in any qualitative research, as it determines the nature and quality of data the research can acquire from the interviewee. In order to achieve the research aim and objective of this study, the researcher targeted HR managers and senior managers who are directly involved with the competency framework in terms of design, usage and application. In addition, the researcher also targeted bank staffs that are at the receiving end of the framework. This provided the researcher with a holistic picture on the application of competency framework and reaction to the competency framework in the banks. For the sake of clarity, the researcher would like to state that the potential interviewees in this research refers to individuals who are familiar, knowledgeable and experienced with the competency framework in terms of design, usage and application within the banks. Getting the right interviewees can provide the researcher with a depth of valuable information, which is very important to the research. Therefore, it is important for the researcher to target interviewees who are experienced and knowledgeable concerning the research topic since they have the prospective to offer valuable information needed by the researcher to achieve the research aim (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Rubin, 2016). In this study, the researcher targeted a CBN executive, senior bank managers, HR mangers, and banking officers in the Nigerian banking industry for interviews because they are able to provide the researcher with the knowledge and experience needed to understand the research problem. The researcher targeted mid-range general bankers who had been in the bank for long and someone from the retail area of the bank with experience in the area of interest because their knowledge provided depth to the targeted data. As a result, the researcher considered senior banking managers and HR managers to have the extensive knowledge on the influence of competency on the performance of their individual banks. In addition, the targeted senior managers and HR managers are most likely to be responsible for creating and implementing the strategic plans and policy of the banks they represent. Similarly, the researcher selected a CBN executive who is specialised in the regulatory side of the banking sector to be another interview participant. This is because the researcher considers the CBN executive an expert who has specialist knowledge and understanding of the CBN competency framework. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the researcher collected the interview data from ten selected Nigerian banks out of a total of twenty-five banks and the CBN.

3.8 Research design

The research design describes the process used in the research. The process takes into consideration the rationale that led to the selection of the appropriate methods adopted, selection of respondent, and the data analysis method (Flick, 2011). There are three major research designs, namely the descriptive, explanatory, and the exploratory.

The descriptive research centres on reflecting the experiences of the participant and closely related to the ethnographic studies (Bryman, 2012). The explanatory research centres on explaining the features of a social phenomenon (Saunders *et al*., 2007). This is effective where the impact of one variable on another can be established using quantitative framework (Kothari, 2004; Turner *et al*., 2017). The exploratory research explores the issues lacking empirical understanding to carry out rigid research, and informs further research in the subject area (Neuman, 2003; Saunders *et al.*, 2012).

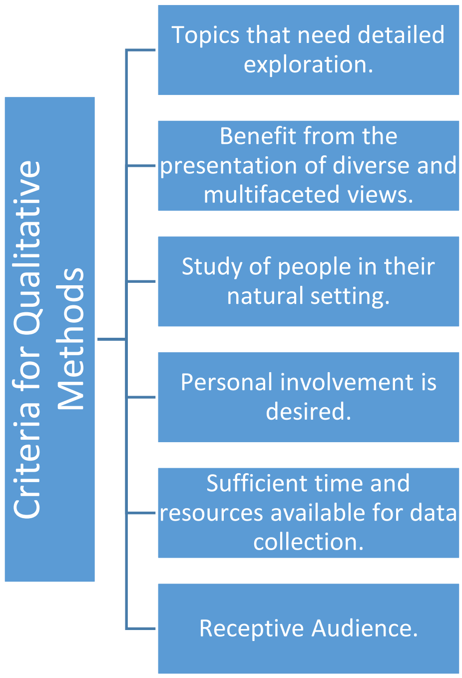
3.8.1 Selecting a testing method: Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research is a research inquiry process that enables the researcher to understand the basis of the research through distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. Based on the qualitative data, the researcher is able to build a complex but holistic picture, by analysing words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducting the study in the natural setting (Creswell 1998 p15; Lee and Bai, 2016). By investigating the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigeria banks, the primary focus of the researcher is to explore the influence of competency on the performance Nigerian banks. A key question in this regard was whether to employ a qualitative or quantitative research method in order to achieve the research objectives. The former was preferred since identifying the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks would be challenging enough without having to rank such value dimensions numerically; and gather a research sample sizeable enough to be statistically relevant. This is why the qualitative method was preferred and adopted for this study.

As Bryman and Bell (2007 p474) describe, qualitative interviewing is not as structured as the highly formularised quantitative research method which maximizes the reliability and validity of the researcher by measuring key concepts (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Anwar, 2016). This makes the qualitative method not as reliable as the quantitative method. However, in qualitative interviewing, the researcher is more interested in the interviewee's understanding of the problem and from their point of view. This means the researcher is given the flexibility to depart from the initial planned guide or structure of the interview based on the interviewee's response to the questions. The researcher is able to ask new questions and follow-up questions based on the response of the interviewees. This is possible because the qualitative research methods centre on the rich, detailed answers acquired from the interviewees. The qualitative methods also allow the generation of easily processed and code able answers from the interviewees (Bryman and Bell 2007; Anwar, 2016).

Creswell (1998) justifies use of qualitative method in the social sciences by representing a legitimate mode of social and human science exploration without apology or comparisons to quantitative research. Good models of qualitative inquiry demonstrate the rigor, difficulty, and time-consuming nature of this approach (Creswell 1998 p9; Lee and Bai, 2016). Creswell summarised the criteria for justifying the use of a qualitative research method, and they are as follows: Topics that need detailed exploration; Benefit from the presentation of diverse and multifaceted views; Study of people in their natural setting; Personal involvement is desired; Sufficient time and resources available for data collection; and Receptive Audience. Creswell (1998) stated that exploratory types of research questions that meet the criteria for qualitative research methods are research topics that need detailed exploration. These topics benefit from the presentation of diverse and multifaceted views, suited to the study of people in their natural setting; suited for studies requiring personal involvement, sufficient time and resources are available for data collection and the audiences are receptive.

Figure 3.8 Criteria for Qualitative methods



This research study fulfils the criteria identified by Creswell (1998). This research seeks to understand the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks. In this regard, it was necessary to build a holistic picture of competencies, and to test the efficacy of its usage under scrutiny against the views of the participants.

3.8.2 Interview procedure and selection of Participants

The interviewees were told what was required of them, how much time it would involve, what the purpose of the study was, the level of anonymity involved, the promise of strict confidentiality on the part of the researcher, as well as what would be done with the collected data. The researcher did not reveal the identity of the participating organisation or the participants throughout this research, therefore, using codes like "Bank 1" or "Participant 1".

Considering the geography and time restrictions, the decision on whether to conduct face-to-face interviews, or telephone interviews became significantly important to accumulate the opinions. The participants were all interviewed face-to face. The researcher intended to audio record the interviews to ensure that a deeper context and better understanding of the nuances of opinions is achieved, however, the participants declined being audio-recorded since it would leave a record of them making specific statements at the detriment of their job. Therefore, in order to ensure the participants' safety and for them to speak freely about the topic no audio recording was produced. English language was used in conducting all of the interviews, as it is the general language in Nigeria. During the interviews, the interviewer made use of repetition and paraphrasing of questions to confirm the intended meaning of interviewee's responses.

3.8.3 Designing interview guides

Arksey and Knight (1999) argued that in a semi-structured qualitative research interview, the semi-structured interview guide functions as a structure that makes sure all the specific themes are covered and the researcher is able to acquire an in depth and thorough data from the interview process (Arksey and Knight, 1999; Bitew, 2016). In most cases, the interview guide represents a structured list of inquiries that the researcher aims to find out in the course of the interview and from the interviewees' point of view (Bryman, 2004; Wilson, 2016). As explained earlier in this chapter, there are four key research objectives the researcher wanted to investigate in this study, in order to answer the research question.

Based on the research question and objectives of this research, the knowledge gained by the researcher from previous literatures, the researcher was able to design an interview guide for interviews with the bank participants and the CBN executive. The interview guides served as a measure of control during the interviews for specifying the research direction but applied adaptably to each participant. The semi-structured interview questions were appropriately planned to inspire participants to 'recreate their knowledge of the phenomenon and to discover their deeper meaning' (Seidman, 1998:76; Fiesler *et al*., 2017). The researcher was able to alter the order and structure of questioning or even skip some certain questions due to participant's responses during the interview. Once an interview is completed, the researcher went through the interview questions and method in the interview guide to make improvements due to information received.

The interview guide entails the interview questions the researcher is interested in finding out, which the researcher developed from the generated themes (*see sections 3.2*). The generated themes for this study are as follows:

Nature and scope of the competency framework; Competency Links to bank SHRM; Competency and Leadership; Competency links to Performance; Implementation of the framework; Staff Engagement with the framework; Evaluation of the framework.

The researcher generated these themes from the literature reviewed and they are critical to answering the research question. The researcher developed interview questions based on each theme to gather as much information as possible about each theme to enable the researcher achieve the aim and objectives of this research.

Table 3.3 Justification of Interview themes and semi-structured interview questions (*see appendix 2 for full list of interview questions*).

Interview Themes and Questions	Justification
Theme One: Nature and scope of the competency framework.	The competency of the organisation is critical to the success of the organisation. Therefore, it is significant for the organisation to define, assess, measure and develop competencies (Shippmann *et al.*, 2000; Delamare Le Deist & Winterton, 2005; CIPD, 2016).
Theme Two: Competency Links to bank SHRM.	Competencies support the organisation's desire to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, the strategic management of human resource is vital (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990; Gupta et al., 2009; CIPD, 2016).
Theme Three: Competency and Leadership	The skills and abilities of leaders/managers are important to the effective use of the competency framework because they will promote consistency, favourability and awareness in the organisation (Hawi *et al.*, 2015; CIPD, 2016).
Theme Four: Competency links to Performance.	Literature on the concept of competencies has offered a wide range of explanations concerning the notion of competencies and

	its role in enhancing the competitive advantage and performance (Srivastava, 2005; Sypniewska, 2013; Zambranol, Castellanos, Calvo, Rioja, 2013; CIPD, 2016; Delima, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016).
Theme Five: Implementation of the framework.	According to the CIPD (2016), the implementation of the framework is critical to the success of the framework because it determines how the workforce will react to the framework. Therefore, the communication of its purpose and goal is key (CIPD, 2016).
Theme Six: Staff Engagement with the framework.	The competency framework describes the combination of knowledge, skills and characteristics needed to effectively perform the job related tasks in an organisation and is used as a human resource tool for selection, training and development, appraisal and succession planning, identifying and mapping these competencies is rather complex (CIPD, 2016). Therefore, it is important review how employees engage with this framework on a personal level.

Theme Seven: Evaluation of the framework.	The competency framework is expected to be evaluated and refined frequently, along with the selection and other human resources practices developed and used with the competency framework (Lucia, and Lepsinger, 1999; Egodigwe, 2006; CIPD, 2016).

According to the competency assessment flow model discussed in section (*2.5.8*, *Chapter 2*), competencies provide a road map through which organisations can achieve their goals and objectives. Therefore, the researcher designed the interview questions using the competency assessment model as a road map to find out the influence of competency in the selected banks. In addition, the researcher also used the balance scorecard model discussed in section (2.6.2.3, Chapter 2) as a structured model to measure the bank's performance. This was necessary to validate and reinforce the findings from the interview. The performance of the bank employees focused on the bank's strategic objectives, which are flowed to individuals. The researcher adopted the balance scorecard model because it is the most popular method amongst researchers, and its ability to measure non-financial performance (Kolibacova, 2014). The balance scorecard differentiates four key performance viewpoints: financial, customer, internal processes and learning & growth. The researcher reviewed the performance reports of at least one employee for the past three years in each of the banks. The researcher focused on the four key areas identified by the balance scorecard and compared the current competency level of the employee with the requirement of the job stated in the job description, development over the past three years supported by the internal processes.

3.8.4 Getting access to interviewees

The researcher targeted senior managers, HR managers, and banking officers of ten Nigerian banks and one executive of the central bank of Nigeria (CBN) as potential participants for an in-depth interview because of their knowledge and experience of the process and policies in the bank relating to the competency framework. This is because they had been through the process personally and are aware of the process in place, as they provide adequate information to the targeted data. This is to provide the researcher with a holistic view of what competency meant to the banks, how it is used and what the employees think of it. The interview with the banking professionals and the CBN executive took place between March and August 2015. The researcher experienced great difficulties in the course of acquiring access and contact to the targeted participants. Getting access to senior managers, HR manager, bank staff and the CBN executive was one of the most challenging tasks of this research because the potential interviewees usually have very busy schedules and limited free time. In addition, at the time, the researcher undertook the fieldwork interview between the period of April and August 2015, Nigeria was conducting its presidential elections, which led to more challenges for the researcher in order to organize interviews. However, as earlier stated in this chapter, the researcher carried out the field research during this period because the 24-month period given by the central bank for the banks to develop their own competency framework in line with that of the central bank had come to an end and the banks had entered the evaluation stage of the framework. As a result, it was a good time for the researcher to carry out his own evaluation of the competency framework because at this time all the banks had implemented their own competency framework in line with that of the CBN. In order for the researcher to deal with the aforementioned problems and collect the necessary data for the research, the researcher considered the following strategies to identify the right interviewees, obtain access and consent, and plan interview dates and times with the participants.

The first step taken by the researcher was to identify individuals within the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and selected banks that had the desired information and experience about the research. From searching the CBN's websites and bank websites, the researcher discovered that only a few individuals with contact information were listed within the CBN and the website, and had direct dealings with the banks in relation to the competency framework. However, the researcher got access to senior manager, HR managers and bank employees via a referral. This was possible because the researcher had previously worked with one of the banks and still has family members and friends working within the banking industry in Nigeria.

The second step was to make contact with the identified individuals. Subsequently, an email was sent to the identified individuals detailing the research purpose and what the researcher intended to find out, benefits of the research and every information necessary as regards to ethics. Fortunately, one of the listed CBN executive who is also a senior executive working directly with the banks in connection with the competency framework agreed to be interviewed. After receiving the positive feedback to the researcher's appeal to be interviewed, the subsequent step was for the researcher to arrange interviews dates and time with the potential participants. The interview questions *(see Appendix 2 for interview question)* were sent to the impending interviewee's participants prior to each interview, to enable them get ready for the interview. The selected banks felt the targeted data by the researcher was a bit sensitive because it entails information about their internal process and procedures and how effective it is being managed by the bank. Therefore, making the participants sceptical about speaking freely due to the fear that the information they provide could get to the banks management and them losing their jobs because of participating in the interview. Since the participants and the selected banks regarded the area of study as sensitive, it was important for the researcher to reemphasize and guarantee confidentiality to interviewees to encourage them speak freely about their views of the competency framework. In addition, the researcher guaranteed the participants that the data acquired from the interview process would strictly be used for the purpose of this individual research, and the researcher would maintain strict confidentiality and anonymity when treating the data, and only record the interview with the consent of the interviewee's. The reassurance by the researcher gave the participants the confidence to speak freely about the research area on the condition that the researcher will only take notes and no audio recording made. Although, this made the interview process longer, it did not affect the openness and the clarity in with the participants provided the information. Furthermore, the researcher did not lose any significant information provided by the participant and they were able to discuss freely with the researcher. The researcher sent copies of the final transcript to the participant for correction and approval before proceeding with the analysis of the data.

The above strategy to interview potential interviewees appeared to have worked very well as it provided the researcher with a strategy to get potential interviewees and targeted data from the participants. This also improved the validity and reliability of the research findings. Although, because of the presidential election in 2015 it took longer to arrange the interviews, the researcher was still able to acquire detailed and valuable data during the interviews. In general, the researcher conducted interviews with 1 CBN executive, 10 senior managers, 10 HR managers and 10 banking officers by August 2015. By interviewing these participants from ten selected Nigerian banks out of twenty-five banks, this provided the research with depth and width in terms of coverage and validity of the data based on the knowledge of the interviewees.

The selected Nigerian banks for this research are major national banks with branches in every major town and cities in Nigeria, carrying out both retail and commercial banking activities. The rational for choosing these banks was based size and coverage but most importantly, the view that the greatest opportunity for the banks to perform in terms of increasing revenue is their ability to deliver a high quality and differentiated customer experience. According to Schneider and Barbera (2011) HR systems can strategically improve an organisation's customer satisfaction by ensuring their policies, practices and procedures produce the behaviours that get rewarded, supported and are expected to produce a superior service climate (Schneider and Barbera, 2011). Hence, the researcher selected seven banks from the KPMG 2014 research of the top 10 most customer-focused commercial banks in Nigeria in terms of commercial activities and three other banks outside of this category to see if there is anything they are doing differently. The KPMG survey of the Nigerian banking industry has been ongoing yearly for eight years and the scope of the 2014 survey covered 28 cities in 27 states across Nigeria. They spoke to 20,770 retail-banking customers, 3,500 SMEs and about 400 corporate/commercial organisations. Their survey reflected the perspectives of the customer's levels of satisfaction and expectations from their banks. Based on the validity of their findings the researcher has decided to use seven banks out of their most top 10 rated commercial banks and three other banks outside this category as the case study banks for this research.

3.8.5 Conducting interviews

The researcher was able to conduct thirty-one successful interviews with a CBN executive, ten senior bank managers, ten HR managers and ten banking officers. The researcher conducted all the interviews face-to-face and the interviews lasted between forty-five minutes to one hour respectively. The researcher conducted the face-to-face interviews in the selected Nigerian banks and the CBN. The interviewees declined permission to be audio-recorded as they felt it would hinder them from speaking freely. The researcher did reassure the participants about their freedom to withdraw from the research if they felt uncomfortable, the information they provide would be treated with strict confidentiality and no harm would come to them by participating in the research. This reassurance did not change their minds and preferred not to be audio-recorded. Therefore, the researcher had to make notes during the interview, which made the interview process a bit longer but successful. The researcher later summarized interview notes into a comprehensive document, sent to the participants for approval before using the analysis of the data.

Table 3.4: Profile of the Interviewees.

Bank Code	Position of Interviewee	Interview Type	Date and Time
Interview A1	Customer service officer	Face-to-face	19th Aug 2015, 13:00 – 13:40
Interview A2	Senior HR Manager	Face-to-face	19th Aug 2015, 14:00 – 14:55
Interview A3	Customer Service Manager	Face-to-face	19th Aug 2015, 15:00 – 15:55
Interview B1	Senior Banking Officer	Face-to-face	14th Aug 2015, 10:00 – 10:45
Interview B2	HR manager	Face-to-face	14th Aug 2015, 11:10 – 11:57
Interview B3	Operations manager	Face-to-face	14th Aug 2015, 12:25 – 13:15
Interview C1	Senior Banking Officer	Face-to-face	14th Aug 2015, 15:25 – 16:15
Interview C2	Senior HR manager	Face-to-face	14th Aug 2015, 17:00 – 17:45
Interview C3	Head of Corporate Banking	Face-to-face	17th Aug 2015, 09:10 – 09:55
Interview D1	Customer service officer	Face-to-face	17th Aug 2015, 10:35 – 11:15
Interview D2	Assistant HR Manager	Face-to-face	17th Aug 2015, 12:00 – 12:55
Interview D3	Corporate Banking Manager	Face-to-face	26th Aug 2015, 12:30 – 13:18
Interview E1	Teller / Cashier	Face-to-face	26th Aug 2015,10:15 – 10:50
Interview E2	Assistant HR Manager	Face-to-face	26th Aug 2015, 11:10 – 11:58
Interview E3	Head of Operations	Face-to-face	17th Aug 2015, 15:30 – 16:25
Interview F1	Marketing Officer	Face-to-face	20th Aug 2015, 15:13 – 15:57
Interview F2	Assistant HR Manager	Face-to-face	20th Aug 2015, 14:10 – 14:55
Interview F3	Branch Manager	Face-to-face	20th Aug 2015,16:20 – 17:05
Interview G1	Customer Service Officer	Face-to-face	18th Aug 2015, 13:15 – 14:30
Interview G2	Senior HR manager	Face-to-face	18th Aug 2015, 10:00 – 10: 51
Interview G3	Business Dev. Manager	Face-to-face	18th Aug 2015, 11:25 – 12:15
Interview H1	Banking Operation	Face-to-face	24th Aug 2015, 12:03 – 12:50
Interview H2	Senior HR Manager	Face-to-face	24th Aug 2015, 14:21 – 15:17
Interview H3	Operations Manager	Face-to-face	24th Aug 2015, 13:17 – 14:06
Interview I1	Customer Service Manager	Face-to-face	21st Aug 2015,10:07 – 10:53
Interview I2	Customer Service Officer	Face-to-face	21st Aug 2015, 11:19 – 12:03
Interview I3	Regional HR Manager	Face-to-face	21st Aug 2015, 12:33 – 13:15
Interview J1	Senior Banking Officer Ops.	Face-to-face	20th Aug 2015, 11:20 – 12:30
Interview J2	Branch Manager	Face-to-face	20th Aug 2015, 13:00 – 13:50
Interview J3	Regional Manager	Face-to-face	20th Aug 2015, 10:00 – 10:50
CBN	Assistant Director Financial Policy and Regulation	Face-to-face	28th August 2015, 11:30 AM

It is important to note that the researcher understands the diversity in roles of all the participants that can affect the study since they all perform different roles and managed differently. However, the aim of the research is to get a more holistic view from different perspective on the bank's competency framework in terms of implementation, application and influence on the bank's performance. Therefore, this did not affect the findings of the study in anyway but rather provide the study with a variety of perception.

