



Accommodation Strategy and Employee Resilience of Oil and Gas Servicing Companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between accommodation strategy and employee resilience of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of the study was 250 employees of seven (7) selected oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt. The sample size of 154 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Crombach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between accommodation strategy and employee resilience of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt. The study recommends that management and employees of oil and gas servicing companies should try as much as possible to exhibit accommodation in conflict situations in order to achieve harmony at work place, since it has been revealed that accommodation have a positive influence on employee adaptability and proactiveness.

Keywords: Accommodation, Employee Resilience, Proactiveness, Adaptability

INTRODUCTION

Employee resilience is one major ingredient in any sector of the economy, particularly in the oil and gas industry and this basic ingredient of employee resilience is an employee committed to work and is free to give his/her maximum effort (Deevy, 1995). This commitment may however be demonstrated via employees' behaviours that go far and above their call of duties. Resilience is characterized as the ability to bounce back from negative emotional experiences and by flexible adaptation to the changing demands of stressful experiences (Brooks & Goldstein,

2003). The demand for resilient from employees is high especially for key decision making workforce; therefore oil and gas servicing companies are exposed to a continuous competitive fight for the best method of exploration due to the even complaint of ozone depletion. Indeed, there is a paradigm shift from human resource to human capital which consists of knowledge, skills and capabilities of the people employed in an organization which is indicative of their value (Armstrong, 2011).

Due to the myriad of conflicts that has bedeviled the oil and gas industry and the fear of sabotage, between December 2005 and April 2007, an estimated 587,000bpd of crude production was shut-in by companies operating in the Niger Delta region. Most of the shut-in production is located offshore. It has been estimated that Nigeria has lost around \$16 billion in revenues due to shut-in oil production during this period. Shell has the biggest losses – they have lost approximately 477,000 bpd. Other companies such as Chevron have lost approximately 70,000bpd and AGIP approximately 40,000bpd (EIA, 2006). In February 2006, attacks in the Delta region forced the Warri refinery (125,000bpd) and Kaduna refinery (110,000bpd) to close because of a shortage of feedstock. Niger Delta community-based organizations seeking monetary compensation and/or political leverage claim they are responsible for the attacks. The conflicts have affected how the oil companies have structured their workforce (Business in Africa Online, 2007).

With the constant decline in oil revenue accruing to the multinational companies and increasing hostilities, the MNCs have undertaken several adjustments, including downsizing, outsourcing etc in a bid to reduce its overhead costs. At the same time trade unions in the sector are clamouring for improved remuneration due to decreased purchasing power occasioned by high exchange rates against the US dollar and other foreign currencies, which changed from about 149 naira/dollar in 2009 to 360 naira/US dollar in 2019 (www.cbn.gov.ng). This has set the stage for management -labour conflict in the MNCs oil and gas companies.

Over the years, industrial harmony has been the concern of organizations, researchers, employees and other stakeholders because of its importance on productivity (Fajana, 2012). Industrial harmony is important in the oil and gas industry like other industries because it promotes employees' commitment which enables the achievement of organizational goals. The

oil and gas industry's upstream sector is portrayed by controversies, for execution of collective agreement, superseding bargaining force over unjustifiable work practices, for example, casualisation, outsourcing, and contract staffing and different types of work adaptability (Ogbeifun, 2008). These business issues are incompletely, the impact of globalization and have pulled in the consideration and judgment of trade unions in the sector. Expanding industrial activities have been ascribed incompletely as casualisation of specialists (Kalejaiye, 2014).

Conflicts between project participants has been identified in various oil and gas servicing companies as being the principal causes of poor performance in the job. These conflicts occur at the organizational interface level where project participants with different organizational cultures which define their approach to work and relationships come into contact with other participants (Ankrah & Langford, 2005). The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between accommodation strategy and employee resilience of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt. Furthermore, this study was also guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between accommodation and adaptability of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt?
- ii. What is the relationship between accommodation and proactiveness of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt?

