

**COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE IN RETAIL OIL AND GAS FIRMS IN BAYELSA STATE****<sup>1</sup>Dr. Timitimi Ebisinkemefa and <sup>2</sup>Adias Lolo Teddy****<sup>1</sup>Department of Management, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria****<sup>2</sup>Department of Business Administration & Management, Bayelsa State Polytechnic Aleibiri, Nigeria***Email: [timi2ebis@ndu.edu.ng](mailto:timi2ebis@ndu.edu.ng), [loloadias@yahoo.com](mailto:loloadias@yahoo.com)***ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the relationship between worker competency management and organizational resilience of oil and gas servicing companies in Bayelsa state. The study adopts competence planning as a key dimension to competency management, and situation awareness, vulnerability management and adaptive capacity used as the measures for resilience in the organization. The study is cross-sectional in design based on the inclusion of multiple oil and gas servicing firms as the macro unit of analysis. One hundred and twenty-four employees were considered as the total population which is duly made up of managers and supervisors from different studied firm's and Taro Yamane sampling approach, produces a sample size of ninety-five participants. Questionnaire validated by previous researcher was modified and used the primary instrument for data collection. The data was comprehensively analysed using Pearson Moment Correlational Coefficient as the inferential statistics. The result shows that competence planning has a significant correlation with situation awareness, vulnerability management and adaptive capacity. This form the basis for concluding that there is a significant relationship between worker competency management and organizational resilience of oil and gas servicing companies in Bayelsa state. It was relative recommended that management should place employee skill and competence acquisition as the core human resources function to promote resilience in this turbulent business environment.*

**Keywords: Worker Competency Management, Organizational Resilience, Competence Planning**

**INTRODUCTION**

Significant volatility is present in the business landscape across a number of sectors, including the US-China conflict and Brexit uncertainty, fluctuating exchange rates that affect local economies and currencies, unstable oil prices, frequent terrorist attacks, fierce international competition for market dominance, and geopolitical tensions. The activities of oil and gas maintenance firms in Nigeria have been significantly hampered by the current worldwide pandemic as well as issues like oil theft. As a result, reaching goals and objectives has grown more difficult, particularly in light of Nigeria's distinct set of difficulties. Organizations are advised to take a more creative and proactive stance in order to strengthen their resilience and guarantee business continuity in light of these challenges. Umoh and Amah (2013) contend that regardless of outside events, firms need to be focused on longevity and profitability despite the disturbances. Resilience is essential to surviving and growing in such an unpredictable environment. Companies need to be ready to deal with unforeseen circumstances, anticipating difficulties, obstacles, and possible interruptions (Kim, 2020).

The ability of an organization to adapt successfully to disruptive changes, whether they come from the inside or the outside, is known as organizational resilience (OR) (Kantur & Say, 2015). In the fast-paced, globally linked world of today, OR is an essential strategic tool for companies looking to grow. Businesses need to build resilience so they can take advantage of any risks to their continuity and respond to unanticipated occurrences with skill (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). This resilience is the result of long-term, consistent work rather than a single effort. Kim (2021) pointed out that an organization that is resilient not only survives but also grows and demonstrates its resilience

throughout time. Organizational resilience, according to Sachenko (2020), is the capacity to preserve or reestablish functional performance in the face of adversity or upheaval.

Owing to the swift changes prompted by globalization, oil and gas firms need to consistently come up with tactics to stay competitive in both local and worldwide markets. As a result, in order to predict environmental changes and react proactively with significant improvements, these businesses are relying on Human Resource (HR) practices (Albini et al., 2021; Okeke et al., 2021). One notable HR strategy that has attracted a lot of attention from academics is competency management. Sesugh (2022) asserts that because the corporate environment is always changing, individuals need to pick up new skills in order to handle developing social and organizational difficulties and navigate new domains. Furthermore, new knowledge capabilities and competences derived from interrelated social norms, cultures, and values that now influence most contexts and economies have supplanted many outmoded skills with the onset of globalization and the blurring of boundaries and markets.

### **Problem statement**

With the oil and gas sector providing over 95% of export revenue and contributing between 5.9% and 9% of the GDP, Nigeria's oil and gas sector is a major business in the nation. The majority of infrastructure projects and diverse industries are funded by oil production revenue, which benefits millions of people by raising living standards and creating job possibilities. In addition, the sector supports infrastructure development, draws foreign investment, boosts national security, decreases energy prices, increases energy security, and provides a vital source of energy for families. Notwithstanding these benefits, research constantly points out the many difficulties that Nigerian oil and gas servicing firms face. These difficulties, according to McManus et al. (2008), point to a deficiency in situation awareness and adaptability inside the organizations.