Before commencing with each interview, the researcher made an effort to build trust and create a comfortable atmosphere by beginning the interviews with a brief outline of the interview process ant the purpose of the study. In addition, the researcher explained how the information they provide would be used and all the ethical process that has been covered to make sure no harm came to the participants. Further to this, the researcher also emphasized interest in their experience and knowledge on the influence of competencies on the performance of their bank from their point of view. It is important to note that the researcher conducted pilot interviews with colleagues before embarking on the actual interviews. This was very helpful to the researcher because it enabled the researcher improve his interviewing skills and exploring deeper and more in depth data. Furthermore, the researcher also reviewed each interview process in order to make improvements. After going through the first interview with a bank employee, it was discovered that the interviewee's knowledge of competency seemed to be restricted to 'capabilities' only, and did not encompass other factors like behaviour on the job. Therefore, the researcher decided to introduce a definition and the categories of competencies for subsequent interviews with other participants. The researcher defined competency as the behaviours that individuals must possess, or must acquire, to perform effectively at work (CIPD, 2016). The researcher carefully introduced this to avoid grooming the interview participants. In the succeeding interviews, the researcher discovered this to be very useful and helped the interviewees understand the research, and to enable them to discourse generally.

In the course of the interview, the researcher made use of various questioning methods like main questions, probing questions and follow-up questions to achieve deeper meaning and understanding of the interviewees point of view (Bryman, 2004; Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Rubin, 2016). The researcher used the interview guide comprising the list of key questions the researcher was interested in to ensure that every important issue was examined in each interview and to further enhance the consistency across interviews (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Rubin, 2016). The main interview questions were broadly designed and semi-structured in nature to raise the spirits of the interviewees and enable them speak freely and willingly about their understandings and perspective of the topic (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Rubin, 2016). The researcher ensured the interview guide was very flexible, and the order of the main questions asked by the researcher depended upon the interviews and the responses provided by the interviewees. Although the interview guide provided flexibility, however, the targeted data provided the researcher with a clear notion of the particular target information needed for the research.

Since the researcher's key role in the course of the interview was to listen, the researcher made sure follow-up questions were used to follow up on what the interviewee had said, and to explore valuable information. This was important because it provided the research with a means of getting detailed information from the participants. In addition, it also validated the consistency of the participant's responses. Rubin and Rubin (2005:136) suggested, "*The use of follow-up questions is critical in gaining in depth and detail data, frequency distribution, consistency of action, distance of view held and can help in gaining more nuanced answers*". In the course of each interview, the researcher routinely used this pattern of questioning to gain insight into the depth of information the interviewee was providing in terms of frequency of distribution, consistency of actions, strength of assumptions, changes over time to provide richness to the data (Arksey and Knight, 1999; Bryman, 2004; Wilson, 2016). It was realised by the researcher that in some instances where the participants answer did not provide an in-depth answer to the main questions or where the interviewee appeared to be less conversational, this method of questioning was particularly essential in achieving a successful interview.

In addition, the researcher also made use of probing questions reveal deeper meaning of their answers, and further triangulate and reinforce their answer to previous questions. Sometimes interviewees say things that the purpose of why they said it is not clear, in such situations the researcher would use this method of questioning to triangulate the findings from previous questions to find out exactly what they meant or reveal the connections between answers, therefore, reinforcing and understanding the consistency of the interviewee's point of view. In such situations, triangulating the interviewee's response was an effective way of getting more details from the interviewee (Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Rubin, 2016). The researcher estimated the interview's timescale to be roughly one-hour long, however, the actual length of the interviews lasted between forty-five minutes to one hour and differed from interview to interview. The researcher made the interviewees aware they could discontinue the interview at any time and all the information they provide will be returned to them when requested. After each interview is completed, the researcher would ask the participants if there were any points they feel the researcher had missed, or if they had any suggestions to make about the topic. The researcher has also maintained contact with the interviewees to show appreciation for their time and help with the interview but most importantly to get them to approve the final transcript before using it for analysis. Generally, the primary data collection procedure was effective because a huge amount of original and useful information was gathered from the case study banks. In addition, the interviewees have had the opportunity to see the final transcript and checked for corrections where necessary.

3.9 Data Analysis Techniques

According to Collis and Hussey (2009), the analytical stage of the qualitative research data is more complicated than the data collection stage. This is because the qualitative research data analysis lacks a specific approach to analysing the data (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Osarenkhoe and Byarugaba, 2016). The nature of the qualitative research makes it difficult to be achieved in a uniform way. Many researchers have defined data analysis as the systematic process of exploring and acquiring important data in order to increase understanding and discover useful interpretation to the data collected (Burns, 2000; Boeije, 2010; Masson and Osseweijer, 2016). The process includes the development and categorisations of themes, apportioning elements of the researcher's original data to suitable themes or groups, recognising the relationships within and between the different sets of data, and creating the foundation for producing well-grounded conclusions (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, this stage of the research is important because it provides the critical connections between the theoretical foundations of the research and the findings.

3.9.1 Steps of Data Analysis

Saunders *et al.*, (2012), Strauss and Corbin (2008), and Miles and Huberman (1994), have all provided strategies to data analysis, therefore, this researcher has built the data processing approach and analysis of the data based on the recommendation of these authors (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 2008; Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Analysing qualitative data involves three key activities: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Talukder, 2016). Therefore, this research adopts the use of the three recommended stages to analysing the research data. In addition, the researcher combined these with those of Saunders *et al.*, (2012) and Strauss and Corbin (2008) to arrive at a strategic process for data analysis.

3.9.2 Data Reduction

In a qualitative research study, the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, conceptualizing, and transforming the data from the written field notes or transcriptions of audio interviews to useable data is the process of data reduction (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Talukder, 2016). Qualitative data analysis is proposed to organise and reduce the data collected into themes that are easily defined and fed into the theories. According to Patton (2002) the data analysis process is a precise method that begins with describing the data and moves to theoretical organisation of the data and then on to theorising the data (Patton, 2002). This process is achieved through a sophisticated set of coding processes, structures and categories, which were initially based on the theoretical framework, themes and sub-themes (Patton, 2002; Palinkas *et al.*, 2015).

According to Patton (2002) coding is a means of discovering valuable facts locked in the data by identifying similarities and differences within themes and labels of the data (Patton, 2002). Coding is the fundamental analytic process and not just a part of data analysis used by researchers (Strauss and Corbin, 2008; Urquhart, 2016). This process transforms the researcher's data from the transcript to theory. In addition, coding allows filtering of the data, compared, and categorised. Coding is iterative and inductive; it reduces and organises the data, to enable the researcher construct themes, meaning, descriptions and theories. Strauss and Corbin (2008) said coding comprises of three different processes and they are open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The open coding is the preliminary stage of comparative analysis, involving an analytic process through which ideas are recognised and the dimensions discovered in the data (Corbin, 2008; Urquhart, 2016). The axial coding is the second stage of the process and it centres on putting the filtered data back together in new ways by connecting categories and subcategories. The selective coding integrate and refine the data, this is the third phase of the process.

3.9.3 Data Display

This method centres on transferring and reducing the data into meaningful clusters. It is a structured process that allows the researcher to draw conclusions and take necessary actions by compressing the collected data (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Erdogmus, 2016). The process identifies two significant phases and they are as follows: the first phase is hinged on the organisational structure and how the targeted interviewees were divided into three groups, senior manager, HR managers and banking officers. This sort of classification allows the researcher to understand and control the data from the interview process. In addition, the process also supports that some analytical strategies can be applied inductively without any pre-determined theory (Saunders *et al*., 2012).

3.9.4 Drawing Conclusions

This stage of the process interprets the data by identify matching patterns. Yin (2009) recommended that the logic of matching pattern hinge on comparing the theoretical or anticipated patterns with the observed or developed patterns. Therefore, if the patterns correspond, the result can help reinforce the internal validity of the findings, hence, by matching the theoretical findings with the empirical findings of the data, a conclusion is drawn.

3.9.5 Process of qualitative data analyses

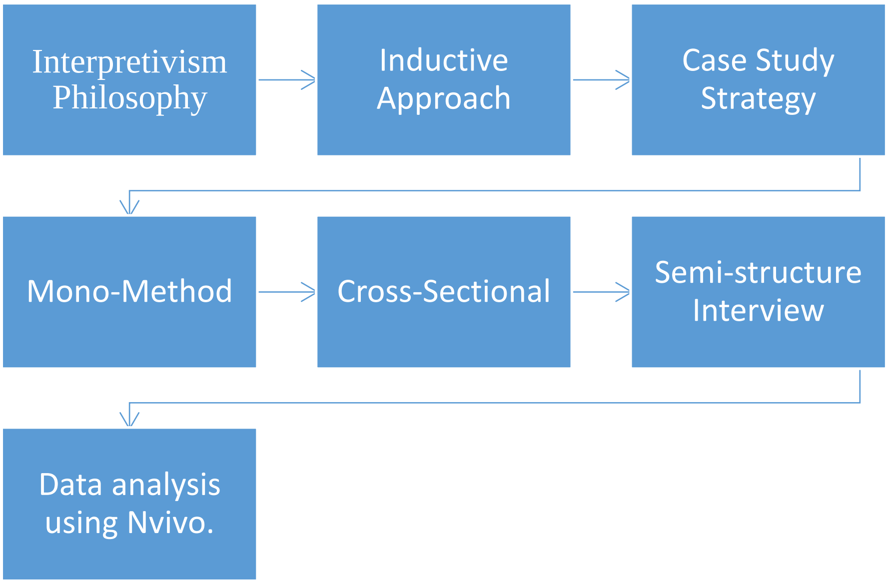
The analysis stage of a qualitative research data is more complicated than the data collection stage. This is because the qualitative research data analysis lacks a specific approach to analysing the data (Collis and Hussey, 2009; Osarenkhoe and Byarugaba, 2016). The researcher adopted semi-structured interview method for this research, which gave the interview flexibility. In addition, the Nvivo software gave the research a clear target data structure that was clear on the themes. Therefore, the research strategy was to target the data the researcher needed to find out. The data, once collected and transcribed, was fed into the qualitative data analysis software package known as Nvivo. The use of the Nvivo software facilitated the automation of many administrative tasks associated with the qualitative data analysis, allowing the researcher further time to reflect on the interpretive aspects of the data. The Nvivo software ensured that a clear audit trail was maintained throughout the analysis, thus, guarding against random, subjective analysis. All coding processes and stages are traceable in a way that would best facilitate an objective and rigorous approach to the data analysis.

3.9.6 Rationale for use of Nvivo

The data, once collected, will be imported into a data analysis software package known as Nvivo. A specially developed computer aided qualitative data analysis system (CAQDAS), Nvivo is recognised as a highly reputable tool for managing and supporting qualitative analytical work. Developed by Professor Lyn Richards (2005) of Latrobe University, Melbourne, Nvivo is now standard qualitative data analysis software in many universities. Using Nvivo to process the data has two principal benefits, efficiency/scope of enquiry and transparency/audit trail.

Nvivo offered efficiency, facilitating a thorough, systematic exploration of avenues of enquiry that would not have been possible in a manual system due to time constraints. This efficiency further allowed for the exclusion and inclusion of propositions, or emerging hypotheses, throughout the analytical process. In addition, Nvivo facilitates the automation of many administrative tasks associated with the qualitative data analysis, allowing the researcher further time to reflect on the interpretive aspects of the data. Nvivo software ensured that a clear audit trail was maintained throughout the analysis, thus guarding against random, subjective analysis. All coding processes and stages will be tracked in a way that would best facilitate an objective and rigorous approach to the data analysis. The process of the Nvivo data analysis will be explained in the next chapter.

Figure 3.9 Research Design



3.9.7 Approach to Nvivo Content Analysis

Categorisation: *(verbatim transcription of interviews).*The researcher made sure the notes were written in the interviewee's actual words and the way it was said by the interviewee. Next, the notes were then transcribed verbatim into the Nvivo software for the data cloud analysis. Once the data cloud analysis was completed, the researcher then inserted pre-codes for data cloud analysis. The researcher generated the pre-codes used for this research after carefully analysing the research literature and findings from the data collections. The pre-codes were generated from the themes and the pre-codes were used to represent each of the themes created. The generated themes were then broken down into levels to ascertain the extent to which each theme was represented. Level 1 represents the theme being investigated, Level two represents the threshold level of the theme, Level three represents the sustainability or validity level of the theme being investigated, and Level four represents the expert level at which the theme is being used.

As explained in section 3.3, the research themes were created to enable the researcher create a link between the research question and the findings in order to identify and acquire the desired information from the interviewees. In order to achieve this, the overarching research question for this study was divided into four key research objectives which formed the broad area the researcher intended to investigate (targeted date, *see section 3.1*). The targeted data was further broken into themes to enable the researcher narrow the data required in answering the research question. Within each theme, the researcher carried out an analysis to demonstrate the relationship between competency and the findings. See section 3.2 for the generated research themes for this study. The generated themes informed the primary data targeted by the researcher in order to answer the researcher question. The data provided the researcher with clarity on what the competency framework hopes to achieve. This information also enabled the researcher create a link between the data acquired from the interviews and the literature reviewed. The pre-codes were generated from the themes and the pre-codes were used to represent each of the themes created. For example, theme one (*Nature and Scope of The Competency Framework*) was converted to the pre-code (*NSCF*) which was used to identify information relating to the theme in the analysis stage and the extent to which it was discussed, see the below table for pre-codes.

Unitization: *(sentence-by-sentence).* The researcher also took steps to ensure the 'pre-codes' and 'actual words' match and the extent to which they achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions by amending the codes to reflect the results in step 2.

Table 3.5: Pre-codes

Level 1 Research Themes	Level 2 Threshold Level	Level 3 Sustainability Level	Level 4 Expert Level
THEME 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK (NSCF)	NSCF – Awareness	NSCF – Awareness – Viability	NSCF – Awareness – Viability – Extent to agreement

	NSCF – Prior infrastructure	NSCF – Prior infrastructure – Robustness	NSCF – Prior infrastructure – Robustness – Consistency
	NSCF – Embedded	NSCF – Embedded – Design of framework	NSCF – Embedded – Design of framework – Usage / coverage
	NSCF – Links to business	NSCF – Links to business – Published and communicated	
	NSCF – Meaning	NSCF – Meaning – Similarity	NSCF – Meaning – Similarity – Extent to agreement
	NSCF – Drive HR strategies and performance change	NSCF – Drive HR strategies and performance change – Extent to agreement	
	NSCF – Successful use	NSCF – Successful use – Agreed by others	NSCF – Successful use – Agreed by others – extent to opinion
	NSCF – Reaction and response	NSCF – Reaction and response – Readiness to change	NSCF – Reaction and response – Readiness to change – Cost to bank
THEME 2: COMPETENCY LINKS TO STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CSHRM)	CSHRM – Links	CSHRM – Links – Strategic or operational	CSHRM – Links – Strategic or operational – Application
	CSHRM – Interpretation of CBN framework in SHRM	CSHRM – Interpretation of CBN framework in SHRM – Links	CSHRM – Interpretation of CBN framework in SHRM – Links – Integration
	CSHRM – Performance flow from strategic business objectives	CSHRM – Performance flow from strategic business objectives – Inform decision-making	CSHRM – Performance flow from strategic business objectives – Inform decision-making – Extent to agreement
	CSHRM – Significant change by CBN	CSHRM – Significant change by CBN – Prior level of development	CSHRM – Significant change by CBN – Prior level of development – Reaction to HR systems and policies

THEME 3: COMPETENCY AND BANK LEADERSHIP (BL)	BL – CBN justification BL – Leadership awareness and favourability BL – Competencies bank leader's need BL – Banks leaders understand importance BL – Competencies and leadership evaluation BL – Leadership actions impact performance BL – Motivating staff – Leadership style is effective BL – Management practices of bank fits leadership style of CEO	BL – Competencies bank leader's need – Extent to agreement BL – Banks leaders understand importance – Issues faced BL – Competencies and leadership evaluation – Development BL – Motivating staff – Leadership style is effective BL – Management practices of bank fits leadership style of CEO – Ready and equipped to promote on-going leadership development	BL – Management practices of bank fits leadership style of CEO – Ready and equipped to promote on-going leadership development – Good way of communicating
THEME 4: COMPETENCY PERFORMANCE AND TALENT MANAGEMENT (PTM)	PTM – Competency / Performance relationship PTM – Evaluation activities PTM – Driving performance	PTM – Competency / Performance relationship – Embedded in individual and team performance PTM – Evaluation activities – Frequency CPTM – Driving performance – Performance measures	PTM – Competency / Performance relationship – Embedded in individual and team performance – About performance or training PTM – Driving performance – Performance measures – Non–financials

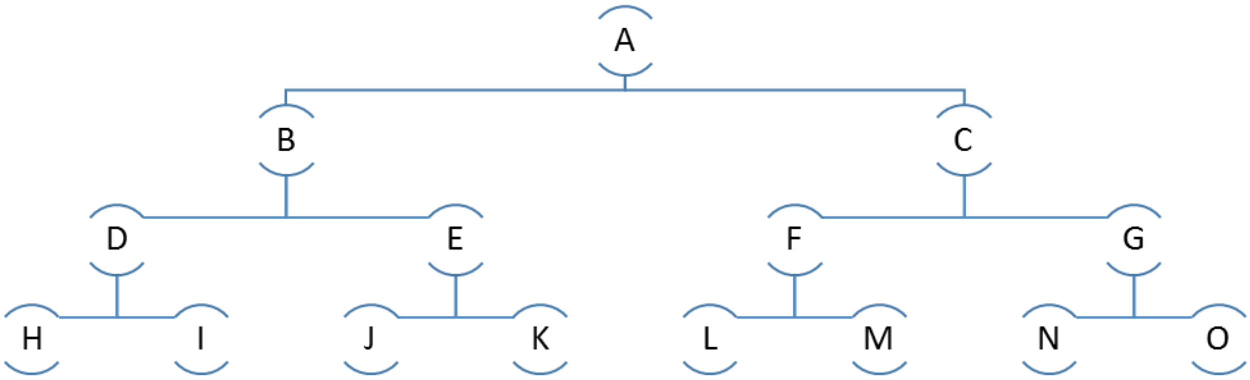
	PTM – Analysed and feedback	PTM – Analysed and feedback – Stimulated any change and improvement	
	PTM – Minimum or superior performance	PTM – Minimum or superior performance – Continuous training	PTM – Minimum or superior performance – Continuous training – Existence of career plan
	PTM – Appraisals are important	PTM – Appraisals are important – Changes in relevance	PTM – Appraisals are important – Changes in relevance – Achieve business goals
	PTM – Application and management consistency	PTM – Application and management consistency – General reaction to appraisals	
	PTM – Impact of CBN framework	PTM – Impact of CBN framework – Leading to meaningful outcomes	
	PTM – Effectiveness of appraisal in measuring performance	PTM – Effectiveness of appraisal in measuring performance – Informs development needs	PTM – Effectiveness of appraisal in measuring performance – Informs development needs – How it's done
	PTM – Link between development and career progression	PTM – Link between development and career progression – providing result	
	PTM – Experiencing expected outcome		
	PTM – Talent and resource management	PTM – Talent and resource management – Includes leadership skills	PTM – Talent and resource management – Includes leadership skills – Embedded in SHRM
	PTM – Assessing impact of learning and development	PTM – Assessing impact of learning and development – Important to performance system	
	PTM – CBN framework restriction		

THEME 5: COMPETENCY IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION (CIC)	CIC – Sustainability CIC – Application and implementation CIC – Appraisals stimulates change and improvement CIC – Level of acceptance to CBN framework CIC – Framework outcome	CIC – Application and implementation – Clear understanding of job role CIC – Appraisals stimulates change and improvement – Extent to agreement CIC – Level of acceptance to CBN framework – Extent to agreement CIC – Framework outcome – Extent to agreement	
THEME 6: COMPETENCY STAFF ENGAGEMENT (SE)	SE – Response to changes SE – Change progressing SE – Constantly acted upon SE – Reasons for having framework SE – Inspired by manager SE – Recommend bank to others SE – Tools to work effectively SE – Contribute to decisions	SE – Constantly acted upon – Frequency SE – Reasons for having framework – Agreed by others	SE – Constantly acted upon – Frequency – Scale of frequency SE – Reasons for having framework – Agreed by others – Extent to opinion

	SE – Trust information received SE – Competent employees impact performance SE – Focus of appraisal on competencies SE – Willing to devote time	SE – Trust information received – Feel valued SE – Willing to devote time – Give feedback on value	SE – Willing to devote time – Give feedback on value – Involved in redesign of process
THEME 7: COMPETENCY EVALUATION (CE)	CE – Impact of framework CE – Method of evaluation CE – Responsibility CE – Preliminary progress reports CE – Scale of positively change CE – Scale of implementation successes	CE – Impact of framework – Extent of relevance CE – Method of evaluation – Time for evaluation CE – Preliminary progress reports – progress result far from expected outcome	CE – Impact of framework – Extent of relevance – Mechanisms for checking impact CE – Method of evaluation – Time for evaluation – Who's responsible CE – Preliminary progress reports – progress result far from expected outcome – Scale of difference

Relationship: These are the links between themes/codes based on a hierarchical structure which stems from researcher's theoretical construct. The researcher conducted a cluster analysis with the Nvivo software to represent the hierarchical relationships between themes/codes. Once this was completed, the researcher then represented the hierarchical relationships using Microsoft Word based on reductionist principles and sense-making approach to recreate the relationship in a more simplistic and explainable way. The researcher decided to reduce the levels or stages in the hierarchical relationship to four, in order to align with the levels or stages analysed in the themes. The levels checked are which the banks engage with the framework, how long they've had the framework and how far they've gone with the framework since having it, time scale indicators of each levels and what was used in checking the existence of it. By doing this it made the analysis clearer, it reduced duplication of stages but did not lose any insightful and important information and also provided a coherent and aligned flow of the data.

Figure 3.10 Competency – Performance Hierarchical relationship



Competency – performance Hierarchical relationship - adapted from the Nvivo result.

