

Research Article

Application of Compromise Strategy and Corporate Survival in Oil Companies in Nigeria

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A B S T R A C T

This study examined how the application of a compromise strategy can lead to the survival of oil companies in Nigeria. The study design is a cross-sectional survey and utilised the Quantitative Methodology in its assessment of the association between all the variables of the study. The population of the study was 264 out of which a sample size of 159 was used for the study. The analysis comprised the use of both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The validity test was carried out using the face and content validity, while the reliability test was carried out using the Cronbach alpha with a benchmark set at 0.70. The descriptive statistics for the demographic and univariate levels of analysis were carried out using simple percentages, frequencies, and measures of central tendencies (mean) while the inferential was carried out using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (for the tests of bivariate hypotheses). The results from the analyses show that there is a significant relationship between compromise strategy and all measures of organisational survival (adaptability, dynamic capability, and growth). Given these findings, it was concluded that the adoption of a compromise strategy in managing conflicts is a sustainable means of harmonising and balancing incompatible interests that characterise today's business operational arrangements. Therefore, we recommend that organisational leaders should always embrace dialogue and compromise in handling conflict situations among stakeholders and others in their organisations.

Keywords: Compromise Strategy, Corporate Survival, Adaptability, Dynamic Capability, Growth

Introduction

The development which led to the discovery of oil in Nigeria gradually gave room to the need for the establishment of organisations that deal specifically with explorations, installations, and other needed services within the sector. We would recall that the discovery of oil did not profit all the citizens in Nigeria which is always the case in developed countries where roles of explorations and laws put in place by government are strictly obeyed by the multinational

companies. This discovery though has its advantages in terms of higher wages to the workers, imposed from its operations an environmental destruction to a magnitude not ever witnessed in the history of the development of other sectors of the economy. With so much presence of different multinational oil and gas companies comes the need for an Indigenous company that we believe could have provided adequate services in addition to paying more attention to the protection of the environment. However,

the reverse was the case since the management of the said companies paid more attention to profit maximisation and shareholders' interest with zero attention to the protection of the environment. Another fact, worthy of note is the fact that the better treatments advocated for by the public (immediate environment) were only paid for leap services thereby giving room for a conflicted relationship between the public and organisational leadership.¹

One of the most prominent cases of such environmental challenges posed by multinational companies is the observed challenges of river pollution in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.² This pollution has led to many fishermen/women losing their sources of livelihood, and water-borne diseases caused by the oil spill into the body of water, along with the breakout of diseases for many who accidentally consumed sea foods from the affected waters. In view of the data mentioned earlier, conflicts have become a common occurrence for members of the impacted communities because effective communication is consistently hindered by the failure of the organisation's management to fulfil promises made to the host communities.

As multinational companies and corporations became more actively involved, in the explorations and exploitation of crude oil and gas, clashes between them and the various Niger Delta communities increased. Issues of pollution, erosion as well as ecological degradation called for adequate compensation, calls often made by militant youths in the various communities. These youths, in addition, bore the brunt of unemployment and underdevelopment and so criticised their elders for being too ineffective in protecting against the wrongs of their people.³

In these circumstances, the various Niger Delta communities adopted the internationally accepted principle of asking the polluter to pay for pollution. They also urged the various multi-national companies to play a major role, in the development of their communities, as compensation, for the massive pollution suffered by them.⁴

Subsequently, these observed occurrences have resulted in multidimensional negative implications for organisational survival such as early entropy, running of skeletal operations, and outright relocation to other parts of the world; therefore, the survivability of an organisation depends on its success in surmounting some observable environmental challenges and seizure of available opportunities.⁵ Furthermore, beyond the macro-environmental forces impinging on business survival everywhere in the globe are also the issues emanating from within the organisation which are best described as micro elements of the business environment. Issues within this perspective border so much on the internal mechanisms the organisation, as an entity, has adopted to help it adapt to its environmental demands. Thus, the oil and gas companies are saddled with the responsibility of

adopting effective conflict management strategies, one of which is compromise, to cope and adapt to an avalanche of these challenges in order to survive and deliver goods and services to both stakeholders and the public.

