



**HUMAN RESOURCE SUPPLY AVAILABILITY AND CORPORATE SURVIVAL OF MULTINATIONAL OIL AND GAS PRODUCING COMPANIES IN NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study investigated the relationship between human resource supply availability and corporate survival of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria. The study adopted a cross sectional survey design. Using the census sampling technique, responses were solicited from 52 key managers of the five multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria selected for the study. As a quantitative study, the primary data collection instrument utilized was the structured questionnaire. The test for the reliability of the instrument was carried out using the Cronbach alpha reliability instrument with a reliability threshold of 0.70. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficients was utilized to test the hypothesized relationships with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Findings from the study revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between human resource supply availability and corporate survival of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended that human resource managers of multinational oil and gas producing companies should take steps to boost their external human resource supply, by initiating career development trainings for non-employees on skill-sets that are of specific interest to the organization, as this would serve as their future external human resource supply basket for those specific skill-sets in times of draught in those skill-sets.*

**Keywords:** Corporate Survival, Dynamic Capability, Human Resource Supply Availability, Resource Acquisition

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## INTRODUCTION

Organizations are confronted with political alterations, economic fluctuations, new legal amendments, technological advancement and so on, that affects their smooth operations and so will require a stable and conducive business environment to be successful. But, the present world is characterized by constant changes in the business environment, so survival in the midst of all these frequent and uncontrollable changes will require prompt actions to respond to the dynamics of the environment. Membere-Otaji (2018) averred that the ability of organizations to survive turbulence is not necessarily to create stability but to be proactive, swiftly learn, adapt and respond to changes and ambiguities which in most cases may not be favourable. Even though there are various objectives of business, survival is of paramount consideration, as it provides the organization the possibility to achieve all the other objectives so long as it is alive (Jaja, Gabriel & Wobodo, 2019).

Organizations do not operate in isolation; they are influenced by the actions or inactions of other players within their environment (Ahiauzu & Asawo, 2016), some who may be their competitors. Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) pointed out that organizations can obtain competitive advantages through several ways such as entering new markets, developing new business models or making strategic innovations. Furthermore, technological advances, high accessibility to product information, and availability of similar services or products in the market-places make strategic innovation issues very important for almost all industries. Others include having a highly dependable human resource that could give the organization competitive advantage; because it is the quality of managers in the organization that determines the quality of decisions concerning how the organization responds internally and externally to environmental pressures through the acquisition, development and utilization of resources. Hence the need to carefully identify, source for and develop the

required human resource of an organization through deliberate human resource planning (HRP).

Human resource professionals have to estimate the availability of and need for future employees when assessing the supply of employees both within and outside the organisation. In addition, assessing future demand for specific numbers and types of employees is another important task for Human resource professionals (Sutanto, 2004). A survey by Manpower Group (2016) reveal that over the past decade, forty percent of employers find difficulty in filling job openings globally. But this, predominantly will be for jobs requiring some specific skill sets and competences. Sometimes workers possess skill at higher level than those required. That is why, Gambin, Hogarth, Murphy, Spreadbury, Warhurst and Winterbotham (2016) averred that the major problem is with skill surpluses and their opportunity cost and not shortages. The number and characteristics; such as skills, abilities, pay levels, or experience of employees required for particular jobs at a given point in time and in a particular place is referred to as labour demand while the term labour supply refers to both the number and characteristics of people available for those particular jobs (Jackson & Schuler, 1990). Forecasting the right number of staff and the appropriate skills require reliable and valid information about the organisation's current and potential workforce (O'Brien, Birch, Baumann & Murphy, 2001). Tripathi (2010) noted in a study that it is necessary to collect comprehensive information and conduct extensive information analysis about a particular organisation to achieve workforce forecasting and planning that can create an intelligent decision-support system.

The starting point of forecasting demand and supply is job analysis, a process that entails HR professionals accessing each job within the organisation (Omoankhanlen, 2013). Job analysis is a systematic process of identifying information regarding the tasks, duties, and responsibilities of a job. Job analysis is an important means of providing services and valuable information toward forecasting future staffing needs and HRP activities (Lunenburg, 2012). For example, the

information obtained from job analysis can be utilised to determine the number of employees, to identify appropriate recruitment and selection methods, and to develop training programs for employees (Lunenburg, 2012). The importance of job analysis is not limited to providing information for human resource planning purposes; it also plays a significant role in organisation performance.