In order to offer an in-depth and analytical discussion of the performance hierarchical structure shown above, the researcher presented the hierarchical relationship and discussion of the links between the themes beginning from top to bottom. The researcher adopted this approach to provide an explicit understanding of the hierarchical diagram (*see above diagram*). Taking each 'theme-to-theme' links or relationship between themes from top to bottom gives a significant break down of the competency – performance relationship in the selected Nigerian banks. However, it is important to note the initial analysis and sense making of the node-clustered analysis that resulted from the Nvivo software. The relationships findings were developed using a bottom – top hierarchical approach to discover what the major findings from the analysis were; once this was discovered it was the easy for the researcher to explain this relationship from top to bottom, which further build into a significant top – to – bottom detailed analysis of the hierarchical findings.

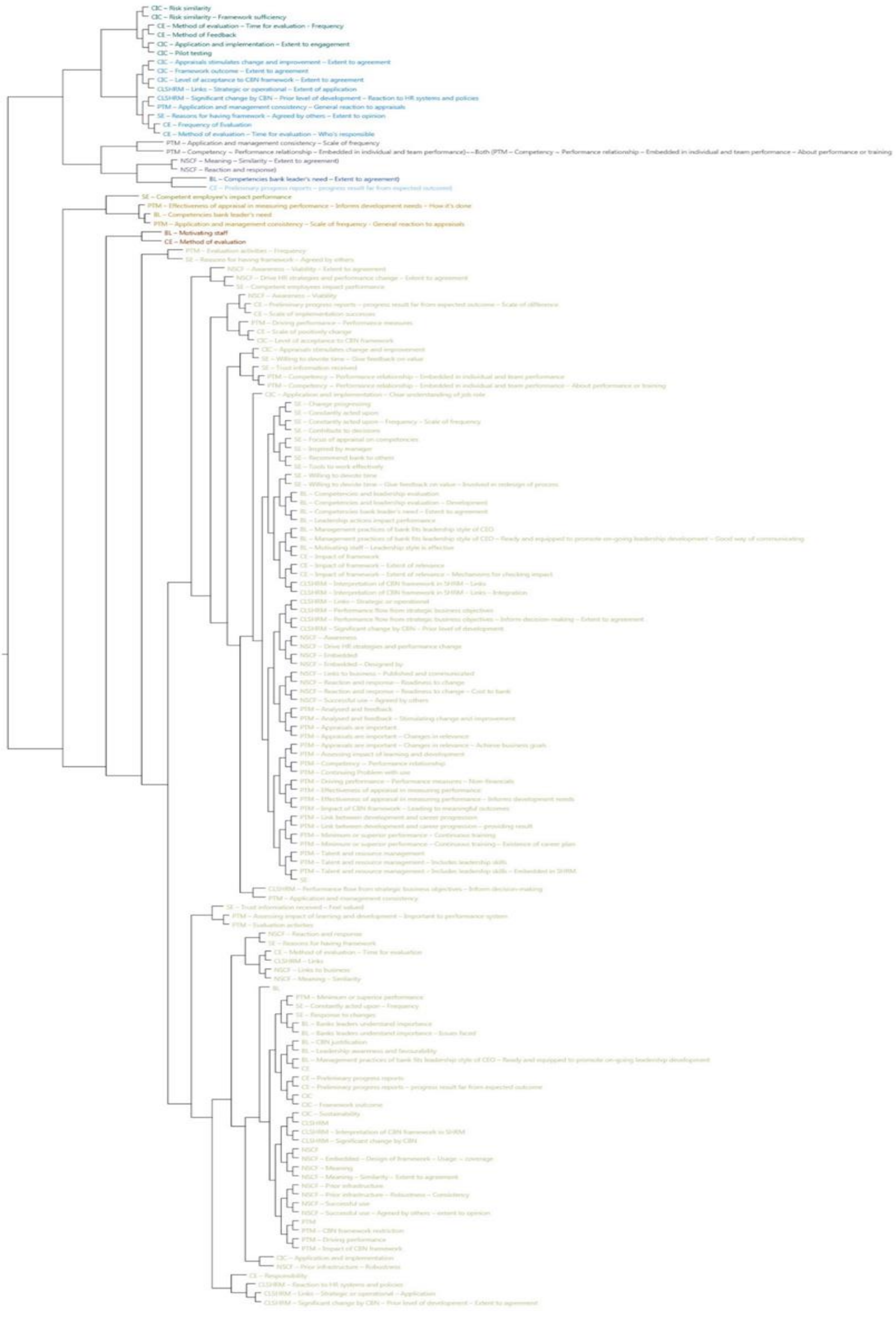
Before identifying the relationship between the hierarchical relationships derived from the node clustered result from bottom – top, the researcher had to label each connecting points within the diagram by alphabets (A) and then establish what the relationship between themes were. The purpose for this was to help provide better clarity, understanding and easy explanation of the relationship depicted in the diagram above. Next, the researcher analysed the theme – theme relationship from bottom to top to get a clearer picture of the connecting points in the hierarchical relationship. Once this was completed, the researcher then excluded the first four levels of the relationship from the hierarchical structure for a clear explanation and understanding from top to bottom, taking point (A) to point (O). This was done because the researcher only analysed four level of the theme created, therefore, the analysis of the hierarchical relationship was also done using the same four levels. The themes for this research were created after reviewing key words from the research questions and the interview data. The themes are features of the participant's accounts, characterising specific insights and understanding as seen important to the research question.

The hierarchical relationship between the themes from point (A) to point (O) (*shown in the Hierarchical structure diagram above*) tells us the research has just one major factor (*Point* 'A') which demonstrates that competency has a relationship with performance in the selected Nigerian banks. Therefore, in order to examine the extent of this relationship the researcher had to analyse the subsequent three levels of the relationship to see what it reveals. To achieve this, point (A) is then split into two other sub levels (*point* 'B' and 'C') respectively. Point 'B' reveals to us that the competency framework and the appraisal measures in the bank's SHRM have a relationship with performance. While point 'C' expresses that the strategic and operational application by bank leaders informs the level at which the framework is embedded in individual and team performance and its evaluation to drive positive change. The two sub-levels (B & C) were further divided into additional sub-levels (*points* 'D' 'E' 'F' 'G').

Point 'D' further reveals that understanding and the need for the competency framework and links to the bank's SHRM and methods for staff motivation and evaluation as important. While point ‘E’ tells us that the application and management consistency of the appraisal measures helps competent employees improve performance, point ‘F’ tells us that bank leader’s influence the application and management consistency of the framework and the level at which the competency framework is embedded in individual and team performance. Point ‘G’ tells us that the competency framework and the level of acceptance by bank staff affects the reaction, timescale and frequency of the evaluation, evaluation method, and the sufficiency of the framework to produces change. This sub level that formed (*points* ‘D’ ‘E’ ‘F’ ‘G’) was then further split into additional sub levels to arrive at (points ‘H’ ‘I’ ‘J’ ‘K’ ‘L’ ‘M’ ‘N’ ‘O’).

Point ‘H’ tells us that the implementation and communication of the framework in the bank's SHRM informs the bank's approach to evaluation, performance management strategy, and staff engagement with the framework. Point ‘I’ tells us that the methods of evaluation also motivate staff. Point ‘J’ shows that the application and management consistency of the competency framework influences the effectiveness of appraisals in measuring performance, which informs development needs and the general reaction to appraisals. Points ‘K’ simply states that competent employees impact performance. Point ‘L’ reveals the bank leader’s competence impact the meaning and similarity of the bank's framework to that of the CBN, which influences the reaction, and response to the framework and its success. Point ‘M’ reveals that the application and management consistency of the competency framework affects the level at which the framework is embedded in individual and team performance. Point ‘N’ explains how the strategic and operational use of the framework, relates to prior level of development and the general reaction to HR systems & policies which affects the framework in terms of change. Point ‘O’ talks about the relationship between the application and implementation of the competency framework and how it informs the method, timescale and frequency of the framework evaluation which improves the framework sufficiency.

Figure 3.11 Original Nvivo result for hierarchical relationship



3.10 Value of the research

The primary value of this thesis is that it makes a new contribution to existing literature in the field of competency in Nigerian banks, which benefits both the practitioner and researcher. Practitioners are able to engage with a study modelled on the perspective of HR specialists, business executives, and the researcher and each offer considerable experience discussing the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks. For the researcher, the study will fill a theoretical gap in existing studies of competency in a Nigerian context. While there has been significant research on the influence of competency on performance in organisations, there has been little or no investigation into this relationship in Nigerian banks. This thesis attempts to close that gap, thus, pave the way for banking organisations in Nigeria to develop competencies that include a perspective relevant business performance, as well as to organisational goals.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

The researcher made contact with the case study banks on the proposed academic research for investigating the influence of competence on the performance of Nigerian banks. The selected banks gave consent for the researcher to speak with bank employees. In addition, the researcher also obtained consent from each interviewee prior to the day the interview. It is worthy to note that throughout the process, the interviewees were advised they retain the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences, and to also retain the rights to withhold responses they perceive threatening to their jobs and employment conditions. The interviewees were further educated on the reason for the research and why their responses would not be harmful as they would be summarised together with others and no personal identifiable detail would be used for the research, therefore, making them feel relaxed and confident to speak freely about the questions. This did not affect the findings in anyway. Research ethics is considered an important issue when conducting a qualitative research. According to Silverman

(2011), researchers need to protect their research participants during the course of the research. This view was particularly relevant to this researcher in conducting the data collection. It is important to note that the researcher took a neutral stand while conducting the research. The university ethics committee certified and permitted the researcher to self-certify this study being a business research. The university identifies five key ethical principles and they are as follows: informed and voluntary consent, confidentiality of information shared, anonymity of research participants, no harm to participants and reciprocity. The following sections will discuss how each of these key principles was applied to the research data collection process of this study.

In order to conduct a thorough and ethical research, attempts were made by the researcher by ensuring that the interest of all the participants in the data collection process was properly protected in every way and no harm came to them as a result of participating in the study. In addition, the researcher obtained approval from the university authorities before conducting the research as required by the University of Sunderland ethics board.

3.11.1 Informed and Voluntary Consent

The researcher received an informed consent from everyone directly involved in this research or within the area of the study as required by the University of Sunderland's code on ethics. This is because the researcher is required to observe the rights of the participants in terms of respect and not coerce them into taking part in the research study. This also makes sure the participants have access to relevant information prior to granting their consent for the research. The researcher obtains consent from the participants through consent forms, which the researcher sent to the participants prior to them agreeing to the interview. Included in the consent form was prior information on important elements of the research such as purpose of the research, methodological processes, time scale, risks involved in the research (if any), benefits of the research, and a section specifying that their participation was completely voluntary and that participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. This helped prepare the participant for what to expect and made them more relaxed during the interview because they understood the purpose of the research.

3.11.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity of Research Participants

The researcher protected the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants throughout the process of the research in terms of the information shared by not revealing the identity of the individual participants and institutions involved in the research. In this sense, the researcher made use of codes and assured participants that no personally identifiable information was revealed unless they willingly requested it. In addition, the researcher combined and summarized the data acquired from the participants in a report with that of other participants to protect their anonymity. The researcher held the entire data for this research securely and privately to ensure no other person outside of the research could access it.

3.11.3 No Harm to Participants, and Reciprocity

The researchers made sure he provided the participants with an outline of the possible risks (if any) and the benefits of the research before granting consent request. For example, the participants anticipated the information they provided could reach the bank’s management, therefore, they might lose their jobs, hence, the researcher had to reassure the participants that the research was purely for academic reasons and no identifiable information about the participants would be exposed. Although this did help make the participant feel relaxed, however, not to the extent of agreeing to be audio-recorded. This information provided the participants with all the necessary information needed about the research in terms of risk, benefits and purpose of the research, which helped them made a more informed decision to participate in the study.

The researcher also took into consideration compensating the participants for their effort, and adding value to the research. The researcher provided information about the risks and benefits of the research in the consent letter attached with the consent form.

The researcher outlined the ethical issues in this research to protect the participants from unprofessional conduct and breach of ethics. There is no doubt that the issue of ethics is not an integral part of this research and the recognition and application of ethical principles to this study is thoroughly linked with assuring the quality of the research, rigour, reliability and credibility of the research.

3.12 Research Findings Credibility

The credibility of this study is expressed, using the validity and reliability of the study.

3.12.1 Research Validity and Reliability

Robson (2002) stated that participant bias, participant error, observer bias and observer errors are all threats to the consistency of data collected (Robson, 2002; Jackson, 2016). With this in mind, this research tried to reduce these threats by adopting face-to-face interviews, which increases the research reliability since participant errors due to pressure, was greatly reduced. In addition, by ensuring anonymity in the presented response, the researcher reduced participant bias and by structuring the question in a way, that does not threaten a particular cadre of staff, managers or organisation. All of the above measures serve to increase the entire research reliability and validity.

3.13 Limitations of the Research

One limitation of the methodology includes the assumption that people might think that the researcher can be subjective in interpreting the data collected; however, a wide range of data collected and the journals reviewed from secondary data overcame this. Interviews were carried out in person, via face-to-face interview and this allows for human interference from the responses gathered. Statistical reliability is another common limitation in every interview-based research because the findings are based on an assumption that those interviewed, were sincere and truthful with the answers they provided to each question asked. To reduce this limitation, the researcher explained comprehensively to the interviewees that the research is purely for a scholarly purpose and also explained that the conclusions obtained would benefit the banks in its pursuit of improving business performance via competencies. The choice of using interviews rather than questionnaires brings the human element to this study that most definitely would have been lacking if questionnaires were used. Similarly, the busy schedule of bank workers to be interviewed may ensure that summarized and direct answers will be obtained which in itself is a limitation to this study. However, this may also be a blessing in disguise and of high benefit to this research in the analysis because it reduces the possibility of incorrect data interpretation that may be present when analysing lengthy responses and thus portend threat to research reliability.

According to Collingridge and Gantt (2008), the central concerns relating to the value of qualitative research are validity, sampling, reliability and generalizability (Collingridge and Gantt, 2008; Taquette and Minayo, 2016). The concept of reliability and validity as documented by other researcher was conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality in qualitative research. To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher made sure detailed attention was paid to coding the participant’s responses to identify themes that will guide the discussion of the results. In addition, the aim of this study is not to generalize its findings but rather to provide a rich, contextualized understanding of how competency is used as a driver for business performance through the intensive study of selected banks in Nigeria. Several challenges were encountered during the course of collecting the qualitative interview data; therefore, imposing some limitations to the research.

Firstly, this is the problem of selecting the sample for the collection of the interview data. As earlier stated, the sample for this research was drawn from Nigerian banks, and the participants for interviewees were based in Lagos and Abuja. Due to the constraints of time and finance, the researcher did not have enough time and money to travel to various parts of Nigerian to conduct the interviews. Therefore, the possibility of having problem with the sample coverage is possible in this research. Furthermore, gaining contact with selected interviewees participants was another challenge the researcher experienced in this research, particularly because of the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria, which affected the sample size of the case interview.

Secondly, all the participants were sensitive in nature, as the process involved giving out valuable and private information about their banks, therefore, this created difficulties for the researcher when collecting the interview information. This did not only restrict the access to potential interviewees, but also made the interview participants very guarded about giving out comprehensive and in-depth information. Additionally, the researcher was unable to audio-record the interviews owing to the interview participants' nervousness concerning confidentiality. As such, there was information that was lost when the interviewees spoke faster than the researcher could write. In order to deal with this problem, after all the interviews were completed, the researcher immediately went to the break-out area of the organisation to write down whatever he could remember concerning the conversations when the information was still fresh.

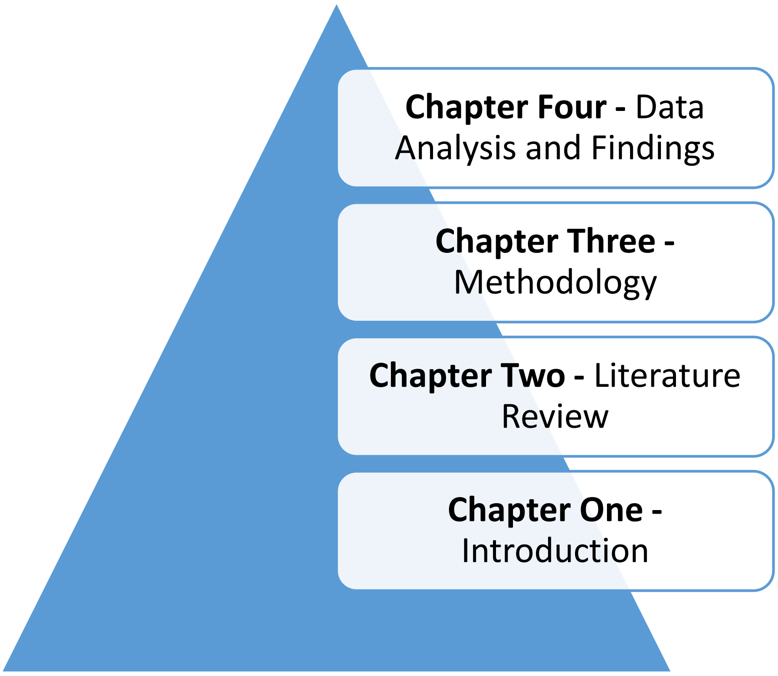
Thirdly, like any other qualitative study, this research shares the same challenge of not being free from bias (Bryman, 2004:284; Wilson, 2016). McKinnon (1988) suggested that researchers could potentially impose certain bias during the interview process and data analysis process (McKinnon, 1988; Holland, 2016). Although the researcher made efforts to reduce bias, however the researcher's background knowledge of the study area, experience, and bias could have possibly influenced the data collection process of this study, the sample selected for interview and the formulation of interview questions.

Fourthly, there was a problem of generalisation. According to Bryant (2004), qualitative studies are often critiqued in terms of the finding restriction (Bryman, 2004; Wilson, 2016). This researcher recognizes the difficulty in generalizing the results from the selected banks to other organisations. On the other hand, some researchers have stated that the way to generalize a qualitative research is in the analytic generalization and not by the statistical generalization (Seale, 1999; Yin, 2003; Twining *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, the findings of this research is intended to realise analytical generalization because of the "assertational logic" (Collingridge and Gantt, 2008; Taquette and Minayo, 2016), therefore providing a pathway to understanding competencies in other perspective.

It is important to note that, even though the identified challenges enact some limitations to the research, the aim of this research is to provide a rich, contextualized understanding of the influence of competency on the performance Nigeria banks. Therefore, the identified limitations did not affect the findings of this research.

3.14 Chapter summary

This chapter explained the various research philosophy, assumptions, methodology and approaches before adopting the suitable methods and approach for this particular study. The chapter identified the research focus, and the researcher's paradigm as an interpretivist. The research approach adopted for this study was the inductive approach because it supports the interpretivist paradigm. The instrument used in sourcing the data is justified as the qualitative semi-structured interview. The chapter also detailed the methods used to gather data from participants using qualitative semi-structured interviews, therefore, developing a closer understanding of existing scholarly research in the field to further facilitate a more thorough analysis and finding of the data, and contextualise the contribution of this study to the field of competency. The next chapter discusses the data analysis and discussion of findings.


Chapter Four - Data Analysis and Findings
Chapter Three - Methodology
Chapter Two - Literature Review
Chapter One - Introduction

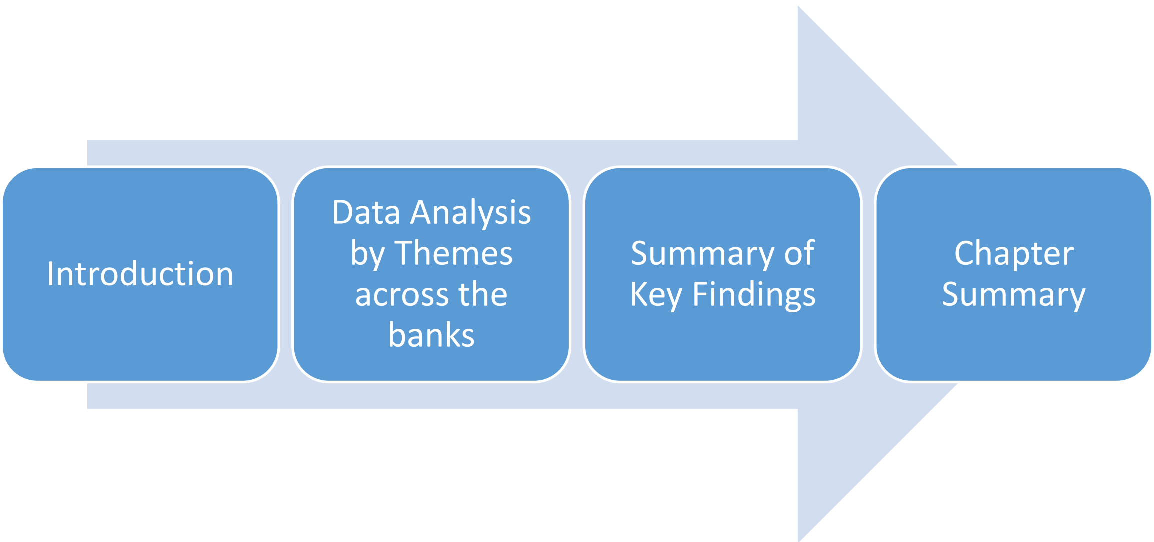
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the method and process of the research. This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the data analysis generated from the previous chapter. This chapter gets into alignment with the data and reveals the issues coming out from the data based on questioning and interrogation. In addition, the chapter reveals what the data is 'telling us' from the perspective of all the banks against the themes. In order to see what sort of trends is immerging, the researcher attempted to categorise the banks by what they are doing and the results of the data to see if there any emerging trends. This information enabled the researcher to understand what is going on in the banks concerning the influence of competency on the performance of Nigerian banks. The remaining part of chapter is organised as follows:

Figure: 4.1 Chapter Structure



4.1 Data Analysis by Themes across all the banks

This section discusses the finding of the research by theme across all the banks.

4.2 Summary of key findings

This section discusses the key findings from this research.