Conflict is pervasive in all organisational work environments due primarily to individual differences and the pursuit of goals among the actors such as the owners of the organisations, employees, customers, host communities, and the government. Each of these groups will always want its interest to be protected sometimes without minding how it affects others and as such this can result in conflicts that may impinge on the achievement of the organisation's objectives such as its survival.⁶ Ivancevich supports that conflict is endemic in every organisation. It is impossible for it to be avoided but possible to manage when we diagnose the symptoms properly. In the same vein, Ivancevich further contends that effective management of conflicts can contribute to the growth of an organisation and consequently give direction for a strategic direction.

Conversely, as important as compromise strategy is in promoting a level playing ground for all actors in a business-society relationship or win-win atmosphere within a given business group, we have really not seen any empirical attention given in this direction; although there is an array of empirical and theoretical investigations on organisational survival phenomenon that focuses on other variables. For example, Umar, Gunu, and Sann examined the impact of learning organisations on organisational survival in some selected Nigerian manufacturing firms. Ugwuzor also studied the effect of survivor behaviour management and organisational survival and found a strong correlation between the two variables. Given the observable paucity of empirical research attention on how compromise strategy can be adopted as a precursor of organisational survival; it is therefore the focus of this study to fill this gap by examining the effect of compromise strategy on the organisational survival of oil companies in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were stated to guide the study: to assess the association between compromise strategy and adaptability of indigenous oil companies in Nigeria; to assess the association between compromise strategy and dynamic capability of profiled oil and gas companies in Nigeria; to assess the association between compromise strategy and the growth of oil companies in Nigeria.

To achieve the above objectives, the following research questions were put forward:

1. How does compromise strategy associate with the adaptability of oil companies in Nigeria?
2. How is compromise associated with the dynamic capability of oil companies in Nigeria?
3. How is compromise strategy associated with the growth of indigenous oil companies in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The baseline theory on which this study draws is the contingency theory. The contingency theorists emerged as an integrative approach to leadership studies. The contingency theory was championed by Fiedler in the 1960s and subsequently advanced by Jaja and Obipi (2005). Here the theory states that successful managers must structure their leadership pattern in relation to the different situational outcomes (Sapru, 2013). Similarly, in handling conflict tendencies that characterise modern organisations, managers also ensure that there is a fit between a conflict situation and the strategy adopted for its resolution in order to achieve maximum outcome.

Compromise Strategy

The concept of compromise strategy is an approach to conflict resolution through effective collective bargaining. According to Danish and Usman 2010, compromising is a conflict management strategy directed toward sharing losses and gains jointly. Similarly, Blanchard 2008 posited that compromises in conflicts are achieved through balancing the interests of conflicting parties and bargaining in a give-and-take position to come to some agreeable solutions to the conflict in view. This strategy is therefore adopted when the conflicting parties have equal powers and goals and with the same importance; and as such no party imposes its opinions over the other party thereby making compromise as the one and only solution to the existing problem. Given this circumstance, all parties gain something and also give up something. In this same vein, Steyn 2001 said that it is mainly cogent when there is a balance of power between the individuals in conflict or when limited resources have to be shared; in the sense that this strategy requires the achievement of balance between personal and common interests. Under this approach, all participants are required to change some attitudes through intervention negotiations and voting (Victor, 2012). This implies that in doing so, each party in the conflict situation surrenders certain values or interests in order to allow peace to reign.