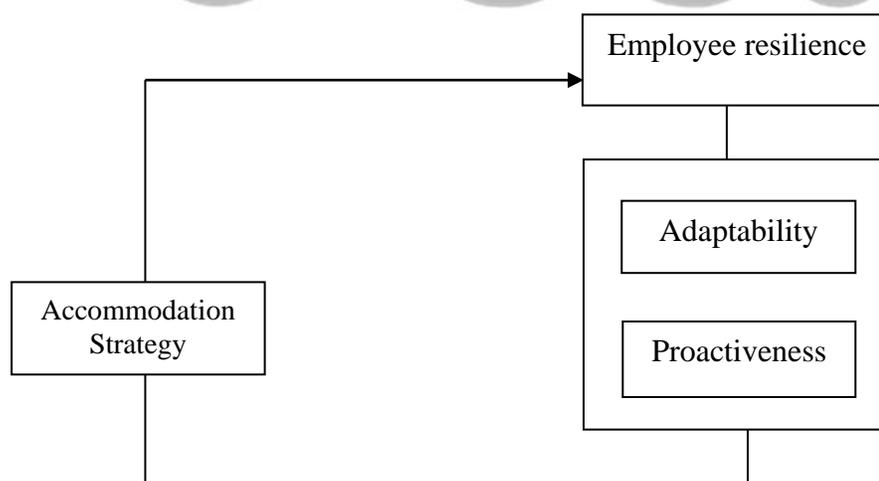


Fig.1 Conceptual Framework for the relationship accommodation and employee resilience

Source: Author's Desk Research, 2019

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

The social cognitive career theory was conceptualized as a derivative of Bandura's general social cognitive theory in which the intersection of intrinsic and extrinsic factors influences psychosocial learning. This theory has been termed as the most promising career theory that may prove satisfactory in retention and career development. Lent and Brown (2006) expanded the scope of social cognitive career theory, offering a new and related social – cognitive model designed to explain the ways in which previously identified inputs such as self-efficacy and outcome expectations, along with person and contextual variables are related to job satisfaction. The authors cited recent research (Heller, Watson & Iles, 2004) that linked job satisfaction to overall subjective well-being, thus providing a rationale for the use of the theory in the current research. The primary focus is on the central elements of social cognitive namely: self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Self-efficacy can be defined as an individual's sense of control and responsibility for his/her personal environment. It is also defined as the beliefs in ones capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments. Self-efficacy is concerned with the belief in the ability to exercise control over ones actions and events that affect their lives.

Beliefs impact life choices, motivation, quality of actions and the ability to overcome adversity. The sources of self-efficacy are derived from three sources: mastery experience, vicarious experience and social persuasion. Vicarious experience is observing the model of someone similar managing a task successfully and drawing experience. Outcome expectations refer to the personal belief that successfully performing certain tasks may result in probable response outcomes.

Lent and Brown (2006) expanded upon Bandura's work to focus exclusively on the development of the individual within the context of career. Managers who wish to retain talent can borrow heavily from this theory. Career behavior is driven by self-efficacy or the belief in the ability to accomplish something worthwhile. The degree of achievement depends on two factors: outcome expectations or the idea that initiating a particular behavior will yield the desired results and goals. If a person feels confident of his/her abilities, he/she is more likely to take specific actions to reach them. This is especially so for the young generation of employees popularly known as

the millennials. They have grown up with an abundance of role models from parents and other mentors and still expect the same at work.

Accommodation Strategy

An accommodating style of conflict management involves neglecting one's own concerns in order to satisfy the concerns of others (Brown, 1967). Cavanagh (1991) made it clear that this strategy is regarded as the acceptance that the preservation of pleasant interpersonal affairs is more significant than forming disagreements among colleagues. Individuals adopting an accommodating style of conflict management have a high want for recognition and support from others. The accommodating individual is more apt to take a "middle of the road" attitude when an inescapable conflict emerges. These individuals tend to use apology or humor, or express their desires in an indirect way rather than coming straight to the problem (Stanford, 1997). Kraybill (2005) refers to accommodating as a harmonizing conflict response. He stated that the harmonizing style has a low focus on the agenda and a high focus on the relationship. Individuals will often use this style when they want to fit in with the other party. When this style is over-used the individual will eventually become depressed due to the fact of always giving the other party what they want and always losing what is important to the individual.