4.3 Chapter summary

This section concludes the chapter.

4.1 Data Analysis and discussion of findings by Themes across all the banks

This section reveals what the data is telling us from the perspective of all the banks against the themes, to see the immerging trends from the data. This information enabled the researcher understand what the data revealed concerning the influence of competency on the performance of the selected case study banks. It is important to note, before the research analyses the data received by banks, that it was first analysed in terms of respondents, themes and constituent. In addition, the researcher analysed the banks SHRM, the importance of the banks SHRM, what the data is telling us about the management system of competencies, and what the data is telling us about change in the Nigerian banking sector. In total, the researcher conducted thirty-one interviews. The interviewees included a CBN executive, an HR manager, a senior manager and banking officers from the selected banks. The data from the interviews were analysed using Nvivo, and the aim was to answer the research question by investigating the research objectives identified in section 1.4 and 3.2 of this research. In order to investigate the research objectives, the researcher created themes to cover salient points from the literature and research objectives. The researcher further developed these themes into interview questions during the interview stage of the research. Table 5.1 below provides a structured approach for analysing the data.

Table 4.1 Analysis Structure

	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10
TM1										

TM2	
TM3	
TM4	
TM5	
TM6	
TM7	

Table code: TM - refers to themes and B - refers to Banks.

4.1.1 Theme One: Nature and scope of the competency framework

The researcher created this theme after reviewing key areas from the literature and research questions as discussed in *section 1.4 and 3.2* of this research. The researcher created this theme to understand the nature and scope of the competency framework in the selected Nigerian banks, in order to answer the research question. In addition, this theme investigates the first and second research objective discussed in *section 1.4 and section 3.2* of this research; *To investigate the existing frameworks in the selected Nigerian banks and their similarities with the CBN competency framework;* and *To examine the management consistency of the framework, and whom the framework apply to within the banks*. As stated earlier in the literature review chapter, competency frameworks are an essential vehicle for organisations to drive high business performance by focusing and reviewing each individual's ability and potential against expected outcomes. Furthermore, the competency framework is a key component in any change management process by setting out new organizational objectives (CIPD, 2016). Rothwell (2012) also argues that the competency framework focuses on two key characteristics. The first describes the characteristics of a person and how that individual meets the expected minimum required outcomes and the second describes the productivity improvement and competitive advantage. Based on the above expectation, the nature and scope for the competency framework in this research will refer to the characteristics of the competency framework and the length and breadth of its coverage. This was significant in answering the research questions because it investigated the research objective one and two of this research.

This theme investigated the systems and infrastructures in the selected case study banks and if they were in line with the CBN competency framework, the embedding and alignment with other HR systems and processes, the consistency and frequency of the application, the cover of the framework within the bank and the alignment with the banks policies. The researcher looked out for this information to identify the nature and scope of the competency framework in the selected case study banks.

Findings from the interview data revealed that four out of the thirty participants from the ten selected case study banks, stated they were unaware of the CBN competency framework, and found out about the CBN competency framework from unofficial sources. For example, Teller, Bank 4, "*No, I don't know about the CBN competency framework but I know the bank has its own competency framework that has been in use since I started.*" The remaining twenty-six participants from the ten-selected case study banks all agreed they were aware of the CBN competency framework during one of their regular team meeting, and the discussion included how the framework will affect their individual jobs, the need for the change and necessary training required (*if any*) due of the changes. In addition, the four participants who stated they were unaware of the intended implementation of the CBN competency framework were all banking officers. This could suggest an uneven communication of the CBN competency framework in those banks to cover all levels of management. The researcher further interrogated this view in theme five to support this idea. Out of all participants, from the ten selected case study banks, the banks all had very active competency framework long before the introduction of the CBN competency framework, which had been in existence for more than ten years. They all also agreed that their bank's competency framework defines the skills, knowledge and abilities required for each individual role. For example, senior manager, bank 10, "*To us competency means having the knowledge, skills and ability to perform a job which can be developed over time and lead to superior performance*". In addition, they all agreed that the bank's competency framework communicates clearly the desired behaviours and strategic goals of their banks. According to the participants, the competency framework is embedded in their HR systems and processes and it is evident in the way they attract and retain employees, staff management and performance systems, rewards, development and career progressions. Furthermore, they all confirmed that the bank's employees understand the competency framework because it is influencing individuals in terms of their development, performance expectations, and measure contributions objectively, focus employees on what is critical to enhancing their performance and possibly increasing their level of work satisfaction. All the participants from the ten selected case study banks agreed that their banks have other HR systems and processes in place that supports the competency framework, which meant the competency framework was not used in isolation. Senior manager, bank 10, "*The application of the banks SHRM strategy in the competency framework is far reaching as it is well integrated in all our policies which is interpreted in our systems and processes*". In addition, the participants further stated that the information derived from the framework improves the bank's recruitment and selection practice, performance management, work satisfaction, employee development, career planning, identifying and assessing competency gaps in individuals and teams to provide valuable insights for creating highly targeted development and training initiatives. Furthermore, they all agreed that their banks competency framework is linked to the business by strategically aligning the bank's business objectives to both individual and team performances. What this means is that the bank has strategically cascaded its strategic and financial objectives to staff members in the bank by clearly defining their performance expectation.

All the interviewed participants believe their bank's competency framework is similar to that of the CBN's because they both communicate the skills, attributes and behaviours needed for each individual to be successful in their job role. This includes leadership, core competencies and functional competencies. Each of the selected case study bank confirmed that they are different from other banks in terms of their capabilities to select, build, deploy, and protect their core competencies. The selected case study banks all agreed that they have differentiated themselves by defining the desired competencies and identifying their core competencies in other to achieve competitive advantage over rival banks. Each of the individual banks agreed that their core competencies are valuable to the bank, differentiate them from other banks and it is applied to the designing of all their products and services. According to the participants, their banks' ability to define and communicate the desired competencies makes it possible for the staff to share in the bank's vision, support the bank in achieving the vision based on their performance and development needs. They all provided enough evidence to show that their banks' competency framework is similar to that of the CBN's competency framework. In addition, their competency framework identifies the various job roles requiring leadership capabilities, core competencies and functional competencies, which defines the key competencies and indicators that will enable individuals at every management level achieve the strategic aims of the bank, drive culture change, and deliver high performance. "*The banks competencies are linked to our SHRM to assist with workforce planning and succession planning – identifying the requirements for a job and how staff can develop to move up within the bank*", senior manager bank 10.

According to all the selected case study banks, their bank has been able to align their competency framework with that of the CBN competency framework to focus on culture change, and leveraging the capability and extending the capabilities, engaging the capabilities, as well as screening out inadequate performance. HR manager, Bank 8 "*Yes it is, both ours and that of the CBN define the minimum knowledge required to carry out a particular job, it defines competency levels basic, intermediate or advanced. It provides trainings and courses to have completed or required for a particular job. Qualifications to show you are qualified for that* *particular job. You just cannot be a manager without some sort of qualifications and accreditation. It also identifies competency gaps and develops strategies to bridge those gaps*". Furthermore, they all confirmed that they frequently applied and managed their banks competency framework in all their systems and processes. The researcher interrogated this view in subsequent themes to see how the banks are achieving this and if it supports the findings from this theme. All ten banks agreed that their HR departments designed the competency framework for the purpose of managing and developing the banks human resource. They achieved this by extensively studying competency models from local and international business and from leading researchers in the field of HR. They all further confirmed that their bank's competency framework is central to the development of current employees to impact positively towards enhancing the effectiveness of the banks recruitment process and other HR functions.

Findings from this theme reveal that the banks do have a competency framework in line with the suggestions from the literature discussed in Chapter 2 of this study. According to the CIPD (2016), the competency framework describes the skills and attributes staff and managers need in order to build a new organizational culture and meet the future challenges of the organisation. This view was in line with the selected banks, and they mean the same thing to the banks. In addition, the competency framework help organizations clarify expectations, define future development needs and achieve a more focused recruitment and development process in the organisation (CIPD, 2016). The findings also reveal this true with the case study banks. Furthermore, the competency framework provides the organisation the luxury of a sound basis for consistent and objective performance standards by creating shared language about the required competencies and the expected outcomes desired in the organization. The selected case study banks confirmed that they are different from other banks in terms of their capabilities to select, build, deploy, and protect their core competencies. These differences are producing different results in each of the banks in terms of performance as stated by (Hamel, 1994; Rubin *et al*., 2016). Based on the findings from this theme, the researcher can reliably conclude that the banks do have competency frameworks in place that covers the entire workforce, which aligns with other HR systems, processes and policies. Findings from this theme also agree with Leonard-Barton (1992) that core competencies are the set of knowledge that distinguishes an organisation and provides a competitive advantage over its rivals (Leonard-Barton, 1992; Huy *et al*., 2016). Therefore, the key to achieving competitive advantage is the ability of the bank's workforce to maximize the advantages of their state of the art technology, superior products, and steady source of capital to enter into the marketplace (McLagan, 1989; Lau *et al*., 2016). Findings further reveal that the competency framework is extremely useful in several situations from recruitment, development, talent management and performance management as suggested by the CIPD (2016) literature. However, according to the CIPD (2016) the competency framework will only be successful in supporting decision-making if they accurately reflect the needs of both the job and the organisation in terms of skills, experience and behaviours. This view was particularly true with the finding from this theme because the participants confirmed that the competency framework clearly defines the job needs, expectations and links to the organizational goals, takes into account the job and personal specifications, the organization's medium and long-term needs for talent and organizational moral belief and values. Since the 1990s, competencies have formed the basis for human resources and strategic management practices in terms of recruiting, selecting, placing, leading, and training employees and evaluating employee performance (Dubois, 1993; and Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999; Cumberland *et al*., 2016). Finding from this theme reveal this is ongoing and in line with the literature and other international organisations. In addition, the theme also revealed that the competency framework has also been effective in the classification of jobs. When engaging in succession planning, the bank uses competency frameworks to prepare and advance top-level incumbent talent to vacant positions of leadership. As stated by other researchers, the banks competency framework is inclusive and integrated throughout all of the human resources practices of the bank (Rothwell and Wellins, 2004; Montier, *et al.,* 2006; Mathur and Hameed, 2016). Another benefit for using competency framework to develop behaviourally based interview protocols and assessment tools is that it makes sure the right candidate fit for the job during the selecting and hiring phase is picked for the position (McClelland, 1998; Woodside, 2016). The findings again, revealed this true in the selected banks. It also prepares incumbent top-level talent for succession into specific positions through development plans and training, and guidance received through the performance review system of the organisation (Gangani *et al*, 2006; Grigoryev, 2006). Developing the relevant competency framework for each position within the bank creates the appropriate capacity for the human resources to meet the goals of the bank. According to Delamare Le Deist & Winterton (2005) competency frameworks describe what each individual employee must do consistently to achieve or exceed the strategic goals of the bank (Delamare Le Deist & Winterton, 2005; Osagie *et al*., 2016). In other words, there are competencies required in a job role and both average and top-level talent can hold these. In addition, there are also competencies held by only the top-level talents in the organisation (Dubois, 1993; Sanghi, 2016). This definition has to do with the aligning of people and their performance to the organisations' strategic goals, organizational strategy and success, business competitiveness and profit. The data also reveals the approach taken by the bank in utilizing the competency framework, and the significance of the competency framework. However, there are gaps that exist in the data because it does not provide details of the frequency in which the competency framework is used, evidence of examples on how it is infused into employee work, training, development, performance and appraisals systems. The researcher further explored these discoveries in other themes to make sure the questions asked in this theme did not lead to the identified gaps.

4.1.2 Theme Two: Competency links to the banks strategic human resource management

Strategic human resource management (SHRM) is the strategic way by which organizations attract, develop, reward, and retain their employees for the benefit of both the employees as individuals and the organization. In addition, the competency framework helps the organization to manage these systems strategically in order to achieve the organization's goals and objectives, therefore the need to have these systems synchronized as one becomes necessary. As stated by Ulrich and Lake, (1991), 'the strategic HR framework aims at leveraging and aligning HR practices to build critical capabilities that allow organizations to achieve its goals and the strategic management of these systems offers both financial and non-financial benefits to the organizations'(Chung *et al*., 2016). The researcher created this theme to investigate the competency links to SHRM in the selected Nigerian banks and by doing so; it investigates the research objective 3 of this study (*To examine the alignment of the framework in the banks HR systems and processes*).

This theme investigated the links between the banks competency framework and the other HR systems in the case study banks. The data enabled the research infer the extent to which the competency framework is linked and aligned to the overall business strategy of the ten selected banks. In trying to understand the competency links to the banks SHRM, the researcher investigated how the competency framework links to other HR systems and processes in the selected case study banks. As earlier stated, SHRM focuses on the ways in which an organisation plans the usage and activities of its human resource in order to aid the organisation in achieving its strategic goals and objectives. Through a vertical and horizontal alignment between the bank HRM practices and their strategic management processes, the bank can achieve its strategic goals and objectives. What the researcher was trying to find out from this theme was the evidence of the link between the competency framework and the banks SHRM strategy. This is because the framework is likely to be more effective if the banks competency framework is aligned within the banks SHRM strategy and the SHRM strategy is explicit in terms of achieving the business goals. This was what the researcher expected to find out from this theme, in order to support and strengthen the findings from theme one.

According to all the participants, the case study banks have been able to align and embed their competency framework in all the HR systems and processes of the bank to achieve their strategic business objectives. They all confirmed that their banks achieved this by directly linking the policies, procedures, programs and services of the bank to their overall strategic objectives. For example, they have a policy for different situations, which explains what actions are expected, in order to achieve a consistent and structured approach to the bank's processes. "*Well, for us because human capital is our major focus so what we do or try to achieve is that from the recruitment process to exiting the bank there is some sort of initiative developed to enhance performance. Besides the regular HR function the HR department also manages the business because we have a business partner model where HR executives can become part of the business. The competency framework has always been a part of our SHRM even before the CBN introduction. It is evidence in all we do as a bank from employment to exiting the bank*", HR manager bank 8. Participants from all ten banks further agreed that their banks' SHRM is focused on attracting, developing, rewarding, and retaining the banks' employees for the benefit of both the employees as individuals and the bank as a whole by making sure they offer a competitive reward system, employee development and career progression. According to the participants, this was necessary because it enables the bank retain their employees. In addition, they all further agreed that the HR department interact with other departments within the bank to enable the HR department understand the goals of the department and then create strategies that aligns the goals of the individual department with the overall goals of the bank. The banks achieve this through utilizing the talents and opportunities within the bank to make other departments stronger and efficient, therefore, ensuring a greater chance for the banks to succeed. According to all the participants, their bank's competency framework enables the bank to attract employees by outlining the range of knowledge, skills and attributes required for every job role and function. They all further stated that the competency framework defines the development needs of the employees because their knowledge, skills and abilities are measured against predefined standards to see their current level of competence and the required training relevant to improving their level of competence to meet the required standard. For example, senior manager, bank 10, "*Yes, we measure how our employee behave on the job in terms of how they relate with the customer to see if they are helpful and how consistent are they in doing this. This helps us to create a better relationship with our customers*". By defining the required competencies for employee performance, the bank is able measure performance and creates a reward system that strategically aligns with the banks business strategy. Based on all the participants' response, it was discovered that the reward system of the bank is important in attracting and retaining employees because if the rewards offered are not competitive, it will be difficult for the bank to recruit staff since potential employees can obtain better rewards from other banks. Equally, existing employees can also be tempted to leave the bank if they know they can get better rewards in a different bank. In addition, they all further suggested that the bank links its competency framework to their SHRM by creating a system where their workforce are effectively managed and deployed to enable the bank achieve its business goals. The bank achieves this by identifying employee competence using the framework, and deploying the employee to a place where the employee competence can be effectively utilised. The three participants from each of the ten banks agreed that their bank's performance management process is integrated in the strategic and business planning process of the bank and the performance management information is used to inform key decisions on pay, development and management of talent. According to all the respondents, their individual performance determines the bonus they get, but most importantly, their performance determines their career progression, training and development needs. However, this is not always the case as there are instances where performance does not always determine development needs because development or training could require additional cost expense to the bank. For example, customer service officer, bank 4 answered "*Yes but not regularly*" to the question, has training been identified and been made available to continuously upgrade staff skills? The participants were able to reveal to the researcher that their individual banks use the competency framework to achieve their strategy goals and objective by identifying what human resources the bank will need to achieve the goals and objectives, the training or development required for the employees, how their performance will be assessed and the rewards they will receive. The data from this theme provided sufficient evidence to show there is clearly a link between the bank's competency framework and the SRHM strategy, and it covers the relevant areas and a number of main themes within the bank. It also shows it embraces the objectives of the bank and the strategic plan for the bank to move forward. In addition, the theme identifies the existence of a competency framework that is flexible and adaptable to the goals of the bank and is reviewed in the context of the recruitment of people into the business and the management of their performance; however, it does not clearly define how it is supporting staff development.

Based on the findings of this theme, we are able to understand how the selected case study banks align their competency framework with other HR systems and processes in the selected banks. The findings from this theme support Walker's (1978) claims that there is a link between the strategic planning of the organisation and the human resource planning of the organisation (Walker, 1978; Boxall and Purcell, 2008; Kabue and Kilika, 2016). According to Werbel and DeMarie (2005), HRM practices create procedures that constitute the building of employees' knowledge and skills throughout the organization to promote valued and unique organizational competencies, which support competitive advantage (Werbel and DeMarie, 2005; Chen *et al*., 2017). The findings from theme one and two have shown how the selected banks apply their competency framework in their SHRM to achieve this competitive advantage. The data also revealed that the bank's SHRM aims to achieve strategic fit by producing vertically integrated HR strategies that align with the business strategy and are ideally an integral part of their strategy. This vertical integration is necessary to provide congruence between the business and HR strategy so that the latter supports the accomplishment of the business strategy and helps to define it. The bank's SHRM is also about horizontal integration, which aims to ensure that the different elements of the HR strategy fit together and are mutually supportive as suggested by the literature (Armstrong, 2008; Ntwari and Kule, 2016). This makes it possible for the bank to make strategic decisions that have a major and long-term impact on the behaviour and success of the bank by ensuring that the bank has the skilled, committed and well-motivated employees needed to achieve competitive advantage. Various researchers (Appelbaum *et al*., 2000; Guest *et al.*, 2000; West *et al*., 2002; Purcell *et al*., 2007; Imran, *et al.*, 2015) have found a positive relation between HRM practices and firm financial performance. This study also supports this view in its findings. Cole (2004) emphasize the need for HR function to brings in the strategic value of people in the organization by making contribution to the level of value added and contribution to competitive advantage (Chapman *et al*., 2016). It is expected that effective HRM strategy systematically organize the entire individual HRM measures to directly influence the attitude and behaviour of employees in a way that enables the organisation to achieve its desired competitive strategy (Huang, 2001). In view of this fact, the management of HR function of the organisation aligned with the overall corporate strategy of the organisation becomes critical to the achievement of the organisations desired goals and objectives. By doing this, the organisation can achieve competitive advantage and superior performance (Kelliher and Perret, 2001; Calicchio and Marcondes, 2016). This is why the banks are aligning their competency framework with their SHRM to achieve these goals. In most organisations today, it is the employee skills and commitment that create competitive advantage for the organization, therefore, making it important for the organization to leverage on the workforce as a competitive weapon to develop a competitive advantage. A majority of the studies in this field support the view that SHRM practice does lead to superior performance (Sayyad, 2017). This study also supports the view that SHRM practices do lead to superior performance.

4.1.3 Theme Three: Competency and bank leadership

This study defines competency as the behaviours that individuals must possess, or must acquire, to perform effectively at work (CIPD, 2016). Changes in organizations are more common and appear at faster pace than employees can adapt to, therefore, making the role of leaders very important in the organization for setting the example for values, behaviours and considerations expected from employees (Tremaine, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary for leaders to set the key performance and behavioural expectations for employees, in order to implement successful changes. With these in mind, it is important to examine the leadership competencies in the selected banks. This is why the researcher created this theme which also investigates the research objective four of this research; *to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks*. From the literature, we see that the CBN seems to be suggesting that the bank leaders in Nigeria lack the skills and dearth in executive capacity. In the global content, we know that the banking industry is going through changes in the nature of leadership or what leaders are meant to do. Therefore, this theme is designed to explore the extent to which there is an evidence of a policy stream that enable the change to occur in the bank, and to enable existing managers to develop the required leadership capabilities that fosters this new line of thinking and the extent to which it is having an impact. This is what the researcher hopes to find out from the theme.

Based on the literature and the findings from theme one and two, we know that the bank's competency framework is about aligning and making clear what the goals of the bank are, and applying those goals through people. According to the majority of participants, the CBN was right to say there is a dearth of skills in executive capacity in the executive capabilities in Nigerian banks. For example, HR manager bank 1, "*To a large extent I do agree with the CBN but not all executive are guilty of this*". This is because they believe the CBN competency framework is a good way to bring about change, and screening out inadequate performance. The CBN competency framework is established to give shape and identity to new ways of doing things, style of leadership, and new focus for the way banks operates, as was introduced by the CBN. Based on the participant's responses, they agreed with the CBN because it highlighted the question about the skills and dearth of executive capabilities. Against this new agenda, the competency framework has been brought in to rewrite and to reshape the way governance is applied in the Nigerian banking sector. This change is needed and necessary and explains why the banks agreed with the CBN; as competency underpins change. All the interviewed participants agreed to the need for change and agreed to be opened to the change.