Chiang and Birtch 2008 argued that a compromising strategy, despite its effectiveness in solving conflict problems, also has its own deficiencies. However, the magnitude of the shortcomings depends on each conflict situation, environment, and the extent of the compromise or values surrendered by each party in the conflict. Furthermore, Sapru (2009) warned that a conflict resolved through this strategy is not the best, despite its wide acceptance, because it may simply suspend yet a greater magnitude of the problem which is likely to resurface in either the same form or in an entirely different manner. Often, people resist the temptation of reaching compromise due to ego clashes

or stated positions. According to Hussein, and Blanchard (2008), integrative bargaining is normally used as a tool to achieve compromise in which both parties succeed in a way. For example, the method of resolving conflicts is very popular when management and labour unions are negotiating through collective bargaining. In the initial stages, it is normal for unions to request more than what they desire to take home, while management proposes less than what they desire to give. They negotiate, bargain and finally reach a compromise, mostly when there are arbitrators or mediators involved in the process (Chiang & Birtch, 2008).

Corporate Survival

When entrepreneurs set up a business enterprise irrespective of the size, it is always the desire of the entrepreneur that beyond the profit maximisation goal, the business will thrive and flourish against all odds. This is practically in line with the assumptions of the going concern principle, which states that "the firms expect that they will remain viable and continue to exist and operate in the foreseeable future" (Ugwuzor, 2017). It is on this premise that the organisational survival construct is considered a phenomenon in the evaluation of an organisation's general health, especially in this current economic order whereby the environment of a business is characterised by fierce competition and turbulence. This is further buttressed by Odunayo 2018 who stated that organisational survival is very crucial in this period of business turbulence. Therefore, achieving survival through sustained efficiency, effectiveness, profitability, customer satisfaction and all other indicators of business performance requires unbridled organisational effort through synergy between management and their employees. Just as Venkatarman (2001) contends that the success of a business depends on collaboration and stakeholder shared interests, they must be working for the same purpose, otherwise, the business will come to an end and new collaborations may be formed and enforced.

Robbins and Judge (2015) suggested that owing to the uncontrollable forces that impinge on a business's predetermined goals for an organisation to survive and affect appropriate performance, it must know and adopt the best strategy to rebound from decline and avoid death. In view of this assertion, we are compelled to say that without an organisation possessing and displaying a well-consolidated resilient posture, it might not be able to withstand and proactively bounce back or maintain balance in the face of change that threatens its survival agenda. This is therefore, in line with the position of Hamel and Valikangas (2003) who stated that the issues of resilience came about because of the need for corporations to respond to turbulent times caused by natural disasters, economic downturns, and man-made disasters that pose a threat

to their survival. In the management literature, resilience has been observed as the capacity of an organisation to absorb distinct environmental shocks and return to its prior equilibrium (Umoh & Amah, 2013). Further studies have also argued that it is only those organisations that anticipate, respond to threats, and are ready to adapt to unexpected disruptions in the environment that can survive.

Measures of Corporate Survival

Adaptability

Given the multiplicities of challenges from the internal and external environments that characterise modern organisational activities, the culture of adaptation has been proven to promote an organisation's survivability. Crook, Ketchen, Comb, and Todd (2008) maintain that successful organisations should relentlessly learn to adapt and reflect on the changing external environment. Adaptive capacity, as a resilient behaviour, is particularly strategic for organisations providing goods and services to consumers and customers and to fashion out ways to prevent disruptions in their operational processes. Adaptability, therefore, is associated with the organisation's ability to expect and respond to threats and latent opportunities by influencing the situation to its advantage (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). It is the engagement and involvement of the organisational workforce that they are responsible, accountable, and occupied with developing the organisation's resilience through the work they perform because they understand the links between the organisation's resilience and its long-term success (D'Cruz, 1992).

Dynamic Capability

Situational theorists maintain that the leadership style of a leader should be dependant on the prevailing context or situation hence no one particular strategy can provide a solution to all organisational challenges. Thus, organisational leaders must also be able to demonstrate dynamic qualities in terms of strategies, processes, resources, etc. in response to perturbations within and beyond their control in order to survive. According to Zahra et al. (2006), dynamic capability is the ability to realign existing observable capabilities and resources in such a way that it suits the organizations' current realities. Similarly, Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) argued that when an organisation is dynamically driven, it can progressively create new resources such as immutable knowledge. In relation to this, Helfat et al., (2007) professed that dynamic capability is associated with the capability of an organisation to deliberately create, share as well as alter, its resource base.