Elenwo and Akankali (2014) blame stakeholders' lack of focus on environmental strategies and policies for these enterprises' failure. Similarly, Okafor et al. (2022) identify policy neglect by the government as a major element in pollution. According to Oyakhire and Akpan (2021), the enterprises' decreased profitability and turnover can be attributed to their inability to leverage market diversity and strategic competitiveness. According to some studies, the problems facing the oil and gas industry are made worse by the lack of laws requiring the industry's participants to disclose their CSR (Owolabi et al., 2022).

All of these research point to a deficiency in organizational resilience in Nigerian oil and gas servicing firms. The capacity of an organization to respond to short-term disturbances, adapt to changing global market conditions, and overcome long-term problems is known as organizational resilience. These businesses seem to have difficulty keeping up with the changing needs of the business world (Akpan et al., 2021). In light of this, the purpose of this study is to ascertain how organizational resilience and worker competency management relate to oil and gas servicing enterprises in the state of Bayelsa.

### **Objectives**

This paper carried out to examine the relationship between worker competency management and organizational resilience of oil and gas servicing companies in Bayelsa state. The specific objectives are:

- i. To ascertain the relationship between competence planning and situation awareness of oil and gas servicing companies in Bayelsa state.
- ii. To examine the relationship between competence planning and vulnerability management of oil and gas servicing companies in Bayelsa state.
- iii. To investigate the relationship between competence planning and adaptive capacity of oil and gas servicing companies in Bayelsa state.

**Hypotheses**

The following null research hypotheses are formulated and will be tested:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between competence planning and situation awareness of oil and gas servicing companies in Bayelsa state.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between competence planning and vulnerability management of oil and gas servicing companies in Bayelsa state.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between competence planning and adaptive capacity of oil and gas servicing companies in Bayelsa state.

**Employee Competence Management (ECM)**

Competence management has its origins in the ancient work "Arthashastra," written more than 3000 years ago by Chanakya, the prime minister of Chandragupta Maurya, and the Indian ruler. Considered as one of the greatest works of humankind, Arthashastra addresses many different fields, such as Management Sciences, Organizational Behavior, Chemistry, Physics, Military Strategies, Engineering, Ethics, Law, Psychology, and Anthropology (Akpan et al., 2021). But David McClelland's groundbreaking paper, "Testing for Competence Rather than Intelligence," helped popularize the idea. Lache (2011) defines competence as the sum of the knowledge, technical skills, and professional abilities that define a person, a group, or an organization.. He underlines that the development of competence results from the application of one's own resources, real-world experiences, social skills, and efficient use of resources that have been allotted to oneself, including networks, work equipment, and information.

In addition, Lache (2011) contends that workers should be able to investigate, choose, and apply the best methods possible to complete tasks that have been delegated to them. Therefore, competence is a reflection of an individual's or a group's ability to apply a variety of skills and knowledge to the performance of their duties. Similar to this, Sapta et al. (2022) characterize employee competence as the capacity to carry out given duties successfully in light of learned abilities and knowledge. It acts as a yardstick for evaluating a person's competence at work and as a forecasting tool for improving output.

According to Rotich (2020), competency is a key factor in assessing a person's capacity to do tasks as given and forecasts their potential for performance improvement.

According to Zupančič (2020), competency includes all information, skills, talents, and personal traits that have a direct bearing on how well a person does their work. It entails using the abilities and mindsets required to succeed in order to master tasks (Sesugh, 2022), which promotes professionalism and raises standards at work.

**Competence Planning (CP)**

A key component of workers' competence management is competence planning, which includes all HRM (human resource management) procedures used to guarantee that potential and existing employees have the skills required for their jobs in the company. This procedure guarantees that workers have the necessary abilities, know-how, attitudes, and behaviors from the hiring through the placement phases. When it comes to defining the minimal skills needed for each position at entrance and during a promotion, the HR division is a key player. Accordingly, opportunities within their respective functional areas or departments should only be extended to workers who fulfill these competency standards (John-Eke & Gabriel, 2021). No matter what their position or level, all departments and workers must be included in the competency planning process. Proper execution of duties and obligations is ensured by the efficient planning of staff skills (Stor & Haromszeki, 2022).

According to Ewrierhurhoma and Oga (2020), employee competence planning is the first step in any competency management process and has to be carefully overseen by organizational management and HR professionals. This step must be as successful as possible since any

inadequacies might jeopardize the competency management procedure as a whole (Zeb-Obipi, 2015). Determining the kinds and degrees of competence required for exceptional employee performance is the task of competency planning. It entails determining the assets and liabilities of staff members, creating growth paths to amplify strengths, and obtaining the necessary training to close competency gaps. Moreover, competency planning aids in identifying employees' behavioral abilities within the organization (Ogoun & Tamunosiki-Amadi, 2022).