All the participants from the ten selected banks agreed that there was leadership awareness and favourability of the competency framework in their bank. This is because the leadership of the bank understand the importance of the framework and why it is important, which is why they agreed to the CBN competency framework when consulted by the CBN before implementation. The researcher went on to ask the participants what competence they think bank leaders should have. All the participants gave different views which includes being able to serve and lead others, good communicator, people skill, problem solving and networking. They all further agreed that the leadership of their bank are competent enough to achieve the goals of the CBN competency framework, and their bank leaders understand the importance of having an effective competency framework. Interestingly, eighteen out of the thirty participants from the ten banks agreed there are issues faced by their banks in terms of dealing with the competency framework and these include competency framework not equally applied during recruitment process; this is majorly because of nepotism and favouritism during recruitment. In addition, they also stated that performance does not always lead to development in their banks because even when development need is identified, the required training and development do not always follow. However, all the participants agreed that their banks leadership is ready and equipped to promote and reinforce ongoing leadership development.

The data from this theme reveals there is evidence of a policy stream that enables the change to occur in the banks in terms of the competency framework and how it is linked to the bank's SHRM strategy as explained in theme one and two. However, it does not reveal the extent to which it enables existing managers to develop the required leadership capabilities and how the bank is achieving this. As a result, we cannot reliably conclude that the competency framework is having any significant impact on the bank's leadership development. In addition, the data did highlight some of the challenges faced by the banks in terms of nepotism and favourability during recruitment, and that the competency framework does not always guarantee development needs.

4.1.4 Theme Four: Competency Performance Management

Performance management is the general process of ensuring employee performance contributes to the overall business objectives. It is the bringing together of every element of good people management practice, which includes learning and development, measurement of performance, and organizational development. Armstrong and Baron (2004) defined performance management as ‘a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high levels of organizational performance (Armstrong and Baron, 2004; Metasebiya and Lelissa, 2016). As such, it establishes shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to leading and developing people which will ensure that it is achieved.' They further suggest that performance management is 'a strategy which relates to every activity of the organization set in the context of its human resource policies, culture, style and communications systems'. According to Armstrong and Baron (2004) performance should be strategic (*about broad issues and long-term goals*) and integrated (*link various aspects of the business, people management, individuals and teams*). Moreover, to meet the organization's objectives the performance management system must incorporate: Performance improvement (*throughout the organization, in respect of individual, team and organizational effectiveness*); Development (*unless there is continuous development of individuals and teams, performance will not improve*); Managing behaviour (*ensuring that individuals are encouraged to behave in a way that allows and fosters better working relationships*). The researcher created this theme to investigate the influence of competency on the performance of the selected banks and the management of their performance systems. By investigating this relationship, it provides an insight into the competency – performance relationship in the selected banks therefore, answering the research objective four of this research; *to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of the selected case study banks*.

The management of employee performance is a continuous process that ensures employee performance contributes to both the goals of the team and the organisation. The intention for creating this theme is to investigate the influence of competency on the performance of the banks, the extent to which competencies are influencing on the bank's performance, and how performance is measured in the banks. What the researcher expects to see is the evidence of a clearly defined performance expectation, monitoring and measuring performance, links to development needs, recognizing and rewarding good performance, and evaluation of the process. This is what the researcher looked out for and this was what the researcher expected to find.

All participants interviewed agreed there is a positive relationship between competency and performance in their bank. This is because the participants believe the competency framework is proving to be a priceless resource for the banks as it helps them to define what is required of employees to perform successfully. "*The bank has a very strong competency – performance relationship. This is because the outcome of our evaluation processes are reported in the competency framework and used to improve our workforce and measure our leadership capabilities to improve performance*", HR manager bank 8. In addition, they all confirmed that the competency framework enables the bank to focus on the training and development of its workforce effectively, it also encourages employees to take more responsibilities for their own development in order to perform better as the framework provides clarity on key areas and levels of performance the bank expects. This corroborates some of the findings from theme one and two, therefore, strengthening the reliability of the data. According to the participants, their performance expectation is based on the bank's strategy which is spilt into the goals and objectives of the various departments and teams, and finally down to individual employee objectives. All the participants from the ten banks agreed that the bank's competency framework communicate the desired knowledge, skills, abilities and characteristics considered valuable in achieving the bank's goals. According to all the participants, the framework covers a range of job levels from lower level staff to senior management staff in the bank and the purpose was to guide the banks staff towards the desired attribute in terms of behavioural, functional and technical competencies required and supported by the bank. In addition, the entire participants all stated that the increase in the application of the competency framework across the bank's human resource functions is driving staff performance and has achieved results that are relevant to the bank's business strategies and vision. This was achieved by communicating the required competencies to employees, therefore, empowering the employees to take charge of their careers; direct their own personal development and continually evaluate and improve their skills. All ten banks provided internal performance management documents to support their statements and to show that the competency framework actually influences on the bank's performance. According to the information and documents provided by the individual banks, their bank's strategic approach to achieving financial objectives is to leverage on the core competencies of the bank. Once the desired goals and objectives are defined, the bank then identifies the job roles and employees critical to achieving the set goals and objective. The competency framework is used to define the competencies needed by the employees for each role and function supported by the bank's people management functions which include staffing, training, work design, reward and appraisals. The bank then makes use of competency mapping to assess the current competence level of the employees and the required competence to excel in the role. By identifying this gap, the bank is able to provide the necessary training and development to bridge the gap. According to the participants, the effectiveness of the bank's people management system leads to core competencies, which gives the bank and edge over rival banks. The development of staff competencies to meet the required competence level aligns their performance with the objectives of the bank. However, some of the participants did confirm performance assessment does not always lead to development in some cases.

According to all participants, there is an annual appraisal system in place, which has different levels of objectives and is frequently reviewed. In addition, there is a financial target from the position of the business, and other non-financial targets in place to ensure that people stick closely and align with the bank's goals. The non-financial target corresponds with the culture of the banks and deals with the model of competencies associated with development activities of individuals and teams. All the participants agreed there is a link between performance and development needs, and the performance management system recognises and rewards performance because the bank perceiving financial performance very seriously. All of the participants also confirmed every employee is given a financial target which they are expected to meet at the end of the financial year. Furthermore, they all agreed their performance management system is appraised using a 360 degrees feedback performance appraisal system and they provide feedbacks that are feed into the performance management system. This is carried out at the same time with the employee appraisal which enables the employees to appraise their managers and the competency framework.

Findings from this theme reveal that there is a link between competency and performance in banks. Based on the information from the data, we know there is a SHRM strategy, competency framework, and the people are generally aware of it, it is aligned to the bank's goals, discussed in the bank's HR planning circle and informed the development programs of the banks. A successful competitive strategy is built upon the organisation’s core competencies and competitive advantages (Javidan, 1998; Rezaee and Jafari 2016). The findings reveal that the selected banks focus on this approach to achieve competitive advantages because core competencies are the set of knowledge that distinguishes an organisation and provides a competitive advantage over its rivals (Leonard-Barton, 1992; Huy *et al*., 2016). Srivastava (2005) suggested that when core competencies are viewed as a unique knowledge for defining and solving problems in the organisation, they can form the basis of the organisation’s competitive advantage and can also be leveraged in a wide-ranging variety of markets for future products and services (Srivastava, 2005; Mappigau and Maupa 2015). As stated in the literature, the organisation's technological tools and advancement are only useful to the organisation if their employees can effectively utilize the technology to the organisation's advantage. Therefore, a key to achieving competitive advantage is the ability of the organisation’s workforce to maximize the advantages of their state of the art technology, superior products, and steady source of capital to enter into the marketplace (McLagan, 1989; Opoku *et al*., 2016). This is where the bank’s core competencies are set apart as stated in theme one; the findings of the data have also revealed that competencies are influencing the performance of the selected case study banks.

4.1.5 Theme Five: Competency implementation and communication

According to the CIPD (2016), numerous organisations develop and make use of competency frameworks in order to manage performance and achieve organisational goals. However, managers and employees find it difficult to use the competency framework in order to achieve their organisational goals. This is because the managers and employees may not see the need for using the competency framework or lack the required training to adequately use the framework. Therefore, communicating the purpose of the competency framework is critical to understanding whether the competency framework is fit for purpose and if the employees know how their behaviours contribute to personal and organisational success (CIPD, 2016). The implementation phase of the competency framework is usually the first time the employees affected by the framework are able to fully understand the impact. Based on what we know about performance, employees tend to get nervous about performance issues, so communicating the need for change is very important to the success of the framework. The researcher created this investigation on communication of the competency framework during the implementation process of the framework. The researcher intended to find out how the bank communicated the framework, the employees' understanding of the need for developing the framework, how the framework is created, how the bank intends to use it, how it affects their jobs and if any training was provided to enable them achieve to goals of the competency framework. This is what the researcher intended to find out, and this was what the researcher looked out for.

As stated in theme one, four out of the thirty participants from the ten banks stated they were unaware of the CBN competency framework, and found out about the CBN competency framework from unofficial sources. The remaining twenty-six participants from the ten-selected banks all agreed they were aware of the CBN competency framework during one of their regular team meetings, and the discussion included how the framework will affect their individual jobs, the need for the change and necessary training due of the changes. This suggested the communication of the competency framework might not have been effective between the various levels of management, as the unaware participants were all banking officers. However, the data did not gather enough information to suggest whether this was the case or not. On the other hand, this information does corroborate the response from theme one and further strengthens the reliability of the findings. Although all the participants agreed, the application of the competency framework was frequent in the bank's business activities like recruitment, career progression, pay and reward. However, some of the participants highlighted the challenges faced when using the competency framework to include nepotism, which suggested a lack in consistence and that performance did not always lead to development or training. Interestingly, all the participants agreed the bank did not conduct a competency mapping to identify new competencies needed to achieve the new performance standards identified based on the CBN competency framework. They also all stated that they are yet to receive any training based on the new competency framework but were provided with information throughout the process to ensure they understood the implication of implementing the CBN competency framework and how it will affect their jobs. Furthermore, all the participants agreed they were involved in the implementation process in terms of consultations or making sure they understood the need for change, developing the framework, how the bank will create the competency framework and use it. The CBN was clear about what they wanted to achieve with their competency framework as noted in the literature review chapter, and the communication of the purpose of the competency framework to ensure that the banks understood why it is important. However, the data revealed the banks were not clear on the communication of this information across all levels of management in order to make sure all employees understood the purpose and importance of the competency framework because four out of the thirty participants were unaware of the CBN competency framework. Based on the information provided by the participants, the data reveals that the bank communicated the competency framework to the employees; they understand the bank's plan for creating the competency framework and the application of the competency framework and how the competency framework affects their job roles and performance. However, the bank did not identify and provide any necessary training required to enable the employees to improve their competencies to meet with the new performance standards. By communicating the need for the competency framework, it influences the employee's engagement with the competency framework and ensures the success of the competency framework.

4.1.6 Theme Six: Competency and staff engagement

According to the CIPD (2016), the application of competencies and competency frameworks primarily focused on the performance management and development of more senior management employees. At present, the application of competencies and competency framework covers the whole range of human resource management and development activities for the entire workforce. This approach has become popular amongst organizations because it enables them to recruit and manage employees against a clear range of criteria and behaviours. As stated earlier in the literature review chapter, competency frameworks are now considered a valuable means of achieving high organizational performance by focusing and reviewing the capabilities and potential of individual employees.

According to the CIPD (2016), most organizations use competency frameworks to enable them achieve the following goals:

Fair performance reviews/reward, enhanced employee effectiveness, greater organizational effectiveness, better analysis of training needs, enhanced career management. Therefore, it is important to investigate how the bank employees are engaging with the framework. The researcher created this theme to investigate staff engagement with the competency framework to see if it is fit for purpose and achieving the bank's goals. It also investigates the research objective four of this study; *to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of the selected case study banks*.

From what we have seen from the literature review chapter, competency frameworks appear to be more successful when employees understand how to use it, when to use and where to use it. Therefore, the researcher has created this theme to investigate the level of staff engagement with the competency framework. The researcher expects to see the extent to which the staff are happy when engaging with the framework, the acceptance of the framework, interaction with the framework on personal levels and how it is influencing their behaviours at work. This is what the researcher hopes to find from this theme.

According to all participants, there was an environmental scanning carried out to see how other banks and organisations are using the competency framework. Though four of the participants were not officially informed of the framework as stated in theme one, they however, confirmed they are very excited about the competency framework and believe it will lead to positive outcomes in the bank. This is because the bank's competency framework focused on communicating and promoting a clear strategic goal that is embedded in the bank's HR systems and processes, is understood by the employees and is influencing individuals in terms of their personal development. Although there is the challenge of nepotism during recruitment, some participants believe performance does not always lead to development and still have confidence in what the framework is able to achieve. According to all the participants, the banks developed the competency framework after reviewing various frameworks from local and international organisations and they are very happy with the outcomes derived from the framework. Although, no new additional training or development had been provided on the new competency framework, they all agreed it is similar to the old framework in terms of usage and application. The measure of the engagement by the researcher was in the acceptance of the framework, knowing and understanding the framework, taking personal action and doing something personally to develop their individual abilities. According to the entire participants, they all agreed to behavioural changes resulting from the competency framework and they are communicated in the bank's objectives. In addition, all the participants agreed they understand the required competencies and are all responding positively to the framework. They have also taken personal initiatives to make sure they understand and meet the required standards necessary for their individual job role. They further confirmed that they understand the bank's vision and see where the bank is heading, therefore, having a personal notion and understanding of what it means to them. In addition, they all agreed the bank was not just doing this as a directive from the CBN but because it is going to lead to major changes and shape the way of approaching HR in future. All the participants agreed they have the competencies necessary to carry out their job effectively and they all felt valued for the work they do.

Findings from this theme reveal the staff are happy with the competency framework, have accepted the framework and are engaging with the framework on a personal level to improve their performance at work, therefore, supporting the success of the competency framework in the banks.

4.1.7 Theme Seven: Competency evaluation

According to the CIPD (2016), the Competency framework is extremely valuable to organisations in different ways such as recruitment, development, talent management and performance management. Although these benefits are generally accepted, the competency framework can only be successful in supporting key decision-making if they correctly meet the needs of both the job and the organisation in terms of skills, experience and behaviours. As a result, the competency framework is therefore required to take account of job and personal specifications, the organisations medium and long-term goals and objectives, talent needs, organisational ethics and values. Therefore, the competency framework should consist of job specific and organisational specific behaviours that reflect the organisational need to create a diverse workforce, a broad talent base and complementary team roles. For the competency framework to remain effective, reflective on the changing nature of jobs and flexible to the diverse career pathways it requires a constant review and evaluation against the needs of jobs and individual employees, and informed by future-focused workforce planning assessing the nature and requirements of future roles (CIPD, 2016). This is why the researcher created this theme to investigate the evaluation of the competency framework. The researcher will focus on the how, when and by whom which will provide insight and support the answering of the research objective four; *to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of the selected case study banks*. There is a need to review the competency frameworks periodically to ensure the framework provides the banks new ways of thinking and how they affect employee capabilities in achieving the banks goals. The intention of this theme is to investigate the evaluation of the competency framework in the banks, which were responsible for the evaluation, and its frequency. This information provided the researcher with an idea of how the feedback process of the competency framework operates to make improvements in order to achieve its objectives. This is what the researcher expected to find out from this theme.

All the participants agreed the competency framework is relevant and used in a business relevant way with a management team tasked with the responsibility of making sure the framework is managed and evaluated regularly to make sure if it is fit for purpose. They all further stated that the framework is reviewed during their annual appraisal period with the use of a 360 degrees feedback assessment process to make sure it is successfully achieving its aims. The feedback from the appraisal of the framework is used to make improvements were necessary to make sure the framework is fit for purpose. This information reveals that the competency framework is regularly evaluated to ensure it is fit for purpose and supports the success of the bank.

4.2 Summary of Key findings

There are four key findings from this research as follows:

Firstly, the data revealed that the case study banks all had prior competency framework years before the introduction of the CBN competency framework. These banks have further developed their competency framework to achieve similar goals with that of the CBN's. In addition, the entire banks' competency frameworks are similar to that of the CBN competency framework in terms of managing and promoting change. According to the literature, competency frameworks are an important vehicle for organisations to drive high business performance by focusing and reviewing each individual's ability and potential against expected outcomes. Furthermore, the competency framework is a key component in any change management process by setting out new organizational objectives (CIPD, 2016). Rothwell (2012) stated that the competency framework focuses on two key characteristics. The first describes the characteristics of a person, and how that individual meets the expected minimum required performance outcomes and the second describes the productivity improvement and competitive advantage. The findings from this research support the findings from other similar literatures and research in this field.

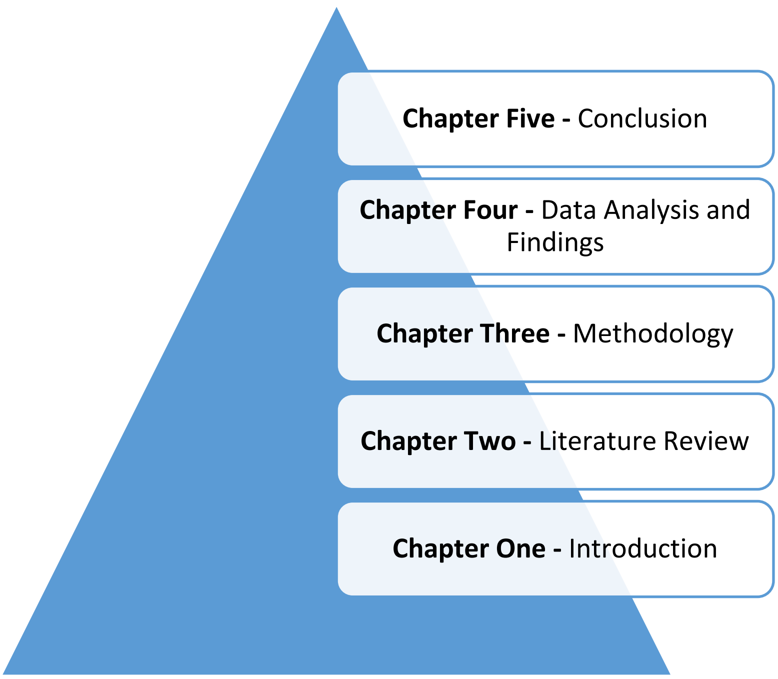
Secondly, findings from this research revealed that the competency framework covers everyone in the banks and the evaluation of the framework is consistently applied in the bank during the annual staff appraisal period, and that the framework is evaluated using a 360-feedback appraisal method. This is because the concept of competency lies at the heart of Human Resource Management, therefore, providing the basis for horizontal integration of key HR activities, such as selection, performance assessment, training, career development, and reward management, as well as vertical integration with organizational strategy, values, business processes and performance outcomes among others (Soderquist and Papalexandris, 2010). The CIPD (2016) also emphasized the importance of having a competency framework that covers all employees and not just senior management.

Thirdly, the data reveals the existence of a link between the competency framework and the bank's SHRM strategy, the way they are used in the banks to attract and retain employees, how they inform key decisions on pay, and how it is linked to employee development. However, the data does reveal that performance does not always lead to training in the banks and employee development is not frequent. In addition, the data did not tell us the extent to which the banks have been able to achieve this relationship and how mature the bank's SHRM strategy aligns to the competency framework; therefore, reducing the confidence we have about what is going on and how secure the link is.

Finally, the data revealed that competencies are influencing the performance of the selected Nigerian banks. The performance expectation of these banks centres on the strategy of the bank, which is to assign targets to individuals and teams in order to meet the goals and objectives for departments and the bank. The combination of knowledge, skills and other personal characteristics that are necessary for the effective performance of the bank is included in the competency framework. As showed in figure 2.6: (*the competency assessment flow model*), the information and documents provided by the individual banks revealed that their bank's strategic approach to achieving their financial objectives is to leverage on the core competencies of the banks. Once the desired goals and objectives are defined, the bank identifies the job roles and employees, critical to achieving these set goals and objective. The competency framework is used to define the competencies needed by the employees for each job role and function supported by the bank's people management functions, which include staffing, training, work design, reward and appraisals. The bank then makes use of competency mapping to assess the current competence level of the employees and the required competence to excel in the role. By identifying this gap, the bank is able to provide the necessary training and development to bridge the gap. According to the data, the effectiveness of the bank's people management system leads to the bank’s core competencies, which gives the bank and edge over rival banks. Based on this approach on achieving the bank's goals, findings revealed that competencies play a significant role in influencing the performance of the banks. The theories on the relationship between competencies and performance comply with the result of this research.

4.3 Chapter summary

The objective of this chapter was to discuss the empirical findings from the data analysis. This chapter succeeded in discussing the findings of the study concerning the influence of the competency on the performance of the selected banks. Findings revealed that Nigerian banks do have competencies and they are influencing the performance of the selected banks and SHRM strategic management and that interrelationship within the competency framework. In the next chapter, the researcher will make recommendations based on the findings and conclude the research.


Chapter Five - Conclusion
Chapter Four - Data Analysis and Findings
Chapter Three - Methodology
Chapter Two - Literature Review
Chapter One - Introduction

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter has presented and discussed the empirical findings of the study in relation to the influence of competency framework on the performance of the selected Nigerian banks. The chapter also provided key findings from this study. In this chapter, the researcher will make recommendations concerning the findings of the study and provide a conclusion to the study.

5.1 Purpose of Study

As stated in chapter one and three of this study, the purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks by examining the role and influence of competencies on the performance of ten selected case study banks in Nigeria. This provided the researcher insight into the bank's SHRM strategic management and that interrelationship with the competency framework. The researcher examined the role of competencies based management systems in the selected case study Nigerian banks by employing qualitative semi-structured interviews to acquire the targeted data for answering the research question. The researcher's intention is for this study to fill the competency gap identified in the previous chapters. In addition, the study also provided a more inclusive image of the role of competencies in the selected Nigerian banks.