The purpose of forecasting supply is to ensure an adequate supply of human resources both in terms of the number and the characteristics of people available to fill the projected vacancies (Jackson & Schuler, 1990). Supply forecasts can be derived from either internal or external sources of information. The first step in human resource supply forecasting is usually generating an inventory of the current supply of employees in the organisation (the number of people and their skills and abilities). The second step involves analysing external sources of human resource

(Lunenburg, 2012). Both steps are dependent on an accurate assessment of the current workforce situation, but most organisations start with internal candidates. The main goal of this study therefore was to examine the relationship between human resource supply availability and corporate survival of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria.

This study was guided by the following research question:

- What is the relationship between human resource supply availability and dynamic capability of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between human resource supply availability and resource acquisition of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria?



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the relationship between human resource supply availability and corporate survival**

Source: Desk Research (2020)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

#### Population Ecology Theory

The basic premise of population ecology is that the environment (or marketplace) in which an organization exists affects that organization's operations and trajectory in predictable ways. Hannan and Freeman (1977) authored the first seminal piece on the subject, in which they challenged the dominant unit of analysis guiding

organizational theory, that is, the organization itself. Instead, they advocated a population ecology approach that uses the entire population of organizations as the unit of analysis. This approach informs several theoretical propositions that continue to guide empirical studies of public and non-profit organizations.

This approach recognizes an important milestone in the work of Hannan and Freeman (1977), who published their ideas under the title Population

Ecology of Organizations. The main components of the model highlight the role of environment in determining the survival of organizations. The selection of new and different organizational forms in the level of population of organizations occur as a result of structural inertia, which is proposed as the main explanation for the lack of change (Betton & Dess, 1985). The survival of an organization does not emanate from its ability to change but on the environment's ability to select and retain certain organizations and discard others. The thesis starts with the notion that organizations develop structural inertia that prevents them from carrying out radical changes. The higher the inertial pressure, the lower the adaptive flexibility and it is more likely that the logic of the environment will be what is imposed.

Two fundamental assumptions exist in population Ecology – First, organizational changes occur at the population level through organizational birth and death. Organizations adapt to their environment and become institutionalized by retaining and reproducing their form, and this promotes growth and survival in a stable environment. Secondly, the environmental selection favours those with high level of inertia which can be achieved by having high levels of reliability and accountability that creates high reproducibility (standard routines). This generates strong inertia pressures that makes it difficult to change organization core structure that increases survivability (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). Mortality rate of the organization is increased by organizational changes, accountability, reliability and reproducibility. Changes that are small and peripheral may enhance performance.

This theory is relevant to this study because population ecology theory proposes that change occurs at the population level and is a result of the process of organizational selection and replacement (Carroll, 1988). An individual organization's survival is then based on environmental selection of those organizations that best fit their particular localized environment. So, getting the right and timely availability of the required human resources of an

organisation, makes it more adaptable to changes and provides the right competitive advantage that could position it for survival within the environment. Although, “adaptive change is not impossible, or even rare, but it is severely constrained” (Carroll, 1988:2) at the individual organization level due to inert internal and external forces (Hannan & Freeman, 1977).

### **HR Supply Availability (HSA)**

Through effective HR demand forecasting, an organization determines how to allocate their budget or plan for anticipated expenses for an upcoming period of time. This will be impacted by the available skills, competencies and abilities of all personnel working in the organization, which is carried out through HR supply analysis (Chartered Institute of Personnel Management, CIPM, 2018). HR professionals have to estimate the availability of and need for future employees when assessing the supply of employees both within and outside the organization. According to Ayandibu and Kaseeram (2020), HR supply availability is the process of measuring the likely number of people available internally and externally after excluding exits, internal movements, absenteeism and hours and conditions of work.