Accommodation is a means of carrying everybody along in the activities of the organization. People seem to have that natural joy working for their organizations when they are told to make their own contributions, they feel valued and they feel decisions are not just imposed on them by their superiors. While this may be seen as a weak or productive position there are situations when this approach is preferable and will gain more for a person than by taking a strong position, especially during a management of change process. It can be both a productive and unproductive strategy in the "give and take" process. Individuals who have a tendency to be accommodating prefer the harmony, good will and reciprocity that is often associated with this behaviour trait and feel that it serves them well most of the time. People who are normally accommodating must develop the wisdom to know what choices to make in a given situation and learn to deal with stress and conflict in productive ways.

Accommodation is unassertive and cooperative — the opposite of competing. It's sacrificing one's own concerns to satisfy the other person's. The accommodating strategy essentially entails

giving the opposing side what it wants. The use of accommodation often occurs when one of the parties wishes to keep the peace or perceives the issue as minor. Employees who use accommodation as a primary conflict management strategy, however, may keep track and develop resentment.

Accommodators are people who give in to maintain the illusion of harmony (Cahn & Abigail, 2007). Thomas & Kilmann, (1974) say accommodation scores high on cooperativeness. Wertheim (2002) views accommodation as a destructive strategy because it often leads to a build up of negative emotions. An accommodating board is one that cooperates to a high degree. This may be at the boards' expense and actually works against its goals, objectives and desired outcomes. This approach is effective when the other board members are the expert or has better solutions. It is a loose - win approach. There are situations in which accommodation may be appropriate. For example when it is important to provide a temporary relief from a conflict or buy time until one is in a better position to respond or push back. Avoidance may also be necessary when the issue is not as important to you as it is to the other person or when you accept that you are wrong or when you have no choice or when continued competition would be detrimental. In some cases accommodation will help to protect more important interests while giving up on some less important ones and also afford an opportunity to reassess the situation from a different perspective.

Employees Resilience

A number of publications have been made on the concept of resilience in management literature. It gained prominence in the field of organizational behaviour in the early 1980s, where it was referred to an individual ability to withstand and rebound from crisis (Watsh, 1996). It was first subjected to organizational context by Wildavsky in 1988. Since then, the concept has been a subject of progressive attention due to its implications on organizational and employees' effectiveness. For example, Petak (2002) conducted a research on resilience in the face of disasters like earthquake, Mallak, (1998) also discussed resilience in relation to healthcare system. While Comfort et al, (2001) examined it using information systems. Jeffery and Linda Russell,(2006) defined resilience as the ability of a body to recover from or adjust to misfortune or change. Luthans, (2002) defines resilience as a developable capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, failure and increased responsibility. It is also the ability of strained

body to recover its size and shape after being subjected to adversity or stress. But to us, it is the ability and tenacity of a body to persevere in the face of adversity.

Reivich & Shatte (2002) and Brooks & Goldstein, (2004) investigation on resilience in adults dealing with stressful situations shows that resilience behaviour enables someone to bounce back in the face of adversity and stress. The implication of the existence of this type of rare behavioural tendency in the foundation of individual behaviour is strategic in nature. Thus, it provides the organization with competitive advantage since they have a remarkable tenacity to persevere in the face of adversity or stress. It therefore, behoves on the Human Resource Development professionals to develop and sustain this type of behavior amongst its workforce. Hence, employees play important role in addressing change (Shin, Taylor & Seo, 2012).