5.2 Summary of Procedures

As previously stated in this study, the researcher reviewed relevant literature in the area of HR competencies which led to the discovery that many researchers in the field of competency believe there is a link between competencies and performance (Spencer, 1998; Sypniewska, 2013; CIPD, 2016; Delima, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016). However, there is a gap in the competency literature in terms of influencing performance in the Nigerian banking industry. This research investigated the progress made by the CBN competency framework in the Nigerian banking industry, with a focus on the bank reactions to the CBN competency framework and evaluating the viability, sustainability and impact of the framework in order to establish the extent to which the CBN competency framework supports Nigerian banks in achieving business performance. As a result, this research provided insight into the influence of competency on the performance of Nigerian banks. The quest to clarify the key factors of competitive advantage for organizations have revealed that employee competencies are resources that enable organisations to generate profits and maintain their competitive edge over rival organisations (Díaz-Fernández, 2014; Kumar and Pansari, 2016). As a result, this has encouraged the significant need for organisation to improve their people management practice in order to achieve the desired goals of the organisational (Delima, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016; Santana *et. al*., 2017). The study revealed that in the past, researchers have traditionally viewed competitive advantage as barriers to entry as economies of scale, access to capital, and regulated competition, which was popularised by Porter (Díaz-Fernández, 2014; Kumar and Pansari, 2016). Alternatively, researchers have also revealed that competitive advantage is the ability of an organisation to manage its human resources strategically, in a manner that rival organisations find it difficult to acquire or imitate (Santana *et. al*., 2017). At present, banking organisations now seek to understand how their human resources can be effectively managed and aligned with their overall business strategy to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. Competency framework is said to be the glue that links the aspiration of making people competitive and seeing these assets with the reality of the business which enables organisations to measure, monitor and plan with the framework. Therefore, it is expected that if Nigerian banks are able to get the competency profile right it will help achieve sustainable competitive advantage for these banks which could lead to performance with the possibility of impacting the economy as banking success has been critically linked to the economic futures of any economy. The competency framework describes the combination of knowledge, skills and characteristics needed to effectively perform a role in an organisation and is used as a human resource tool for selection, training and development, appraisal and succession planning, identifying and mapping these competencies as rather complex. This was why the researcher investigated the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigeria banks.

The researcher conducted this study using the qualitative research approach, which provided the means to apply semi-structured interviews for data collection. This was because a major factor in choosing an appropriate research design depends on how the researcher intends to answer the main research question. In order for the researcher to be able to answer the main research question, the researcher formulated four key research objectives to give focus and direction to the research and to clarify and support the main research question. The four key research objectives concentrated on areas that are essential to the understanding and development of the study. As stated in the methodology chapter, the form of the research question is very important because it indicates which research method is best suited to answering the research question. The type of research question also determine which research strategy, approach, methods, and data collection and analysis techniques are best employed.

Most qualitative research questions fall into three categories: descriptive; comparative and relationship (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006, p.481; Doody and Bailey, 2016). Qualitative research questions are non-numerical and tend to address "what" and "how" questions (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2006; Doody and Bailey, 2016). Accordingly, this study seeks to investigate how competencies are influencing the performance of Nigerian banks, therefore, the researcher has decided to answer the research question using the qualitative research method.

Considering the research philosophy and approach for this study, the researcher's point of view regarding his research philosophy and research approach was an influencing factor in the selection and design of the research methodology employed to answer the research questions because these predispositions contain important assumptions for the direction of the research (Saunders *et al*., 2009). According to Easterby-Smith *et al*., (2008) social constructivism promotes opinion of the world being constructed socially, hence, it is understood using an interpretivist approach (Easterby-Smith *et al*., 2008; Kevill *et al*., 2017). The interpretivist approach promotes the understanding humans and their roles as social actors as the best means of getting the truth. As a result, the researcher designed the research approach, research strategies, data collection and analysis method for the study based on the interpretivist viewpoint. Therefore, the researcher selected the inductive approach, as it was the most appropriate approach to answer the main research question for this study. Against the backdrop of this belief, the researcher applied the use of qualitative semi-structured interviews as primary data collection for this study, as it allows the researcher human contact with the subjects (Easterby-Smith *et al*., 2008; Kevill *et al*., 2017).

Once the data collection method was agreed, the research had to decide on the appropriate research strategy. Constructing the appropriate research design for this study included deciding on which research strategies for collecting data best allowed for the testing and analysis of variables as well as for the interpretation and generalization of results. In addition, explaining the acquisition of the primary data was also important because different research strategies produce different results. For example, data collected from direct in-depth interviews would produce different results from data collected from an online survey. Depending on the research objective, the research strategies should be consistent with accepted practices in that particular field (Easterby-Smith *et al*., 2008; Kevill *et al*., 2017). The researcher conducted this study with an interpretivist view and an emphasis on inductive approach, supporting that some of the strategies are appropriate and others are not appropriate to this particular research. Therefore, the researcher adopted a case study approach and makes use of a combination of information from various sources which includes interviewing participants, internal performance management data and information from the banks website as suggested by (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Eisenhardt *et al*., 2016).

As previously stated in chapter three and four of this study, the participants interviewed for this research include a CBN (Central Bank of Nigeria) executive, ten senior bank managers from different departments, ten HR managers and ten banking officers from different departments in selected Nigerian banks. The reason for doing this is to provide the research with a holistic picture of the influence of competencies on the bank's performance. The researcher selected the participants because they were knowledgeable and experienced in the targeted data the researcher is interested in as explained in the methodology chapter. Specifically, senior managers and HR mangers in the selected banks who were directly involved with the competency framework were targeted for interviews because they are more knowledgeable about the targeted data the researcher was interested in getting. The actual interview fieldwork took place from March 2015 to August 2015. This timing was significant because the 24-month period given by the central bank of Nigerian (CBN), for Nigerian banks to develop their internal competency framework in line with that of the Central bank was over and they were moving into the evaluation stage. Therefore, it was a good time for the researcher to carry out his own evaluation of the competency framework. It is important to note that the researcher encountered a few difficulties accessing some of the targeted participants and conducting interviews with them. This difficulty was due to several reasons as explained in the limitation section in chapter three. In general, the researcher conducted thirty-one interviews from the ten selected Nigerian banks and the CBN, ten interviews with senior bank managers and one other executive from the CBN. All the interviews were conducted face-to-face and notes were taken during the interviews. The interview notes were used for the data analysis with the permission of participants, who reviewed the notes and made corrections were they felt was necessary. The corrected notes were later used for the Nvivo analysis. Specifically, the process of the Nvivo data analysis includes four stages: categorisation, unitization, relationship finding, and discussion of results and interpretation of findings. The data was then categorised and unitized by sentences which enabled the researcher to draw out relationships and links between themes/codes, from which the researcher was further able to discuss the results and interpret of the findings from the research.

5.3 Summary of Empirical Findings

The overarching aim of this research was to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks by reviewing the uptake and use of competency profiling in a strategic HR context to support the advancement of business performance in Nigerian banks. By focusing on Nigerian banks, the researcher was able to look at the uses of SHRM to support business competitiveness and response to internal and external change in the banking business environment of Nigeria. In order to achieve the research aim, the central research question investigated in this study was:

“Have competencies influenced the performance of Nigerian banks”? In order to answer this central question, the researcher created four key research objectives. The four research objectives are as follows:

- **Research Objective 1:** To investigate the existing frameworks in the selected Nigerian banks and their similarities with the CBN competency framework.
- **Research Objective 2:** To examine the management consistency of the framework, and whom the framework apply to within the banks.
- **Research Objective 3:** To examine the alignment of the framework in the banks HR systems and processes.
- **Research Objective 4:** To investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of the selected case study banks.

These four research objectives formed the key areas of focus during the semi-structured interviews and were critical to answering the research question.

5.3.1 Research Objective 1: To investigate the existing frameworks in the selected Nigerian banks and their similarities with the CBN competency framework.

This research objective investigated what competencies the case study banks had in place prior to the CBN competency framework, how they are defined, check the formality of the framework and the application of the frameworks. The researcher achieved this by analysing both primary and secondary data from the case study banks; the primary data examined the frameworks currently available in the banks and the use of the competency framework by the banks while the secondary date verified the information gotten from the primary data. The researcher made use of the secondary data from the banks to check the availability of the competency framework and see who the competency framework covers within the bank, and to validate the findings from the primary data. This helped inform the research in order to know if the framework was about performance, training or both. Furthermore, the researcher tried to link the framework in the banks to that of the CBN; by doing this, the researcher was able to understand the use and application of the competency framework within the banks and the response of the bank's employees to the competency framework.

The data revealed that the banks had prior competency framework years before the introduction of the CBN competency framework. These banks have further developed their competency framework to achieve similar goals with that of the CBN’s. Their competency framework describes the skills and attributes staff and managers need in order to build a new organizational culture and meet the future challenges of the organisation. In addition, the competency framework help banks clarify expectations, define future development needs, and achieve a more focused recruitment and development process in the banks. The CIPD, (2016) also supported this view. Furthermore, the bank's competency framework provides the banks the luxury of a sound basis for consistent and objective performance standards by creating shared language about the required competencies and the expected outcomes desired in the banks. The selected banks confirmed that they are different from other Nigerian banks in terms of their capabilities to select, build, deploy, and protect their core competencies. The differences in the banks are producing different results in each of the bank's performance as stated by Hamel, 1994, (Hamel, 1994; Rubin *et al*., 2016). Findings from this research objective also agrees with Leonard-Barton (1992) that core competencies are the set of knowledge that distinguish the individual banks and provides a competitive advantage over rival banks (Leonard-Barton, 1992; Huy, *et al*., 2016). Therefore, the key to achieving competitive advantage for these banks is the ability of the bank’s workforce to maximize the advantages of their state of the art technology, superior products, and steady source of capital to enter into the marketplace (McLagan, 1989; Lau *et al*., 2016). Findings further reveal that the competency framework is extremely useful in several situations from recruitment, development, talent management and performance management. The competency framework is successfully supporting decision-making that accurately reflect the needs of both the job and the banks in terms of skills, experience and behaviours. This view was particularly true because the participants confirmed that the competency framework clearly defines their job needs, expectations and links to the organizational goals, takes into account the job and personal specifications and the organization's medium and long-term needs for talent, organizational moral belief and values. Since the 1990s, competencies have formed the basis for human resources and strategic management practices in terms of recruiting, selecting, placing, leading, and training employees and evaluating employee performance (Dubois, 1993; and Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999; Cumberland *et al*., 2016). Findings from this study reveal this is ongoing with the banks and in line with the literature and other international organisations. In addition, the data also revealed that the competency framework has also been effective in the classification of jobs. When engaging in succession planning, the bank uses competency frameworks to prepare and advance top-level incumbent talent to vacant positions of leadership. Findings again, revealed that the competency framework is used to develop behaviourally based interview protocols, assessment tools that ensure the right candidate is fit for the job during the selecting, and hiring phase is picked for the position (McClelland, 1998; Woodside, 2016). It also prepares incumbent top-level talent for succession into specific positions through development plans and training, and guidance received through the performance review system of the organisation (Gangani *et al.*, 2006; Grigoryev, 2006). The data also reveals the approach taken by the bank in utilizing the competency framework, and the significant of the competency framework.

5.3.2 Research Objective 2: To examine the management consistency of the framework, and whom the framework apply to within the banks.

This research objective investigated the consistency in the application and management of the competency framework and how embedded the competency framework is in the HR systems of the case study banks. This enabled the researcher ascertain the length and breadth of the coverage of the competency framework in the banks, who they cover, how wide the coverage is in terms of operating personnel.

Findings from this research revealed that the competency framework covers everyone in the banks and performance evaluation is frequent carried out in the bank using a 360-feedback appraisal method. Based on the findings from this research objective, the researcher can reliably agree that the selected banks do have competency frameworks in place that cover the entire workforce, which align with other HR systems, processes and policies. This is because the concept of competency lies at the heart of Human Resource Management, therefore, providing the basis for horizontal integration of key HR activities, such as selection, performance assessment, training, career development, and reward management, as well as vertical integration with organizational strategy, values, business processes and performance outcomes among others (Soderquist and Papalexandris, 2010). The participants all confirmed the competency framework covers all employees and not just senior managers of the banks.

5.3.3 Research Objective 3: To examine the alignment of the framework in the banks HR systems and processes.

This research objective investigated the links between the bank's competency framework and the other HR systems in the banks. The data enabled the researcher to understand the extent to which the competency framework is linked and aligned to the overall business strategy of the selected banks. In trying to understand the competency links to the banks SHRM, the researcher investigated how the competency framework links to other HR systems and processes in the banks, the application and implementation of the competency framework in the banks. As earlier stated in the literature, SHRM focuses on the ways in which organisations plan the usage and activities of their human resource in order to assist the banks in achieving its strategic goals and objectives. The banks are achieving this through a vertical and horizontal alignment between the bank HRM practices and their strategic management processes, to achieve their strategic goals and objectives.

The data reveals the existence of a link between the competency framework and the banks SHRM strategy, the way they are used in the banks to attract and retain employees, how they inform key decisions on pay, and how it is linked to employee development. However, the data does reveal performance does not always lead to training in the banks and employee development in not frequent. The bank's HRM practices create procedures that constitute the building of employees' knowledge and skills throughout the organization to promote valued and unique organizational competencies, which support competitive advantage (Werbel and DeMarie, 2005; Chen *et al*., 2017). Findings from the data have shown how the selected banks apply their competency framework in their SHRM to achieve this competitive advantage. The data also revealed that the bank's SHRM aims to achieve strategic fit by producing vertically integrated HR strategies that align with the business strategy and are ideally an integral part of the bank's strategy. This vertical integration is necessary to provide congruence between the business and HR strategy so that the latter supports the accomplishment of the business strategy and helps to define it. The bank's SHRM is also about horizontal integration, which aims to ensure that the different elements of the HR strategy fit together and are mutually supportive as suggested by the literature (Armstrong, 2008; Ntwari and Kule, 2016). This makes it possible for the bank to make strategic decisions that have a major and long-term impact on the behaviour and success of the bank by ensuring that the bank has the skilled, committed and well-motivated employees needed to achieve competitive advantage. Various researchers

(Appelbaum *et al*., 2000; Guest *et al.,* 2000; West *et al*., 2002; Purcell *et al*., 2007; Imran, *et al.,* 2015) have found a positive relation between HRM practices and firm financial performance. This study also supports this view in its findings. Cole (2004) emphasize the need for HR function to bring in the strategic value of people in the organization by making contribution to the level of value added and contribution to competitive advantage (Chapman *et al*., 2016). Effective HRM strategy systematically organize the entire individual HRM measures to directly influence the attitude and behaviour of employees in a way that enables the bank to achieve its desired competitive strategy (Huang, 2001). In view of this fact, the management of HR function of the organisation aligned with the overall corporate strategy of the bank becomes critical to the achievement of the bank's desired goals and objectives. By doing this, the banks can achieve competitive advantage and superior performance (Kelliher and Perret, 2001; Calicchio and Marcondes, 2016). This is why the banks are aligning their competency framework with their SHRM to achieve these goals. In the case of Nigerian banks, it is the employee skills and commitment that create competitive advantage for the banks, therefore, making it important for the banks to leverage on their workforce as a competitive weapon to develop a competitive advantage.

5.3.4 Research Objective 4: To investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of the selected case study banks.

This research objective investigated the influence of competencies on the performance of the selected Nigerian banks. To understand this influence, the researcher investigated the position of reporting and evaluation of the competency framework, how they measure and assess competencies, workforce competencies, and improvement because of intervention on resource and development. This highlighted what was applicable in the banks, the extent to which it is applicable, and how long it has been going on. To achieve this goal, a qualitative approach was used, which involved a semi-structured interview and the analysis on internal documents of the banks to verify the results, evaluation system, the description of the tool used to evaluated competencies and performance in the banks.

Finding from the data revealed that there is a link between competency and performance in the case study banks. The data revealed that the individual banks' strategic approach to achieving their financial objectives is to leverage on the core competencies of the banks. By defining the desired goals and objectives of the banks, the bank can identify the critical job roles and employees required for achieving these set goals and objectives. The competency framework defines the competencies needed by the employees for each job role and function supported by the banks' people management functions, which include staffing, training, work design, reward and appraisals. Competency mapping is used to assess the current competence level of the employees and the required competence to excel in the role. By identifying this gap, the bank is able to provide the necessary training and development to bridge the gap. According to the data, the effectiveness of the bank's people management system leads to the bank’s core competencies, which gives the bank and edge over rival banks. As a result, competencies play a significant role in influencing the performance of the banks. Based on the information from the data, we know there is an SHRM strategy, competency framework, and the people are generally aware of it as it aligns with the goals of the banks as discussed in their HR planning circle, and informs the development programs of the banks. The data also reveals that the bank's competitive strategy is built upon the bank’s core competencies and competitive advantages (Javidan, 1998; Rezaee and Jafari 2016). The banks focus on this approach to achieve competitive advantage because core competencies are the set of knowledge that distinguishes them and provides a competitive advantage over rival banks (Leonard-Barton, 1992; Huy *et al*., 2016). Srivastava (2005) suggested that when core competencies are viewed as a unique knowledge for defining and solving problems in the organisation, they form the basis of the organisation’s competitive advantage and can also be leveraged in a wide-ranging variety of markets for future products and services (Srivastava, 2005; Mappigau and Maupa 2015). As stated in the literature, the organisation's technological tools and advancement are only useful to the organisation if their employees can effectively utilize the technology to the organisations advantage. Therefore, a key to achieving competitive advantage is the ability of the organisation's workforce to maximize the advantages of their state of the art technology, superior products, and steady source of capital to enter into the marketplace (McLagan, 1989; Opoku *et al*., 2016). This is where the bank's core competencies are set apart as stated in theme one and the findings of the data reveal competencies are influencing the performance of the selected banks. The performance expectation of these banks centres on the strategy of the bank, which is to assign targets to individuals and teams in order to meet the goals and objectives for departments and the bank. The combination of knowledge, skills and other personal characteristics that are necessary for the effective performance of the bank is included in the competency framework. The theories on the relationship between competencies and performance comply with the result of this research.

5.5 Contributions of this thesis

According to the literature on competencies, if Nigerian banks are able to get the competency profiles right and then manage these competencies in terms of performance relations and developmental relations then arguably that ought to drive all sorts of management decisions and feedback to staff. In addition, they would be able to rebalance the links between the appropriate corporate due diligence decisions and notions as supposed to sales and revenue.

A significant number of researchers have actively researched ways to clarify the connections between competencies and organisational performance. Recent research literature has highlighted the complexity and provided ways to research and develop competencies. It is widely accepted that competencies do have an influence on organisational performance (Tripathi and Agrawal. 2014). However, there is a gap in knowledge concerning the relationship between competencies and performance in Nigerian banks. Therefore, highlighting the need for the researcher to investigate this relationship in Nigerian banks and add to the already existing body of knowledge.

This research identifies the limitation in empirical evidence to understand the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks. The research, therefore, contributes to knowledge by investigating the influence of competence in Nigerian banks. Specifically, the research produced an empirical study across ten Nigerian banks that strategically reviewed how competencies influence performance in these banks. The combination of knowledge, skills and other personal characteristics that are necessary for the effective performance of the banks are included in the competency framework, and the theories on the influence of competency on performance comply with the result of this research.

The researcher concludes that Nigerian banks like other international banks have well thought of competency frameworks, which are in line with the CBN competency framework and they are rooted and grounded in the strategic human resource management systems of these banks. Based on the findings, we can say that the selected Nigerian banks manage their SHRM strategically by supporting the bank's long-term goals and objectives with the competency framework. The banks are able to achieve this by focusing on their long-term people resourcing issues within the context of the bank's goals and the changing nature of work, and inform other HR strategies, such as reward, performance and determining how they are integrated into the overall business strategy of the bank. The banks have the ability to strategically develop and carry out plans for recruitment, training and reward based on the goals of the banks through the use of the competency framework, thereby ensuring improved performance in the selected banks. This findings collaborates the findings from the literature and other studies in this field.

This research also comments upon the progress made by the CBN competency framework, with a focus on the banks reaction and assessing the viability, sustainability and impact of the competency framework in order to establish the extent at which competencies are driving the performance of the selected Nigerian banks. This research also provides an academic evaluation of the competency framework in the Nigerian banking sector, and adds to the body of knowledge already on competency with a focus on Nigerian banks.