The purpose of forecasting supply is to ensure an adequate supply of human resources both in terms of the number and the characteristics of people available to fill the projected vacancies (Jackson & Schuler, 1990). Supply forecasts can be derived from either internal or external sources of information. The first step in HR supply forecasting is usually generating an inventory of the current supply of employees in the organization (the number of people and their skills and abilities). The second step involves analyzing external sources of HR (Lunenburg, 2012). Both steps are dependent on an accurate assessment of the current workforce situation, but most organizations start with internal candidates.

## Corporate Survival

Corporate survival refers to the ability of an organization to uninterruptedly remain in operation in the face of diverse challenges (Akindele, Oginni & Omoyele, 2012). Sheppard (1993 cited in Gabriel & Kpakol, 2015) described organizational survivability as the ability of an organization to continue in existence, which was used to denote sustained learning and adaptive characteristics resulting from the organizations tendency for continued adjustment to seen and unforeseen changes, in the business environment. In contrast, business failure is when the operations of an organization come to an end due to inability to meet up with its financial obligations as a result of losses leading to bankruptcy (Dun & Bradstreet, 1979 cited in Akindele *et al.*, 2012). But, for a business to continuously meet its financial obligations, it will to a large extent depend on the managerial process of directing the affairs of the organization regularly to meet the needs of all stakeholders in the face of complex business challenges (Akindele *et al.*, 2012).

In an attempt to respond to the activities that will enable the organization to operate on going-concern, organizations are constantly in the process of structuring and restructuring to keep abreast with these activities which do come in form of complexity to include technology, structure, competitive advantage, number of employees, physical expansions, success of a product line (Lipton, 2003). Oluremi and Gbenga (2011) asserted that an organization that wants to succeed must develop a clear understanding of the trends of the business environment and forces that shape competition. Corporate survival and growth are implicit organizational goals requiring the investment of energy and resources (Jones & Bartlett, 2008).

Both organizational survival and corporate survival have been used interchangeably to represent the same concept even though corporate is more akin to larger organizations where ownership resides in collectivism and so survival is more complex. Adeoye (2012) submitted that the present form of

complexities facing firms include leadership styles, changes, uncertainty, conflict, culture, technology, structure, competitive market, profitability and workplace motivation. The complexities that happen in the environment greatly impact on the organization and if urgent action is not taken to mitigate them, they could even threaten the survival of the organization (Wobodo, Orianzi & Oko-Jaja, 2020). Hence, firms must develop a strategic plan and tactical procedure that is appropriate and adaptive to the present business environment that will aid its optimum resources utilization and attainment of set goals. Therefore, corporate survival could be defined as the ability of an organization to continuously remain in existence amidst the complexities, uncertainties and changes in the business environment.

## Dynamic Capability

Dynamic capability is the active ability to change or reconfigure existing substantive capabilities routines and resources in the manner envisioned and deemed appropriate by the firm's principal decision maker(s) (Zahra, Sapienza & Davidson, 2006). According to Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) with dynamic capability, firms can create new resource configurations as markets emerge, collide, split, evolve, and die.

The concept of dynamic capabilities was first formulated by Teece and Pisano (1994); and further explored by Teece, Pisano and Shuen (1997), who emphasized that a firm's competitive advantage in a dynamic environment rests on the firms' stock of organizational capabilities which makes it possible to deliver a constant stream of innovative products and services to customers (Hou, 2008). The stock of a firm's organizational capability is an aggregation of the individual capabilities and their interactions with the contextual factors (structures, rules, regulations, norms, culture and organizational goals) within the organization (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000).

Both dynamic and organizational capabilities can be seen as organizational routines, but their outcomes

are different. Organizational capabilities enable the firm to produce goods and services, whereas dynamic capabilities ensure the renewal and development of organizational capabilities. Dynamic capabilities can, therefore, be perceived as the routines in a firm that guide and facilitate the development of the firm's organizational capabilities by changing its underlying resource base (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Possession of dynamic capabilities alone does not necessarily provide any substantial advantage to firms, but being able to manage the dynamic capabilities to achieve their strategic goals provides performance related advantages to firms. The old perception that organizations are simply mechanical devices that can be solved when broken are no longer sufficient. "The challenge for organizations today is to develop a new organizational form, one with the ability to continuously respond to change (Deevy, 1995 cited in Tamunomiebi & Adim, 2019).