Adaptability

Adaptability - Practically, resilient people are those who are usually aware of and sensitive to the changes and happenings in their environment. In Koontz and Wehrich, (1999) they succinctly put that organization does not completely isolate itself from its operating environment, thus, there is a mutual reliance. However, this mutual reliance presents the organization with opportunities and adversity of variable degrees. Hence, adversity is associated with strains and pressures; it requires a progressive adaptive capacity from the organization and its employees to synchronize such changes. This is because; adaptation is a major driver of a sustained resilient behaviour. Specifically, studies indicate that resilient individuals are better equipped to cope with constantly changing workplace (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004) therefore the employees must be influenced to act in the favour of the organization's objectives. Denison, (2007) define adaptability as translating the demand of business environment into action. To survive and make profit, organizations and their employees need to continuously adapt to the different levels of environment uncertainty (Amah & Baridam, 2012) and Daft, (1998) puts it that environmental complexity is a vital contingency for organizational structure and internal policies. Leaning on these postulates, it therefore, means that organization must have internal behaviours or policies imbedded in its core culture that encourages adaptive behaviour in the event of any adversity emanating from the environment.

Proactiveness

Proactiveness means acting in advance to deal with things that might cause problems in the future, but also to identify future opportunities and to act upon this. To be one step ahead. For the entrepreneurial dimension it means that one is active in creating new opportunities and anticipating possible threats. Many scholars since Schumpeter have pointed out the importance of initiative in the entrepreneurial process. In some literature, proactiveness and competitive aggressiveness are used interchangeably. This can be explained by the pervasiveness of Covin and Slevin's theory (1991); competitive aggressiveness was later introduced to the orientation dimensions by Lumpkin and Dess in 1996. It is indeed closely related to competitive aggressiveness; the distinction is that proactiveness pertains to how an organization relates to new market opportunities. By showing initiative and acting with opportune influence on trends, demand can be created. Competitive aggressiveness pertains to how organizations relate to competitors and how they respond to trends and demand that are already on the market.

Proactiveness is related to initiative and first-mover advantages and to taking initiative by anticipating and pursuing new opportunities" (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Akin to a dictionary definition of acting in anticipation of future problems, needs, or changes. Lumpkin and Dess argue that proactiveness may be "crucial to an entrepreneurial orientation because it suggests a forward-looking perspective that is accompanied by innovative" and entrepreneurial activity. In terms of this, proactiveness is considered according to range of conceptions, and the implications of these according to predicted associations are outlined.

Proactiveness is associated with leadership, and not following, as a proactive enterprise "has the will and foresight to seize new opportunities, even if it is not always the first to do so", according to Lumpkin and Dess (1996). In terms of a specific conception of proactiveness, Lumpkin and Dess (1996) suggest a conceptualization of proactiveness as a continuum, whereby the opposite extreme of proactiveness is regarded as passiveness rather than reactivity. According to this, passiveness is the "indifference or an inability to seize opportunities or lead in the marketplace" (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Proactiveness, however, is associated with a response to competitors, and is therefore different from passiveness (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996.). Passiveness is therefore expected to be associated with lower gross earnings due to there being less commitment on the part of a less entrepreneurial, less proactive individual to the development of market share. The

development of market share is therefore considered to represent proactiveness in this work. Following this line of reasoning, it is predicted that proactiveness will to some degree be positively and significantly associated with increased earnings. High levels of entrepreneurial orientation support opportunity recognition and opportunity creation according to Jantunen, Puumalainen, Saarenketo & Kylaheiko (2005). Therefore, the reconfiguration of an asset base to match the requirements of changing environments should enhance performance; yet being active may not necessarily imply efficiency (Jantunen *et al.*, 2005).

Relationship between Accommodation Strategy and Employee Resilience

Accommodating is unassertive and cooperative—the opposite of competing. It's sacrificing one's own concerns to satisfy the other person's. The accommodating strategy essentially entails giving the opposing side what it wants. The use of accommodation often occurs when one of the parties wishes to keep the peace or perceives the issue as minor. Employees who use accommodation as a primary conflict management strategy, however, may keep track and develop resentment. Empirical evidence from Comboh, (2014), on conflict management and organizational performance has suggested a positive link between conflict management strategies of accommodation and organizational performance. This position was further reinforced by the previous findings of Mugal & Khan (2013) as re-affirmed by the study hypotheses