5.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for two specific reasons:

Academic Insight

Firstly, findings from this research show that the relationship between competencies and the performance of the selected banks is achieved through the people management systems of the banks to achieve competitive advantage. Previous studies have shown that competencies do have an influence on organizational performance (Spencer, 1998; Sypniewska, 2013; CIPD, 2016; Delima, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016). Findings from this study also revealed that competencies do influence organisational performance. The implications of these findings on the competency literature is that researchers can now carry out further research in this field knowing that Nigerian banks do have competencies, and they are influencing the performance of Nigerian banks as stated in other international studies, therefore, supporting and reinforcing the competency performance literature. This is because Nigerian banks achieve performance gains from its core competencies, which aligns with the banks SHRM to attain the competitive advantage that result from the effective people management system (Barney and Wright, 1998; Pfeffer, 2005; Newbert, 2008; Batool *et al*., 2016). Findings from this study are also important for two reasons. Firstly, it bridges the gap in the competency literature concerning Nigerian banks. Secondly, findings from the study support other competency research that confirms competency influences the performance of organisations (Spencer, 1998; Sypniewska, 2013; CIPD, 2016; Delima, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016). This study, therefore, extends the findings from previous studies on the influence of competencies on performance by focusing on Nigerian banks. The researcher examined the role of the banks' SHRM strategic management and that interrelationship with competency. Findings demonstrate that the individual bank's strategic approach to achieving their financial objectives is to leverage on the core competencies of their banks (Spencer, 1998; Sypniewska, 2013; CIPD, 2016; Delima, 2016; Misra and Sharma, 2016). By defining the desired goals and objectives of the banks, the bank can identify the critical job roles and employees required for achieving the set goals and objective. The competency framework defines the required competencies needed for each job role and function supported by the bank's people management functions, which include staffing, training, work design, reward and appraisals. The banks then make use of competency mapping to assess the current level of competence of the employees and the required competence to excel in the role. By identifying this gap, the bank is able to provide the necessary training and development required to enable the employees succeed on the job. Another major finding from this research is that Nigerian banks do have and use competencies. According to the CIPD (2016), the competency framework describes the skills and attributes staff and managers need in order to build a new organizational culture and meet the future challenges of the organisation. In addition, they help organizations clarify expectations, define future development needs and achieve a more focused recruitment and development process in the organisation (CIPD, 2016). In addition, the competency framework provides the organisation the luxury of a sound basis for consistent and objective performance standards by creating shared language about the required competencies and the expected outcomes desired in the organization. The data confirmed that the banks are different from one another in terms of their capabilities to select, build, deploy, and protect their core competencies. The differences in the banks produce different resents in each of the banks in terms of performance as stated by (Hamel, 1994; Rubin *et al*., 2016). Based on the findings, the researcher can reliably conclude that the selected banks do have competency frameworks in place that cover the entire workforce, align with other HR systems, processes and policies. This study also agrees with Leonard-Barton (1992) that core competencies are the set of knowledge that distinguishes an organisation and provides a competitive advantage over its rivals (Leonard-Barton, 1992; Menon and Yao, 2017). In addition, the key to achieving competitive advantage is the ability of the bank's workforce to maximize the advantages of their state of the art technology, superior products, and steady source of capital to enter into the marketplace (McLagan, 1989; Gosney and Hughes, 2016). The competency framework is extremely useful in several situations from recruitment, development, talent management and performance management. However, according to the CIPD (2016) the competency framework will only be successful in supporting decision-making if they accurately reflect the needs of both the job and the organisation in terms of skills, experience and behaviours. The competency framework is, therefore, required to take into account the job and personal specifications and the organization's medium- and long-term needs for talent, organizational moral belief and values (CIPD, 2016). To remain reflective of the changing nature of jobs and flexible to the diverse career pathways, the competency frameworks require constant review against the needs of jobs and individual employees, and informed by future-focused workforce planning, assessing the nature and requirements of future roles (CIPD, 2016). Since the 1990s, competencies have formed the basis for human resources and strategic management practices in terms of recruiting, selecting, placing, leading, and training employees and evaluating employee performance (Dubois, 1993; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999; Puteh *et al*., 2016). Another benefit for using competency framework to develop behaviourally based interview protocols and assessment tools is that it ensures the selection of the right candidate fit for the job during the selecting and hiring phase for a position (McClelland, 1998; Goldman and Scott, 2016). It also prepares incumbent top-level talent for succession into specific positions through development plans and training, and guidance received through the performance review system of the bank (Gangani *et al.*, 2006; Grigoryev, 2006; Showry and Manasa, 2016).

In general, this study promotes ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between academic knowledge, and the practical understanding of the influence of competency on performance. Therefore, this study is a step towards theory building in relation to the influence of competency on the performance of Nigerian banks. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first to investigate the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks as proposed by researchers and practitioners in developing and developed countries alike. In addition, this study contributes to the empirical knowledge of competencies because the study reveals the nature of the competency-performance relationship in the Nigerian banking sector.

Policy Development

This research enlightens the policy-makers in the Nigeria banking industry of the current practice of competencies. It also raises awareness of the importance of competencies as an important strategic function, which could help Nigerian banks to achieve their strategic goals, and it gives a better understanding of how competency frameworks in terms of approach and implementation. Having identified and analysed the current position of competencies, with reference to the best practice and emergent academic research, this study provides useful guidelines to assist banks in Nigeria in deriving a better understanding of the role of competencies in organisations' development and success. According to Parasuraman *et al*., (1988), competitive advantage is the firm's ability to offer excellent customer service, which leads to customer satisfaction and retention (Parasuraman *et al*., 1988; Gracia *et al*., 2016). In the banking industry, customer satisfaction can help banks increase both the volume and the stability of their future cash flow, hence, creating greater shareholder value (Liao *et al*., 2009; Afolayan *et al*., 2016 Lau *et al*., 2017). As a result, banks can create competitive advantage through the delivery of superior customer service to their customers that go over and beyond the expectations of their customers. Findings from this study suggest that the banks can achieve competitive advantage by aligning their SHRM strategy and the competency framework to achieve the desired goals of the banks. This suggests that investment in the competency framework pays off. However, to reap the full benefits of such investment, banks must ensure the competency framework is not used in isolation, the awareness and favourability of the competency framework by bank leaders, the competency framework must be well communicated and implemented to ensure the workforce understand and engage with the framework and finally regular evaluation of the competency framework. Based on the above, the study will enlighten the Nigerian banking industry with regard to effective competency approach.

5.7 Conclusion

The overarching aim of this study was to examine the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks. In order to achieve this aim, the study employed empirical methods underpinned by strong theoretical frameworks and research methods. The study applied field survey to collect interview data from employees in ten Nigerian banks. The researcher further analysed the interview data using Nvivo. Based on the findings from the data analysis, it was discovered that competencies do influence the performance of the selected Nigerian banks. Therefore, the banks' need to seize the opportunity to improve continues application and management of the competency framework in the banks, so as to improve the skills, attitude and behaviour of their workforce towards the discharge of their individual job roles and functions to be able to attain high performance potentiality. Furthermore, the theories on the relationship between competencies and performance comply with the result of this research. From a theoretical perspective, the result from this research can deepen the analysis of the relationship between employee competency and performance. From the practical perspective, investing in employee competencies and developing their competencies is profitable to the business, as they will contribute to higher performance standards. The recommendations communicated in the research can also be applied to other organisations.

5.8 Limitations of this thesis

This study created as many questions as it answered, as with any other exploratory study. Though the theoretical framework underpinning this study was well established, the sample size for the study was small, and focused on ten high street banks out of the twenty-five high street banks in the Nigerian banking industry. Other studies have shown that research with a broader sample size would make the findings more quantifiably robust, therefore, provide width and depth on the findings. However, this study provides a strong qualitative assessment of the influence of competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks.

Like most other qualitative research, time and resources in achieving the research aims and objectives limited this researcher. Another challenge for this study was identifying the key authors in the extant literature, and thus excluding the necessary literature for this research, since the literature on competency and SHRM are plentiful. Furthermore, the researcher sourced majority of the literature for this study from other Western research and perspective because there was hardly any competency or SHRM literature on Nigerian banks. Having considered the limitations to this research, areas for more robust further research aimed at developing competencies in Nigerian banks are identified as follows:

Firstly, the need for future research to focus on a more robust sample size that covers the entire banks in the Nigerian banking sector. By doing this, we can achieve a general understanding of the influence of competencies on the Nigerian banking sector.

Secondly, the need for a more time and resources to covers the entire banks in the Nigerian banking sector. By allocating more time and resources to further research, we can achieve a more accurate understanding of competencies influence the performance of Nigerian banks.

Thirdly, further research is needed using both qualitative and quantitative approach. This is because the qualitative approach is limited in what it can achieve, as identified in this study.

Finally, there is a need to promote ongoing efforts to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and the practical understanding of the influence of competency on performance.

5.9 Chapter summary

This chapter concludes the research and summarises the findings from the research. In addition, the chapter reiterating the purpose of the study, the process adopted by the researcher, research objectives and findings to enable the researcher make adequate recommendations concerning the findings and conclusion of the research.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Completing this PhD dissertation is the most challenging task I have taken in my adult life. This is because of the amount of time required and the level of intellectual engagement required with the literature and the data. Before embarking on this research, I was not sure of what career path to follow, however, this research journey has exposed me to the research community and motivated me to become a professional academic tutor and researcher. According to Luft and Roughley (2016), Nye *et al.,* (2016) and Coleman (2016), personal reflection enables researchers to observe and take responsibility of their research journey (Coleman, 2016; Luft and Roughley, 2016; Nye *et al.,* 2016). It is documented that the research methodology provides structure and direction for any research because it gives insight into the researcher's philosophy and informs the researcher choice in terms of the research approach and data collection method. Since every research is different in its approach and method, it was important for me to reflect on the literature to understand what approach best suit me as an individual and my research. Being able to think through the process and evaluate myself is the sort of value that reflection gives to a researcher. In addition, reflections are important for a successful professional development, which is related to the idea of experiential learning. According to Dewey (1933), reflection in the context of learning is not simply an inactive recall of an event, but a deliberate and active process. It centres on thinking in order to learn. According to Dewey (1933) it is an "*active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief* *or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and further conclusions to which it leads*" (Dewey 1933 pg. 118; Burbank *et al*., 2016). Therefore, reflective learning enables us to unveil the values that are surplus in different learning experiences and contribute in the process of learning (Pedler, 2011; Brook *et al*., 2016). In addition, reflection is important in management research according to Bell *et al*., (2016), this is because it centres on problem solving that relates to managerial practice (Bell *et al*., 2016). However, researchers like Tranfield and Starkey (1998) as cited by MacIntosh *et al*., (2017) argue that some researchers have lost touch with the concerns that are importance to practitioners. Therefore, researchers must learn to be reflective so that their research can be valuable and purposeful (MacIntosh *et al*., 2017).

Literature Review

My PhD dissertation was titled "*A study of competency as a driver for performance in Nigerian banks*". I read extensively in an attempt to gain some understanding of the theories underpinning this study. The literature review covered a variety of sources including articles, journals, books, websites and bank documents. The research was aimed at investigating the influence on competencies on the performance of Nigerian banks and how these systems can be combined effectively to improve bank performance in Nigerian, using qualitative methods, underpinned by the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm and the strategic human resource management (SHRM). The resource-based view to strategic human resource management (SHRM) focuses on the difficulty to copy attributes of the firm as the fundamental drivers of performance and competitive advantage (Díaz-Fernández, 2014). In relation to the understanding of the resource-based view of the firm, Barney (1991) described competitive advantage as "when a firm is implementing a value creating strategy not at the same time being implemented by any current or potential competitors". The idea is to maintain this competitive advantage in such a way that competitors' efforts to copy that advantage are frustrated and eventually terminated (Barney, 1991; Kumar and Pansari, 2016). The resource-based view focuses on the promotion of sustained competitive advantage through the development of the human capital rather than merely aligning human resources to current strategic goals (Kaufman, 2015). Competency framework is said to be the glue that links the aspiration of making people competitive and seeing these assets with the reality of the business which enables organisations to measure, monitors and plan with it. In order to achieve this, I made use of theoretical perspectives and concepts of SHRM and RBV to determine the influence of competencies on bank performance in Nigeria. By investigating these theories, I was able to understand their strengths and weaknesses from the ongoing debates about the theories. The research also provided recommendations for researchers, HR professional and policy developers to ensure the effectiveness of the competency-based approach can achieve performance objectives.

Due to the intricacy and length of this research, effective time management was critical to the completion of the research. Initially, my progress in writing this dissertation was slow; this was because I had difficulties focusing the research area by reducing the focus of the topic. However, with the help of my supervisory team I was able to focus the scope of the topic as the research developed. In addition, I planned a strict schedule in accordance with the time scales from my annual review meetings to make sure I completed the research within the desired period. This was not the case because it took me longer to complete some of the tasks than I would have expected. For example, I had to collect the data twice because my first attempt at the data collections was not as robust as the research would require. In addition, I had to learn the use of Nvivo during the course of the research, which ate into my data analysis period. Reflecting on my research, in future I would make sure that a more effective contingency plan would be in place to account for any delays in the completion of my research. Another challenge experienced during the course of this research was adhering to the word count. The field of competency, SHRM and RBV has seen many studies of inquiry previously carried out to improve our knowledge. In order to meet the required word count I had to make sure only the important information was obtained from each source, which led to me struggling to meet up the required word count of 80,000 words (*plus or minus 10%*). In future, I will create a plan to ensure I save time by completing a concise research, which also adheres to the time scale.

Reflection on the Research Methodology

Ghauri and Gronhaug, (2010) as cited by Chew *et al*., (2016) defined research as approaching a quest in a systematic manner to investigate things in order to discover hidden truth (Chew *et al*., 2016). The idea of being systematic as a researcher focuses on the logical relationships proven and not just personal beliefs. Research has the ability to bring to light the relationships that exist in our everyday life and our social science process (Chew *et al*., 2016). Based on this belief, it is possible to say that research is a systematic process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data in order to discover hidden truth. As a result, some of the key features of a purposeful research are criticality, systematic approach, empirical backing and valid conclusions. Reflecting on my research, I must say the data analysis chapter lacked the level of criticality I would have expected. This is because the data did not provide the opportunity to assess or analyse the findings from multiple perspective. Therefore, in future, I will ensure the data allows me the opportunity to analyse the findings from multiple perspectives.

Conclusion

In reflection of this PhD research, I believe if I am to do it again I will do it differently because I took the importance of time and planning for granted. However, the course of researching this PhD research has immensely improved my understanding of research and the systematic process involved in completing a critical, empirical research that will produce a valid result. I am confidently sure that without going on board with this PhD research, I would not have had the opportunity of being acquainted with the research community. My research experience can be compared to that of a ‘roller coaster ride’ because of its highs and the lows. In addition, there were times I felt like the wind had left my sail; however, I was able to navigate my way back on course with the support and guidance of my exceptional supervisory team. This PhD journey has provided me with a new and highly stimulating experience of academic self-growth. In addition, it has provided me with the motivation to further improve and assess my key research skills, rational thinking and reflective practice. Therefore, this has motivated me to become an active researcher even beyond completing my PhD.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: Research Consent Request

Research project title: **A Study of Competency as a Driver for Business Performance in Nigerian Banks.**

Student Name and Course of study: **Kalama Adefe**, Doctoral Research Student, PhD.

I write to request your consent for the use of your organization as a case study in the research topic stated above.

Your participation in this research is voluntary; you reserve the right of withdrawal at any time of the study, without prejudice for any reasons, and the data, records and information will be returned back to you.

A copy of the final report analysis will be sent to you by the researcher for suggested changes to be made where necessary. Strict confidentiality will be maintained in the course of the research within the confines of the law to ensure high moral standard.

Thank you for your consideration and in anticipation of your approval.

Kind Regards

Kalama Adefe
PhD, Research Student
Faculty of Business and Law
University of Sunderland
Email: bf69bu@research.sunderland.ac.uk

APPENDIX TWO: BANK RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Date:
Time:
Participants:

*************** INTERVIEW BEGINS ***************

Interviewer: I am a PhD Research student at the University of Sunderland, currently investigating the use of Competency as a Driver for Business Performance in Nigerian Banks and I would like to ask about your experiences working with your bank and how it relates to this research.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you reserve the right to withdraw from this interview at any point. The information you provide will be analysed and used for the sole purpose of this study. This interview will take about 45 minutes to an hour. No personally identifiable information will be disclosed unless you willingly request to do so. Furthermore, your responses will be combined with those of many others and summarized in a report to further protect your anonymity. All data collected in this survey will be held securely.

Are you happy to continue?

Interviewer: Thanks, can you please state your position in the bank for the record?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: And how long have you worked with the bank please?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Thank you! This interview will cover seven key areas and they are as follows: the nature and scope of your banks competency framework; how it links to your banks strategic human resource management; your banks leadership; performance management and talent management; the implementation and communication of the framework; staff engagement and the evaluation of the competency framework.

SECTION ONE: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Interviewer: Are you aware of the CBN competency framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What is your opinion regarding the framework, do you think it's viable?

Interviewee:

Interviewer To what extent do you agree with the competency framework being a viable option using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Did your bank have any sort of infrastructure in place which was in line with the CBN competency framework prior to the introduction of the CBN framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How robust is your banks competency framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How consistent is the application and management of your banks competency framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: On a frequency of 1 to 7 and 7 being highest regular occurrence, how consistent is the application of you banks competency framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent is the competency framework embedded in the HR systems of your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Who put it together and how was it put together?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Why do you have them?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How are they published and communicated in the bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How are they used in the bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Are there any HR systems in place that supports the competency framework? If yes, how are they used?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Where will the information derived from the framework be used?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How is the competency framework linked to the business?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is your banks competency framework similar to that of the CBN and why?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent do you agree your banks competency framework similar to that of the CBN using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Who does the competency framework cover and how wide is the coverage?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Are competencies driving the HR strategies and performance change of your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent would your colleagues agree with this answer using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What does competency mean to your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent do you think the CBN competency framework agrees with this definition using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What do you think makes the use of competency framework successful?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is this opinion shared by other bankers?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Using the following scale how will you rate this opinion (Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What was the reaction and response by your bank to the CBN competency framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Was your bank ready for such a change?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Did it require considerable investment by your bank or was it just a tweak in their processes and what you were already doing?

Interviewee:

SECTION TWO: LINKS TO STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (SHRM)

Interviewer: How is the competency being linked, used and implemented in your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is it strategic or operational and to what extent is it strategic or operational?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How far is the application of your banks SHRM strategy in the CBN framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How is the CBN competency framework being interpreted in the context of your banks Strategic Human Resource Management?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How does your bank link competencies and the strategic human resource management?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Are the performance management processes integrated in the strategic and business planning processes or other HR processes of your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Does your banks performance objective flow from the strategic business objectives?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is performance management information used to inform decision-making on pay, development or talent management?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent will other colleagues in your bank agree with your last three answers using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Has the CBN competency framework significantly changed your banks competency framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: In your opinion how advance would you say your banks competency framework was prior to the introduction of the CBN framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent will other colleagues agree with this opinion using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What's the reaction to HR systems and policies in your bank?

Interviewee:

SECTION THREE: BANK LEADERSHIP

Interviewer: Is there any leadership awareness and favourability of the competency framework in your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What competencies do you think bank leaders need?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent do you agree that the leadership of your bank are competent enough to achieve the goals of the CBN framework using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent do you agree your banks leaders understand the importance of an effective competency framework using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Are there any issues being faced by your bank with regards to dealing with the CBN in terms of the competency framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What is your banks approach to competencies and leadership evaluation?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What is your banks approach to leadership and competency development?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Using the following scale to answer this question do you think the behaviour and actions of your banks leaders has a direct impact on the banks performance?

(Strongly Agree, Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How is the leadership of your bank motivating the staff to achieve its set goals and objectives?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Using the following scale to answer the question do you believe the leadership style of your bank is effective in achieving its set goals?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you agree that the business strategies and management practices of your bank fits the leadership style of your banks CEO using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is the leadership of your bank ready and equipped to promote and reinforce on-going leadership development using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Using the following scale to answer this question do you believe your banks leadership has a good way of communicating with the staff?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

SETION FOUR: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Interviewer: What is the competency – performance relationship in your bank? Are competencies influencing performance in your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How far are the competencies embedded in individual and team performance?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is the competency framework about performance or training?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Are they measured and monitored? If yes, how is it done?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is there any evaluation activities taking place?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How frequent is this done?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you think competencies can drive performance and is this evident in your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How does your bank measure your performance?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Does the business performance measure consider non-financial performance, and what sort of non-financial measures do they consider and why?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is there any continuing problem or is there likely to be a continuing problem with this going forward?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How is the appraisal analysed and feedback to employees and when is it done?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Has the appraisal measures in your bank stimulated any change and improvement and is the change and improvement on-going?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is your banks competency framework about minimum standards or superior performance?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Has training been identified and been made available to continuously upgrade staff skills?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you agree your bank has a career plan for you and is it exciting, achievable, and being acted on using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent do you agree with the importance of appraisals using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Has there been any change on its relevance to you over the years? If yes, what has changed?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you agree the appraisal method of your bank will help your bank achieve its business goals through employees using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is this being experienced at the moment?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How consistent is the application and management of the appraisal systems?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What’s the general reaction to appraisals in your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent is the CBN competency framework impacting on your banks performance?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Are competencies leading to any meaningful outcomes in terms of performance objectives or learning and development goals?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How effective is your banks appraisal system in terms of measuring performance?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do they inform what needs to be developed?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is there a link between staff development and their career progression?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is your banks appraisal system providing the sort of result it hopes to achieve at the moment?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How does your bank currently manage talent and resourcing?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Does it include leadership skills and capabilities?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is this embedded in your banks strategic human resource management?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you think you other colleagues will agree with this view?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Using the following scale to what extent would your colleagues agree to this statement? (Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How does your bank assessing the impact of learning and development activity?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you agree the competency framework is an important part of the banks performance system using the following scale?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you think the CBN competency framework would further restrict Nigerian banks or improve on them?

Interviewee:

SECTION FIVE: IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Interviewer: How sustainable do you think the competency framework will be in terms of implementation?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How is the competency framework applied and implemented in your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you have a clear understanding of what is expected of you as an employee in terms of meeting the goal of your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you agree everyone has the same understanding and know what they are expected to do?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you agree the purpose of appraisals is to stimulate change and improvement?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent will you respond to the last few questions using the following scale (Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What was the initial reaction to the CBN framework by the banks?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent has the framework been accepted by the banks? (On a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being the highest level of acceptance by the banks).

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is this view shared by others using the following scale?

(Strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree).

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How is the framework working out at the moment?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Using the following scale to answer the question is your bank happy with the results coming out of the framework?

(Strongly agree, Somewhat Agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree).

Interviewee:

SECTION SIX: STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Interviewer: How are you as a bank staff responding to these changes?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Has any change been noticed with the use of the framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is the change progressing and moving you forward?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is the competency framework constantly being acted upon?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How frequent is this done?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: On a scale of 1 to 7 and 7 being the highest positive frequency, how often is this done?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is your bank just doing this or is it really going to lead to a major change and shape the way of approaching HR?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you think your colleagues would agree with this opinion?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Using the following scale how will you rate this opinion (Strongly agree, Somewhat Agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree)?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Does your manager inspire you?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Would you recommend your bank to your friends and family?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you have the tools to enable you do your job effectively?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect you?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you understand how your role contributes to achieving business outcomes?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you trust the information you receive?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you feel valued for the work you do?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Using the following scale to answer this question do you believe competent employees have an impact on your banks performance?