### **Resource Acquisition**

While goals focus on outputs, organization should also be viewed from the perspective of its ability to acquire inputs (resources), process that input, channel the outputs and maintain the stability and balance (Khanka, 2008). The process of acquiring resources, such as financial, physical, human, and intangible resources from others, is commonly acknowledged to be a vital entrepreneurial task during new venture creation (Luo, Zhang, Luo, & Ge, 2017). This will include new projects or product lines. Obtaining adequate resources not only enables a new venture to pursue its identified opportunities, but also facilitates its ability to survive, grow, and generate profits in the face of competition. Competition is normally harder on a new venture because of its inherent resource constraints (Ireland, Hitt & Sirmonm, 2007). When the times are good there is high demand for skilled employees to meet up operational requirements but a lot of those highly skilled workers will be released by their employers during tough economic times. Business Day (2015) reported that globally oil firms laid off over 100,000 workers in 2015 because

of the crash in oil price, including the Engineers who were in high demand in 2012 when the oil price was above \$100 a barrel. Therefore, periods of economic crunch, when highly skilled, well trained and talented employees may be freely available in the labour market, could be a good time to acquire them in preparation for periods of stability or boom. That of course, could provide the challenge of having some seemingly idle resources at some point within the cycle. The cost of the resources will support the decision, so having good resources at the time they are less in high demand and so less expensive will eventually contribute to cost savings in the long-run where the strategic direction suggest the human resource will be required sooner than later.

### **Human Resource Supply Availability and Corporate Survival**

Over the past decades, shortage of critical skills has made the process of identifying and attracting human resource a critical business objective (Laurano, 2013). Varuni & Suresh (2014) describe human resource as a strategic intervention to gain competitive advantage by integrating organizational talent with organization's mission. The availability and quality of skills are important determinants of productivity and the types of activities that can be undertaken, other measures capture potential technology and innovation (World Bank, 2018). As defined by Vanpatten and Benati (2010), skills refer to the ability to do rather than underlying competence or mental representation. Omolo (2013) noted that skills development programmes enable employees gain employability skills. Employability skills are potable competencies and qualifications that enhance an individual's capacity to make use of the education and training opportunities available, in order to secure and retain decent work, to progress within enterprise and between jobs, and to cope with changing technology and labour market conditions (ILO, 2013).

Forecasting supply involves determining what personnel will be available. The two sources are

internal and external: people already employed by the firm and those outside the organization. Factors managers typically consider when forecasting the supply of personnel include promoting employees from within the organization to boost employee retention; identifying employees willing and able to be trained to enhance employee employability; availability of required talent in local, regional, and national labour markets; competition for talent within the field; population trends; and college and university enrolment trends in the needed field (Henderson, 2010; ILO 2013).

Supply forecasting during restructuring will help establish people likely to be available within and outside the organization taking into consideration absenteeism, internal shuffling, promotions, turnover and other working conditions. Managers should formulate measures to counter this (Armstrong, 2012). According to World Bank (2010) skills bottlenecks affects productivity and are likely to worsen in the coming years. The report revealed that Enterprise surveys since the year 2000, in some 90 countries, suggests that skills constraints impede performance particularly in more dynamic environments; and when performance is inhibited corporate survival is threatened.

Based on the following discussion, it is hypothesized that:

- **Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between human resource supply availability and dynamic capability of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria.
- **Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between human resource supply availability and resource acquisition of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross sectional survey design. Using the census sampling technique, responses were solicited from 52 top management staff of the five multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria selected for the study; out of this number 42 questionnaire were returned and they were all useful. As a quantitative study, the primary data collection instrument utilized was the structured questionnaire. The test for the reliability of the instrument was carried out using the Cronbach alpha reliability instrument with a reliability threshold of 0.70. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficients was utilized to test the hypothesized relationships with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. The reliability coefficients obtained as presented in Table 1:

**Table 1: Reliability Coefficients for the Variables**

S/No	Dimensions/Measures of the study variable	Number of items	Number of cases	Cronbach's Alpha
1.	Human Resource Supply Availability	5	42	0.781
2.	Dynamic Capability	5	42	0.834
3.	Resource Acquisition	5	42	0.845

**Source: SPSS Output**

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 2 showed the result of correlation matrix obtained for human resource supply availability and corporate survival. Also displayed in the Table is the

statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes us able to answer our research question and generalize our findings to the study population.