### **Concept of Organizational Resilience**

The origins of the term "resilience" are disputed in a number of areas, including psychology, physics, and ecology (Manyena, 2006). The idea was originally presented by Hollings in his landmark 1973 work "Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems" in the subject of ecology. In 1973, Holling defined resilience as "...a measure of persistence of systems and their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables" (Holling, 1973). In their 2005 paper, Kasperson and Kasperson expand on the impact of random occurrences on natural systems and suggest that a more comprehensive comprehension of resilience may be attained by pivoting the emphasis from explaining stability to assuming change. Furthermore, Holling (1973) points out that advancements in physics have affected conventional ecological analysis.

### **Situation Awareness**

A company that is unaware of its operational environment runs the risk of making expensive errors. Situation awareness is the capacity to identify goods, procedures, and managerial skills as well as to keep a careful eye on important elements related to the organization's goals and objectives. Being well-aware of internal events is vital and is considered a fundamental leadership quality. Human mistake and accidents are more likely to occur in an organization when situational awareness is lacking (Ahmad et al., 2021b). Ahmad et al. (2021a, 2021b) state that with a common knowledge base, members of an organization may build realistic expectations for organizational performance, which is necessary for successful situational awareness. This process comprises forecasting and foreseeing the demands of members of the organization and effectively adjusting to duties inside the organization.

### **Vulnerability Management**

The standard definition of vulnerability is the outcome of exposure to a disaster that causes some degree of loss in humans together with the ability of humans to endure, plan for, and recover from the event. According to Kubacki et al. (2020), it includes the proportionate degree of risk, sensitivity, resistance, and resilience to a hazard occurrence or disaster. Definitions of vulnerability are often adopted by many study areas based on their own needs. Despite having its roots in the social sciences, vulnerability studies have found application in a variety of fields, including economics, information systems, politics, environmental science, geophysical sciences, organizational management, and policymaking. The idea of vulnerability is not static; rather, it is intrinsically complicated and dynamic. A spatial-temporal component is included in vulnerability research, where distinct characteristics of vulnerability emerge at different times and in different locations (Kurniawan et al., 2017).

### **Adaptive Capacity**

According to Meyer and Allen (1991), adaptive capacity is the term used to describe the special organizational capacities that are adapted to particular situations and allow for constant adaptation to meet the needs of the operational environment. Hamel (2008) defines adaptive capacity as an organization's potential to proactively meet or exceed the demands of its operational environment before those needs become urgent. This ability to adapt must be demonstrated consistently and

continually. It is highlighted that, as McManus et al. (2008) point out, adaptive capacity varies in terms of its relevance and features and is dependent upon the circumstances.

### **Human Capital Theory (HCT)**

Theodore W. Schultz first used the phrase "human capital" in a paper titled "Investment in Human Capital," which was published in the American Economic Review in 1961. Human capital became very popular when Nobel Prize winner Gary Becker developed the "human capital theory." According to this idea, different degrees of education and training influence pay and compensation levels, and greater employment possibilities are associated with higher levels of knowledge, skills, and talents (Blair, 2012). In 1964, Becker distinguished between human capital and physical production factors, highlighting the necessity for firms to invest in human capital through health, education, and training programs. Additionally, in 1973, Adam Smith advocated for the enhancement of human capabilities, recognizing that improvements in human skills and abilities lead to enhanced productivity.

### **Empirical Review**

An empirical research on organizational performance and core competency management at First Bank of Nigeria Plc was carried out by Oseremen and Olley in 2022. They employed tables, percentages, and regression analysis to evaluate their hypotheses after using a survey research approach to collect data from respondents. Their research revealed a strong correlation between First Bank of Nigeria PLC's organizational performance and competence management, which covered training quality, customer service quality, and competitive distinctiveness.

Umoh and Amah (2013) looked at the connection between organizational resilience and knowledge management in Nigeria's industrial industry. A strong and positive link between these dimensions was found in their study, indicating that efficient knowledge management improves organizational learning and adaptation.

In a similar vein, Ikirobo et al. (2017) investigated the connection between organizational resilience and performance management and discovered a favorable correlation between organizational resilience metrics and performance management aspects.

The moderating effect of the administrative environment on the link between corporate vitality and staff competence management in indigenous oil and gas businesses in South-South Nigeria was investigated by John-Eke and Gabriel (2021). The significance of successful competence management techniques was highlighted by their findings, which showed a substantial association between staff competence management and organizational vitality.

Hedhili (2020) looked on how human resource policies in Tunisian businesses were affected by competence management. The results of the study demonstrated the beneficial impact of competence management on HR policies, giving managers insightful information on how to raise staff skills and enhance HRM procedures.