(Strongly Agree, Somewhat Agree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How focused is your banks appraisal on competencies?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Are you willing to devote sufficient time to complete the appraisal process?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Do you give feedback on the value of the process?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Are you willing to be involved in any redesign of the process?

Interviewee:

SECTION SEVEN: EVALUATION

Interviewer: What is the impact of the competency framework and how is it being managed?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: To what extent is the competency framework relevant and used in a business relevant way?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What mechanisms are there for checking this out and to what extent are they being checked, are they going anywhere?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How will your banks competency framework be evaluated and measured to know if it’s successful?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: When will the evaluation of the competency framework be carried out?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Who will be responsible for this?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: How frequent will this exercise be carried out?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: What are the preliminary progress reports with regards to the competency framework so far?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Is the current progress result far from the expected outcome of the competency framework?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: On a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being the farthest possible gap, how far is the gap between the current state of the competency framework and what it intends to achieve?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: On a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being the highest positive outcome. How will you rate the influence of the competency framework to positively change your bank?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: On a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 being the highest positive outcome. How will you rate the implementation successes of the competency framework so far?

Interviewee:

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time today, that's all the questions.

********** END OF INTERVIEW **********

APPENDIX THREE: Nvivo Coding for Analysis

Level 1 Research Themes	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
THEME 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK (NSCF)	NSCF – Awareness NSCF – Prior infrastructure NSCF – Embedded NSCF – Links to business NSCF – Meaning NSCF – Drive HR strategies and performance change NSCF – Successful use NSCF – Reaction and response	NSCF – Awareness – Viability NSCF – Prior infrastructure – Robustness NSCF – Embedded – Design of framework NSCF – Links to business – Published and communicated NSCF – Meaning – Similarity NSCF – Drive HR strategies and performance change – Extent to agreement NSCF – Successful use – Agreed by others NSCF – Reaction and response – Readiness to change	NSCF – Awareness – Viability – Extent to agreement NSCF – Prior infrastructure – Robustness – Consistency NSCF – Embedded – Design of framework – Usage / coverage NSCF – Meaning – Similarity – Extent to agreement NSCF – Successful use – Agreed by others – extent to opinion NSCF – Reaction and response – Readiness to change – Cost to bank
THEME 2: COMPETENCY LINKS TO STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CSHRM)	CSHRM – Links CSHRM – Interpretation of CBN framework in SHRM	CSHRM – Links – Strategic or operational CSHRM – Interpretation of CBN framework in SHRM – Links	CSHRM – Links – Strategic or operational – Application CSHRM – Interpretation of CBN framework in SHRM – Links – Integration

	CSHRM – Performance flow from strategic business objectives CSHRM – Significant change by CBN	CSHRM – Performance flow from strategic business objectives – Inform decision-making CSHRM – Significant change by CBN – Prior level of development	CSHRM – Performance flow from strategic business objectives – Inform decision-making – Extent to agreement CSHRM – Significant change by CBN – Prior level of development – Reaction to HR systems and policies
THEME 3: COMPETENCY AND BANK LEADERSHIP (BL)	BL – CBN justification BL – Leadership awareness and favourability BL – Competencies bank leader's need BL – Banks leaders understand importance BL – Competencies and leadership evaluation BL – Leadership actions impact performance BL – Motivating staff – Leadership style is effective BL – Management practices of bank fits leadership style of CEO	BL – Competencies bank leader's need – Extent to agreement BL – Banks leaders understand importance – Issues faced BL – Competencies and leadership evaluation – Development BL – Motivating staff – Leadership style is effective BL – Management practices of bank fits leadership style of CEO – Ready and equipped to promote on-going leadership development	BL – Management practices of bank fits leadership style of CEO – Ready and equipped to promote on-going leadership development – Good way of communicating
THEME 4: COMPETENCY PERFORMANCE AND MANAGEMENT (PM)	PTM – Competency / Performance relationship	PTM – Competency / Performance relationship –	PTM – Competency / Performance relationship – Embedded in

		Embedded in individual and team performance	individual and team performance – About performance or training
	PTM – Evaluation activities	PTM – Evaluation activities – Frequency	
	PTM – Driving performance	CPTM – Driving performance – Performance measures	PTM – Driving performance – Performance measures – Non–financials
	PTM – Analysed and feedback	PTM – Analysed and feedback – Stimulated any change and improvement	
	PTM – Minimum or superior performance	PTM – Minimum or superior performance – Continuous training	PTM – Minimum or superior performance – Continuous training – Existence of career plan
	PTM – Appraisals are important	PTM – Appraisals are important – Changes in relevance	PTM – Appraisals are important – Changes in relevance – Achieve business goals
	PTM – Application and management consistency	PTM – Application and management consistency – General reaction to appraisals	
	PTM – Impact of CBN framework	PTM – Impact of CBN framework – Leading to meaningful outcomes	
	PTM – Effectiveness of appraisal in measuring performance	PTM – Effectiveness of appraisal in measuring performance – Informs development needs	PTM – Effectiveness of appraisal in measuring performance – Informs development needs – How it's done
	PTM – Link between development and career progression	PTM – Link between development and career progression – providing result	
	PTM – Experiencing expected outcome		

	PTM – Talent and resource management PTM – Assessing impact of learning and development PTM – CBN framework restriction	PTM – Talent and resource management – Includes leadership skills PTM – Assessing impact of learning and development – Important to performance system	PTM – Talent and resource management – Includes leadership skills – Embedded in SHRM
THEME 5: COMPETENCY IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION (CIC)	CIC – Sustainability CIC – Application and implementation CIC – Appraisals stimulates change and improvement CIC – Level of acceptance to CBN framework CIC – Framework outcome	CIC – Application and implementation – Clear understanding of job role CIC – Appraisals stimulates change and improvement – Extent to agreement CIC – Level of acceptance to CBN framework – Extent to agreement CIC – Framework outcome – Extent to agreement	
THEME 6: COMPETENCY ENGAGEMENT (SE)	SE – Response to changes SE – Change progressing SE – Constantly acted upon SE – Reasons for having framework	SE – Constantly acted upon – Frequency SE – Reasons for having framework – Agreed by others	SE – Constantly acted upon – Frequency – Scale of frequency SE – Reasons for having framework – Agreed by others – Extent to opinion

	SE – Inspired by manager SE – Recommend bank to others SE – Tools to work effectively SE – Contribute to decisions SE – Trust information received SE – Competent employees impact performance SE – Focus of appraisal on competencies SE – Willing to devote time	SE – Trust information received – Feel valued SE – Willing to devote time – Give feedback on value	SE – Willing to devote time – Give feedback on value – Involved in redesign of process
THEME 7: COMPETENCY EVALUATION (CE)	CE – Impact of framework CE – Method of evaluation CE – Responsibility CE – Preliminary progress reports CE – Scale of positively change	CE – Impact of framework – Extent of relevance CE – Method of evaluation – Time for evaluation CE – Preliminary progress reports – progress result far from expected outcome	CE – Impact of framework – Extent of relevance – Mechanisms for checking impact CE – Method of evaluation – Time for evaluation – Who’s responsible CE – Preliminary progress reports – progress result far from expected outcome – Scale of difference

	CE – Scale of implementation successes		

APPENDIX FOUR: Sample of Coded Interview Response

Themes	Coded Response
Nature and Scope of Competency Framework (NSCF)	Yes am aware of it (NSCF – Awareness) Yes I think so (NSCF – Awareness – Viability) Somewhat agree (NSCF – Awareness – Viability – Extent to agreement) Yes, we had a competency framework. I came in as a graduate student and during my time at the training school we were taught a lot about the bank and emphasis was strongly made on performance and how it's managed (NSCF – Prior infrastructure) Very robust (NSCF – Prior infrastructure – Robustness) It is consistent enough (NSCF – Prior infrastructure – Robustness – Consistency) 5 out of 7 (NSCF – Prior infrastructure – Robustness – Consistency) It is well embedded in our systems (NSCF – Embedded) HR I guess (NSCF – Embedded – Designed by) To check our performance (NSCF – Links to business) In everything we do (NSCF – Links to business – Published and communicated) That is for HR to decide (NSCF – Embedded – Design of framework – Usage / coverage) I think so, yes (NSCF – Links to business) For performance management (NSCF – Embedded – Design of framework – Usage / coverage) By using it to improve the banks performance (NSCF – Links to business) Yes (NSCF – Meaning – Similarity) Somewhat agreed (NSCF – Meaning – Similarity – Extent to agreement) Everyone in the bank (NSCF – Embedded – Design of framework – Usage / coverage) Yes, that's what it's meant to do (NSCF – Drive HR strategies and performance change) Strongly agreed (NSCF – Drive HR strategies and performance change – Extent to agreement) Having the skills and ability to do your job the way it should be done (NSCF – Meaning) Strongly agreed (NSCF – Meaning – Similarity – Extent to agreement) If it is well understood by everyone (NSCF – Successful use) I think so (NSCF – Successful use – Agreed by others) Somewhat agreed (NSCF – Successful use – Agreed by others – extent to opinion) It was surprising (NSCF – Reaction and response) I couldn't say (NSCF – Reaction and response – Readiness to change) Nothing has really changed really (NSCF – Reaction and response – Readiness to change – Cost to bank)

Competency Links to Strategic Human Resource Management (CSHRM)	I think it is linked to our banks strategy (CLSHRM – Links) Both (CLSHRM – Links – Strategic or operational) Very far (CLSHRM – Links – Strategic or operational – Extent of application) I don't think I know the answer to that question (CLSHRM – Interpretation of CBN framework in SHRM) By focusing on internal asset (CLSHRM – Interpretation of CBN framework in SHRM – Links) Yes I believe it is (CLSHRM – Interpretation of CBN framework in SHRM – Links – Integration) Yes (CLSHRM – Performance flow from strategic business objectives) Yes, we are rated during appraisals and it impacts our bonuses and promotion (CLSHRM – Performance flow from strategic business objectives – Inform decision-making) Somewhat agreed I would say (CLSHRM – Performance flow from strategic business objectives – Inform decision-making – Extent to agreement) I don't think so because I don't see any major change (CLSHRM – Significant change by CBN) Pretty much advance (CLSHRM – Significant change by CBN – Prior level of development) Somewhat agreed It's positive (CLSHRM – Significant change by CBN – Prior level of development – Reaction to HR systems and policies)
Bank Leadership (BL)	I somewhat agree with the CBN because there are some managers who have no clue what there are doing and it makes one wonder how they got here in the first place (BL – CBN justification) I think so, yes (BL – Leadership awareness and favourability) I don't know, being able to handle the affairs of the bank effectively I think (CBL – Competencies bank leader's need) Somewhat agreed (BL – Competencies bank leader's need – Extent to agreement) Strongly agreed (BL – Banks leaders understand importance) I don't think so (BL – Banks leaders understand importance – Issues faced) We get tested every now and again to asses our knowledge of the banks process and procedures to develop our skills (BL – Competencies and leadership evaluation) By preparing us for the next level through training (BL – Competencies and leadership evaluation – Development) Strongly agreed (BL – Leadership actions impact performance) By staff engagement (BL – Motivating staff – Leadership style is effective) Somewhat agreed (BL – Motivating staff – Leadership style is effective) Somewhat agreed (BL – Management practices of bank fits leadership style of CEO) Somewhat agreed (BL – Management practices of bank fits leadership style of CEO – Ready and equipped to promote on-going leadership development) Somewhat agreed (BL – Management practices of bank fits leadership style of CEO – Ready and equipped to promote on-going leadership development – Good way of communicating)
Performance and Management (PTM)	It has a positive relationship (PTM – Competency / Performance relationship) Very far (PTM – Competency / Performance relationship – Embedded in individual and team performance) Both performance and training (PTM – Competency / Performance relationship – Embedded in individual and team performance – About performance or training) Yes (PTM – Evaluation activities) Not very frequent but yes it's done (PTM – Evaluation activities – Frequency) Yes (PTM – Driving performance)

	The use of performance appraisals (PTM – Driving performance – Performance measures)
	Yes (PTM – Driving performance – Performance measures – Non–financials)
	I don’t think so (PTM – Continuing Problem with use)
	We are scored during appraisals and feedback is given by our managers (PTM – Analysed and feedback)
	Yes it has (PTM – Analysed and feedback – Stimulating change and improvement)
	Both (PTM – Minimum or superior performance)
	Yes but not always (PTM – Minimum or superior performance – Continuous training)
	Neither Agree nor Disagree (PTM – Minimum or superior performance – Continuous training – Existence of career plan)
	Somewhat agreed (PTM – Appraisals are important)
	No (PTM – Appraisals are important – Changes in relevance)
	Somewhat Agree (PTM – Appraisals are important – Changes in relevance – Achieve business goals)
	Yes
	It is consistent (PTM – Application and management consistency)
	Obligatory (PTM – Application and management consistency – General reaction to appraisals)
	Little or no impact (PTM – Impact of CBN framework)
	Somewhat (PTM – Impact of CBN framework – Leading to meaningful outcomes)
	Not very effective (PTM – Effectiveness of appraisal in measuring performance)
	Not always, no (PTM – Effectiveness of appraisal in measuring performance – Informs development needs)
	Yes but the system has it flaws (PTM – Link between development and career progression)
	I don’t think so (PTM – Link between development and career progression – providing result)
	By training and appraisals (PTM – Talent and resource management)
	I would say it does, yes (PTM – Talent and resource management – Includes leadership skills)
	I don’t know if it is (PTM – Talent and resource management – Includes leadership skills – Embedded in SHRM)
	Through appraisals (PTM – Assessing impact of learning and development)
	Somewhat Agree (PTM – Assessing impact of learning and development – Important to performance system)
	No I don’t think so (PTM – CBN framework restriction)
Competency Implementation and Communication (CIC)	Very sustainable (CIC – Sustainability)
	Through staff performance (CIC – Application and implementation)
	Yes (CIC – Application and implementation – Clear understanding of job role)
	Yes (CIC – Application and implementation – Clear understanding of job role)
	Somewhat, yes (CIC – Appraisals stimulates change and improvement)
	Somewhat Agree (CIC – Appraisals stimulates change and improvement – Extent to agreement)
	I don’t think there was any (CIC – Level of acceptance to CBN framework)
	6 out of 7 (CIC – Level of acceptance to CBN framework – Extent to agreement)
	Somewhat Agree (CIC – Level of acceptance to CBN framework – Extent to agreement)
	Okay I guess (CIC – Framework outcome)
	Somewhat Agree (CIC – Framework outcome – Extent to agreement)

Competency Engagement (SE)	Very well (SE – Response to changes) Yes, somewhat (SE – Change progressing) Yes it is (SE – Constantly acted upon) Frequently (SE – Constantly acted upon – Frequency) 5 (SE – Constantly acted upon – Frequency – Scale of frequency) The bank isn't just doing it but we are yet to see the promised change (CSE – Reasons for having framework) Yes (SE – Reasons for having framework – Agreed by others) Somewhat Agree (SE – Reasons for having framework – Agreed by others – Extent to opinion) Yes, very well (SE – Inspired by manager) Yes (SE – Recommend bank to others) Yes (SE – Tools to work effectively) No (SE – Contribute to decisions) Yes (SE – Trust information received) Yes (SE – Trust information received) Somewhat, yes (SE – Trust information received – Feel valued) Somewhat Agree (SE – Competent employees impact performance) It is well focused (SE – Focus of appraisal on competencies) Yes (SE – Willing to devote time) No (SE – Willing to devote time – Give feedback on value) Yes (SE – Willing to devote time – Give feedback on value – Involved in redesign of process)
Competency Evaluation (CE)	Positive impact and managed by the HR (CE – Impact of framework) Very relevant (CE – Impact of framework – Extent of relevance) Appraisal system (CE – Impact of framework – Extent of relevance – Mechanisms for checking impact) I don't have that answer, sorry (CE – Method of evaluation) The banks management will better answer that question (CE – Method of evaluation – Time for evaluation) Am not sure (CE – Method of evaluation – Time for evaluation – Who's responsible) I believe it would be annually (CE – Frequency of Evaluation) Positive (CE – Preliminary progress reports) I don't think so (CE – Preliminary progress reports – progress result far from expected outcome) I would say 3 (CE – Preliminary progress reports – progress result far from expected outcome – Scale of difference) 5 (CE – Scale of positively change) 5 (CE – Scale of implementation successes)

APPENDIX FIVE: Exact Search for Word Similarity

Analysis By Bnak

Bank A


customers
internal
better
improve
frequently
extent
level
skills
important
continue
part
right
align
constantly
house
actions
expect
business
effective
competency
directive
human
moving
done
management
confident
support
answer
systems
processes
think
needs
knowledge
strongly
ability
tell
going
give
relationship
objective
performance
measure
organisation
making
activities
yes
somewhat
positive
consistent
evaluation
everyone
work
standards
established
integrated
know
aware
limitations
lead
forms
pay
see
fit
framework
acted
used
time
feel
bank
person
achieve
results
advance
place
get
agree
based
really
asset
arrangements
change
related
benefits
focused
links
strategic
communication
covers
developing
implementation
appraisals
plan
carry
present
training
large
responsible
things
showing

Bank B


understanding
implementation
sustainable
category
performance
assessing
dependent
effective
aligning
identifying
training
supported
provide
policies
achieve
communicated
right
goals
measure
lead
agree
skills
accordance
sure
necessary
somewhat
used
going
directive
objectives
business
helps
fairly
done
positive
time
strongly
looking
informed
extent
ability
development
improved
knowledge
operational
appraisals
activities
needed
yes
organizations
competency
change
consistent
important
answer
neither
promising
benefit
job
see
covers
accept
attributes
make
well
reacted
everyone
work
linking
case
acted
also
think
evaluation
standards
proficiency
advance
bank
form
adhered
frequently
together
meeting
structural
disagree
management
point
number
really
systems
processes
products
always
individual
cin
however
requirements
behaviours
application
established

Bank C

Bank D

Bank E

Bank F


completed engagement
connected immediately
communication statement
enable
competency strategic large
view also handle
working positive linked areas
standards
performance
feedback skills
financial responding
training think achieve idea agree
measures
part
provide
biannual move used bank
focused
need going processes
somewhat
yes
strongly
management
development
things
responsibility
expects
policies
possible
appraisal
fit
line
abilities attribute
360
systems objectives integrated
effectively
goals change groups sources
lead
others
consistent give important
frequently
evident
improve
evaluation knowledge
planning way
support
employees
time
personal operational
department implementation networking
sustainable

Bank G


others communicated focus qualified
align required individual financial internal
linking results show
recruiting positive development
human system
measure organisational information
important support always
policies bank attributes used improve
covers
strongly actions
framework groups part
think
possibly yes
processes
changes
integrated idea activities going
consistent
evaluation
effective plan
signs skills
benefits event make
cbn stated
authorities give expected
move agree done one
achieve management appraisals
areas continues
performance somewhat objectives
responsibility leading employees
sort right competency application
however points knowledge better

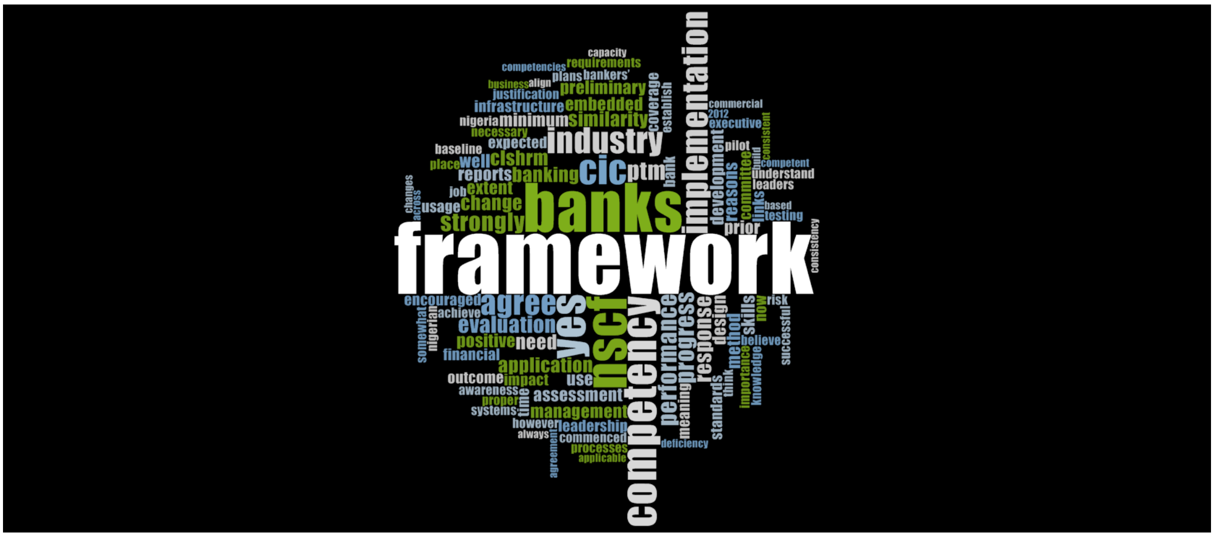
Bank H


serve expect business
fine implementation inform
financial performance
based improve competency required
traits case appraisal annual according
applied directive evaluation
consistent going responded
attributes bank possibly
used others
somewhat
yes
processes
positive
change
organisation
groups
give
communication
provided
employees
surprising
idea
activities
fit
knowledge
monthly
framework
interpreted
operational
sustainable
work management demonstrating
cbn
links
think
human
support agree system skills
really
covers strongly abilities objectives
measures important individual
integrating development embedded acquire
frequently advance training
compliance completed
monitoring

Bank I

Bank J

CBN



Analysis By Respondence

All Interview 1 (All banking Officers Interviewed)

All Interview 2 (All HR Mangers Interviewed)

All Interview 3 (All bank managers interviewed)

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