Growth

Organisational growth is observed when a firm increases its share capital, and level of production, engages more employees, builds more factories, introduces more product

lines, and acquires more assets. Growth strategies are the strategies adopted by an organisation that desires to expand its capacity of products and sales of the existing products and services, or diversification into other product/service lines, or get into a merger and acquisition to achieve expansion and other benefits (Ottih, 2006). The concept of growth is considered one of the phenomenal business objectives in contemporary business operational dynamics. As pointed out by D'Cruz (1992) the survival of any organisation is mainly dependent on its growth rate, and it is an indicator that the organisation is doing well amid fierce competition. Due to the essentiality of growth in business sustainability, Robbins et al., (2011) advocated that while carrying out business activities, organisational managers must carry out their organisations' operations with growth in mind in order to survive and prosper in the short and long run despite business and environmental adversities.

Compromise and Corporate Survival

With respect to compromising style, Bucherer, Eisert, and Gassmann (2012) noted that compromising style can strengthen commitment among employees because it encourages them to manage conflict in a collective way. As compromising style is characterised by the willingness of the employee to give in on some demands in return for a concession from the other so that, both parties will be working together in a cooperative method as such will be not selfish in their negotiation and making of concessions. If one party achieves its needs, the other party will concede in order to achieve the goals together. According to Green and Marks (2001), a compromising style gives team members a better understanding of the others in the team and as a result, it enhances commitment among employees towards the organisation. Based on researchers of organisational conflict, employees who choose to resolve conflicts through cooperation, compromising, and accommodating strategies tend to establish and foster cordial relationships among other employees, (Rahim & Buntzman, 1989); and this will result in improved group performance that promotes organisational overall goal attainment and survival.

Dobkin and Pace (2006) state that a compromising style can boost commitment among employees as it encourages the employees to work together to manage conflict among them. The compromising style is defined by the employee as willing to give in to some demands in return for a concession from the other. According to this technique, both parties are working with full cooperation with each other and they are not selfish in negotiation and making concessions. If one party achieves its goals the other party will concede in order to achieve the same goals together. According to Green and Marks (2001), a compromising style gives team members a better understanding of the others in the team and as a result, it enhances commitment among employees towards the organisation's overall accomplishment.

Methodology

A research design is considered as the specification or procedures involved in the collection and analysis of all necessary data needed to investigate a particular phenomenon, Beamon 1999. Consequently, Akhigbe and Onuoha (2019) opined that a good research design should capture the type of research the researcher is undertaking, the unit of analysis, as well as the time framework for the study. Thus, in this study, the cross-sectional survey design was adopted. The population of the study covers 264 managerial staff of six oil companies in Nigeria. A sample size of 159 was drawn using the Taro Yamane technique. The study data were obtained through the administration of a structured questionnaire to the respondents. However, in relation to data analysis, the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was utilised and was aided by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21). More so, the five (5) Point Likert scales were adopted in assessing the respondent's opinions ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. To establish the reliability of the study instrument, Nunnally's (1978) 0.7 minimum benchmark was observed in this determination.

Results

Ho₁: There is no significant association between compromise and adaptability of oil companies in Nigeria

As per the results presented in Table 1, the correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive association between compromise and adaptability. The correlation coefficient of 0.528 confirms the magnitude and strength of this association and it is statistically significant at $p = 0.000$ (< 0.05). The correlation coefficient represents a moderate association between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant association between compromise and adaptability of oil companies in Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant association between compromise and the dynamic capability of indigenous oil companies in Nigeria.