Last but not least, at Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) in Rivers State, Nigeria, Ekweozor and Zeb-Obipi (2020) investigated the link between organizational flexibility and worker competence management (competence planning, development, and monitoring). Their results showed a strong and substantial correlation between organizational flexibility and competence planning, development, and monitoring, indicating that ongoing competence development initiatives might improve organizational flexibility in DMBs.

Overall, these studies underscore the importance of effective management practices, including competency management, knowledge management, and performance management, in enhancing organizational resilience, performance, and flexibility across various sectors and industries..

### **METHODOLOGY**

Using a cross-sectional methodology, this study will look at organizational resilience and staff competence management in a few chosen oil and gas servicing businesses in Nigeria's Bayelsa state.

The target group, which consists of 124 people, is managers and supervisors from seven oil and gas servicing businesses that have operations bases in Bayelsa State. Using the Taro Yamane sampling algorithm, a sample size of 95 individuals will be selected from this accessible population. Semi-structured questionnaires with an emphasis on the research variables of organizational resilience and staff competence management will be used to gather data. The Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient will be the inferential analytical method used. This statistical technique will be used to evaluate the connection between the different aspects of managing employee competency and the measures of organizational resilience.

## Results and Analysis

Relationship between competence planning and measures of organizational resilience

Correlations

			COM_PLAN	S_AWARE	V_MGT	ADAPT_CAP
Spearman's rho	COM_PLAN	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.063	-.090	-.151*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.349	.182	.025
		N	222	222	222	222
	S_AWARE	Correlation Coefficient	-.063	1.000	-.058	-.145*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.349	.	.388	.030
		N	222	222	222	222
	V_MGT	Correlation Coefficient	-.090	-.058	1.000	-.178**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.182	.388	.	.008
		N	222	222	222	222
	ADAPT_CAP	Correlation Coefficient	-.151*	-.145*	-.178**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.030	.008	.
		N	222	222	222	222

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

Source: Research Data (SPSS Output), 2024

The results show a strong correlation between competency planning and vulnerability management and situation awareness, two indicators of organizational resilience. These results are enhanced by competency planning, as demonstrated by its beneficial contributions. The study did not discover a meaningful connection between adaptive ability and competency planning, though. The process of arranging recognized competencies inside an organization into a framework that helps employees comprehend and use gained competencies in their responsibilities is known as competency planning (Marrelli, 1998). It establishes the kinds and degrees of abilities necessary for higher performance in businesses (Zeb-Obipi, 2015). Organizations may use competence planning to identify competency gaps and create Personal Development Plans (PDPs) to fill them. This way, workers can use training and skill development to close these gaps (Ekweozor & Zeb-Obipi, 2020). Effective competence planning is stressed as being crucial to guaranteeing that all employees—potential and current—have the skills required to carry out their jobs and responsibilities effectively (Stor & Haromszeki, 2022; Stor & Kupczyk, 2015). Additionally, Ewrierhurhoma and Oga (2020) emphasize that, in order to avoid any disruptions to the competency management process, human resource practitioners and organizational management should carefully manage competence planning, which forms the basis of all competence management activities (Zeb-Obipi, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

The study finds a strong and positive correlation between organizational resilience and worker competence management. It emphasizes how important worker competence management is in

determining how situational awareness, vulnerability management, and adaptive capacity are attained inside the company. The results highlight the significance of competency planning, which guarantees that current and potential personnel have the skills needed by the company.

Through the identification of employees' strengths and weaknesses and the creation of defined developmental pathways to strengthen strengths, competency planning plays a critical role in organizational resilience. Competency planning improves the organization's situation awareness, vulnerability management skills, and adaptability by emphasizing the development of staff capabilities.

In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of competence planning in fostering organizational resilience. It emphasizes the need for organizations to invest in worker competence management to strengthen their ability to respond effectively to challenges, adapt to changes, and maintain awareness of their operating environment.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Employers should place a high priority on making sure that current and potential workers have the necessary skills. Organizations can determine the optimal behaviors and individual skills required inside the organization by undertaking competency mapping. With this method, firms may successfully acquire and use information for their present and future well-being in addition to improving workers' understanding and perception of the complete working environment.
2. Employers should make a concerted effort to develop their staff members' theoretical, conceptual, ethical, and technical skills. Applying the information that workers have learned over time is crucial because it gives them the skills and understanding of organizational processes and their interdependencies that they need. Organizations are able to adapt steadily and either meet or exceed the changing demands of their operational environment before they reach a critical point thanks to this kind of ongoing learning and application.
3. It is important for firms to have a feedback process that furnishes employees with insights into the efficacy with which they have utilized their talents and abilities to accomplish designated tasks. Organizations may swiftly resolve identified gaps and inadequacies in staff development thanks to this feedback loop. Moreover, it facilitates the exploration of alternate strategies by companies, guaranteeing that obstacles or disturbances encountered along one path do not prevent the attainment of targeted results.

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