Cahn & Abigail, (2007) suggested that accommodators are people who give in to maintain the illusion of harmony. Thomas & Kilmann, (1974) say accommodation scores high on cooperativeness. Wertheim (2002) views accommodation as a destructive strategy because it often leads to a build up of negative emotions. An accommodating board is one that cooperates to a high degree. This may be at the boards' expense and actually works against its goals, objectives and desired outcomes. This approach is effective when the other board members are the expert or has better solutions. It is a loose - win approach. There are situations in which accommodation may be appropriate. For example when it is important to provide a temporary relief from a conflict or buy time until one is in a better position to respond or push back. Avoidance may also be necessary when the issue is not as important to you as it is to the other person or when you accept that you are wrong or when you have no choice or when continued competition would be detrimental. In some cases accommodation will help to protect more

important interests while giving up on some less important ones and also afford an opportunity to reassess the situation from a different perspective.

From the foregoing point of view, we hereby hypothesized thus:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between accommodation and interpersonal competence of oil and gas servicing companies in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between accommodation and adaptability of oil and gas servicing companies in Rivers State.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between accommodation and proactiveness of oil and gas servicing companies in Rivers State.

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population for the study was 21 oil and gas servicing companies. A total of 250 employees were obtained from the staff enrolment list of the respective Human Resources/administrative departments of the selected oil and gas servicing companies in Rivers. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 23.0.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Hypotheses tests were carried out using the Spearman's Rank Correlation at a 95% confidence interval. The level of significance 0.05 was adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ($p < 0.05$).

Table 1: Correlation for accommodation and employee resilience

			Accommodation	Adaptability	Proactiveness
Spearman 's rho	Accommodation	Correlation	1.000	.849**	.828**
		Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	154	154	154
	Adaptability	Correlation	.849**	1.000	.842**
		Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	154	154	154
	Proactiveness	Correlation	.828**	.842**	1.000
Coefficient					
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.	
	N	154	154	154	

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

Source: Research Data 2019, (SPSS output version 23.0)

Table 1 illustrates the test for the three set of previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements. The results show that for

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between accommodation and adaptability of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between accommodation and adaptability. The rho value 0.849 indicates this relationship and it is significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represents a very high correlation indicating a very strong relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis

earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between accommodation and adaptability of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between accommodation and proactiveness of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt..

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between accommodation and proactiveness. The *rho* value 0.828 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a very strong relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between accommodation and proactiveness of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study examined the relationship between accommodation strategy and employee resilience of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between accommodation strategy and employee resilience of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt. This finding confirms previous findings of Brown (2007) who argued that accommodating style of conflict management involves neglecting one's own concerns in order to satisfy the concerns of others. Cavanagh (1991) made it clear that this strategy is regarded as the acceptance that the preservation of pleasant interpersonal affairs is more significant than forming disagreements among colleagues. Individuals adopting an accommodating style of conflict management have a high want for recognition and support from others. The accommodating individual is more apt to take a "middle of the road" attitude when an inescapable conflict emerges. These individuals tend to use apology or humor, or express their desires in an indirect way rather than coming straight to the problem (Stanford, 1997).

Cahn & Abigail, (2007) suggested that accommodators are people who give in to maintain the illusion of harmony. Thomas & Kilmann, (1974) say accommodation scores high on cooperativeness. Wertheim (2002) views accommodation as a destructive strategy because it often leads to a build up of negative emotions. An accommodating board is one that cooperates to a high degree. This may be at the boards' expense and actually works against its goals,

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

If conflicts are managed properly by applying the best course of action such as the accommodation strategy, organizations can increase their performance in terms of utilizing the scarce resources and achieving the organizational objectives (Awan & Anjum, 2015). Conversely, unmanaged conflict negatively impacts both employee satisfaction and performance. Timely management of conflict has the potential of improving employee satisfaction and job performance (Awan & Anjum, 2015). This study therefore concludes that accommodation strategy significantly influences employee resilience of oil and gas servicing companies in Port Harcourt.

The study thus recommends that management and employees of oil and gas servicing companies should try as much as possible to exhibit accommodation in conflict situations in order to achieve harmony at work place, since it has been revealed that accommodation have a positive influence on employee adaptability and proactiveness.

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