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix for Human Resource Supply Availability and Corporate Survival Measures**

			HSA	DC	RA
Spearman's rho	HSA	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.489**	.833**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	42	42	42
	DC	Correlation Coefficient	.489**	1.000	.342**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	42	42	42
	RA	Correlation Coefficient	.833**	.342**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	42	42	42

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

Source: SPSS output version 23.0

### Research Question 1

What is the relationship between human resource supply availability and dynamic capabilities of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria?

The correlation coefficient (rho) result in Table 2 was used to answer research question 1. The correlation coefficients (rho) indicated that there is a moderate positive correlation between human resource supply availability and dynamic capability. The direction and strength of this relationship is depicted by the rho-value of 0.489. Therefore, the relationship between human resource supply availability and dynamic capability of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria is moderate positive correlation indicative of a moderate relationship.

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between human resource supply availability and dynamic capability of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria.

The correlation coefficient (rho) results in Table 2 indicated that there is a moderate positive correlation between human resource supply availability and dynamic capability (0.489) which was significant at 5% level of confidence. Furthermore, the p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance, hence we posit that the null hypothesis was rejected, which entailed that there

is a significant relationship between human resource supply availability and dynamic capability of the multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria.

### Research Question 2

What is the relationship between human resource supply availability and resource acquisition of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria?

The correlation coefficient (rho) result in Table 2 was used to answer research question 2. The correlation coefficients (rho) indicated that there is a very strong positive correlation between human resource supply availability and resource acquisition. The direction and strength of this relationship was depicted by the rho-value of 0.833. Therefore, the relationship between human resource supply availability and resource acquisition of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria is highly positive correlation indicative of a very strong relationship.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between human resource supply availability and resource acquisition of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria.

The correlation coefficient (rho) results in Table 2 indicated that there is a very strong positive correlation between human resource supply availability and resource acquisition (0.833) which is significant at 5% level of confidence. Furthermore,

the p-value (0.000) was less than the level of significance, hence we posit that the null hypothesis was rejected, which entailed that there is a significant relationship between human resource supply availability and resource acquisition of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between human resource supply availability and corporate survival of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria. This finding was in line with the study conducted by Kehinde (2012) who found that for an organization to increase its competitive advantage it must invest in human capital development to increase available human resource for the future. According to the study, the demand for superior talent far outweighs the supply; as more organizations are competing for the available talent in the global market that is currently facing workplace reforms and changes (Manpower Talent Shortage Survey cited in Garr, 2012).

Furthermore, supply forecasting provides an inventory of the current supply of employees and their skills and competences. A study conducted by Gifford and Dina (2011) on the development of human resource reveal that human resource planning identifies the skill requirements for various levels of jobs; and this will help to achieve best fit between employees and jobs while avoiding staff shortages and surpluses (Waheed, Xiaoming, Karamat & Waheed, 2016).

Empirical evidence suggests that skills shortages can have a detrimental effect on a firm's productivity

level (Bennett & McGuinness, 2009; Cappelli, 2014). Haskel and Martin (1993) observed that when a firm possess human capital in terms of the required skills needed to perform jobs, organizational performance is greater, but when a firm lacks essential skills to meet strategic objectives at different hierarchical levels, its performance is hindered.

This study finding lend credence to the debate in research that has shown that skilled employees feel a greater sense of responsibility, are likely to be more confident, can take charge of organizational change and innovation, and are better able to deal with complexity (Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Skilled employees offer more suggestions on how to improve processes and fill identified gaps (Song, Almeida, & Wu, 2003).

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study concluded that that human resource supply availability significantly predicts corporate survival of multinational oil and gas producing companies in Nigeria. The purpose of forecasting supply is to ensure an adequate supply of human resources both in terms of the number and the characteristics of people available to fill the projected vacancies (Jackson & Schuler, 1990).

Human resource managers of multinational oil and gas producing companies should take steps to boost their external human resource supply, by initiating career development trainings for non-employees on skill-sets that are of specific interest to the organization, as this would serve as their future external human resource supply basket for those specific skill-sets in times of draught in those skill-sets.

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