As per the result given in Table 2, the correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive association between compromise and dynamic capability. The correlation coefficient of 0.763 confirms the magnitude and strength of this association and it is statistically significant at $p = 0.000$ (< 0.05). The correlation coefficient represents a strong association between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant association between compromise and the dynamic capability of oil companies in Nigeria.

Ho₃: There is no significant association between compromise and the growth of oil companies in Nigeria.

From the result given in Table 3, the correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive association between compromise and growth. The correlation coefficient of 0.612 confirms the magnitude and strength of this association and it is statistically significant at $p = 0.000$ (< 0.05). The correlation coefficient represents a strong association between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between compromise and the growth of oil companies in Nigeria.

Discussion

The results of hypotheses one, two, and three show that there is a significant positive relationship between compromise strategy and each of the measures of corporate survival of oil companies in Nigeria. This is in collaboration with the work of Cronin and Crawford (1999) who opined that compromising style as the measure of conflict management strengthened commitment among employees because it encourages them to manage conflicts in a collective way. As compromising style is characterised by the willingness of the employee to give in on some demands in return for some concessions from the other so that, both parties are working together in a cooperative method and they are not selfish in negotiating and making concessions. If one party achieves its needs, the other party will concede in order to achieve the same goals together. According to Green and Marks (2001), the compromising style gives team members a better understanding of the others in the team and as a result, it enhances commitment among employees towards achieving the aims of the organisation. Based on researchers of organisational conflicts, employees who choose to resolve conflicts through a compromising strategy tend to establish and foster cordial relationships among themselves (Crook et al, 2008); and this results in improved group performance that promotes organisations' overall goal attainment and survival.⁷

Cronin and Crawford (1999) stated that a compromising style of conflict management can boost commitment among employees as it encourages the employees to work together to manage conflicts among themselves. A compromising style is defined by the employee as being willing to give in to some demands in return for concessions from the other. According to this technique, both parties are working with full cooperation with each other and they are not selfish in their negotiations and making concessions. If one party achieves its goals the other party will concede in order to achieve the same goals together. According to Green and Marks (2001), a compromising style gives team members a better understanding of the others in the team and as a result, it enhances commitment among employees towards the organisation's goal attainment.⁷

Table 1. Correlation Result for Compromise Strategy and Adaptability

Correlation		Sharing	Exploration	
Speaman's rho	Compromise strategy	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.528**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	126	126
	Adaptability	Correlation coefficient	0.528**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	126	126
	Exploitation	Correlation coefficient	0.450**	0.490**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
		N	88	88

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

Source: Research Data 2024, (SPSS output version 21.0)

Table 2. Correlation Result for Compromise and Dynamic Capability

Correlation		Compromise Strategy	Growth	
Speaman's rho	Compromise strategy	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.763**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000
		N	126	126
	Adaptability	Correlation coefficient	0.528**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.
		N	126	126

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

Source: SPSS 20.0 research data Output, 2024

Table 3. Correlation Result for Compromise and Dynamic Capability

Correlation		Compromise Strategy	Growth	
Speaman's rho	Compromise strategy	Correlation coefficient	1.000	0.612**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.000
		N	126	126
	Dynamic capability	Correlation coefficient	0.612**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	-
		N	126	126

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

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study in addition to shedding light on the pervasive challenges embedded within the oil sector, seeks to empirically ascertain the level of relationship that could emanate in compromise strategy in pursuit of corporate survival of oil companies in Nigeria. However, evidence generated from the study data analysis indicates that the adoption of a compromise strategy in resolving conflicts among stakeholders at the workplace creates a solid base for amicable conflict resolution through a win-win outcome, which in turn instils some cooperative behaviour toward organisational goal attainment and its continuous survival. Thus, we conclude that the adoption of a compromise strategy in managing conflicts is a sustainable means of harmonising and balancing incompatible interests that characterise today's business operational environments. Therefore, we recommend that organisational leaders of oil companies in Nigeria should always see the need for dialogue and compromise in handling any conflict situation that may arise from stakeholders.

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