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## Empowerment and Employee Agility of Indigenous Oil and Gas Servicing Firms in South-South, Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study examined the relationship between Empowerment and Employee agility of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria. The study was a micro-level correlational study that adopted the cross-sectional survey approach, done in a non-contrived environment. The data used for analysis was collected from the employees of seventeen (17) indigenous oils and gas servicing firms studied. Primary data was collected using a self-structured questionnaire as the applicable research instrument. The population of the study was one thousand, five hundred and five (1,505) employees, drawn from seventeen (17) selected indigenous oil and gas servicing firms, that are registered with the Petroleum Technology Association of Nigeria (PETAN) and their head offices in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size of three hundred and fifteen (315) respondents was derived using Taro Yamane Statistical Formula (1967), while the sample size for the individual firms for distribution of copies of questionnaire were generated through the use of Bowley's (1964) Proportional Allocation Technique. However, from the total of three hundred and fifteen (315) copies of questionnaire administered to the respondents, only two hundred and sixty-six (266) copies were retrieved, out of which a total of two hundred and fifty (250) retrieved copies were considered useful for the analysis. The validity of the research instrument was carried out and approved by my supervisors while the reliability was determined using the Cronbach alpha statistics, with a threshold frequency of 0.70. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (SROCC) was adopted to analyse the data; after being justified by the normality test, with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, 23.0) to analyze the hypothetical statements. The research findings revealed that empowerment has a positive and significant relationship with all the measures of employee agility studied. Based on the findings from the empirical analysis of the study, it was concluded that empowerment affects employees' agility of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Therefore, it was recommended that management of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms should embrace employee empowerment strategies to improve the agility level of their employees for competitive advantage and higher productivity.

**Keywords:** *Empowerment, Employee Agility, Resourcefulness, Team Culture, Adaptability.*

### Introduction

The Nigerian business environment is currently linked with enormous occurrence of market alterations; thus, necessitating that managers introduce high-scaled action plans to improve the quality of products and services they offer to their teaming customers. White (2013), in his view captured it better by revealing that today's business environment has become extensively capricious, indeterminate, multifaceted and indistinct. As such, only organisations that are flexible, dynamic and responsive; thus, agile organisations, will be able to muddle through these challenges and gain competitive advantage, and this require creating an agile workforce. In agile organisational environments, employees are encouraged to be greatly involved in the day-to-day discovery and utilization of opportunities, co-creation of products and services, as well as in problem-solving (Akgun, Byrne, & Keskin, 2007). It is extensively believed that employee agility has the capability of making available wide variety of positive outcomes; such as quality improvement, better customer service, learning-curve acceleration, economy of scale and depth (Sherehiy, Karwowski & Layer, 2007). The existence of employee agility in any organisation, irrespective of the sector it is operating in, could often be described as the employees' ability to daily troubleshoot problems, utilize creative thinking and to react strategically in response to uncertainty (Batten Institute, 2012). In spite of the abundant endowment in the nation's human resources, the acquisition of knowledge and relevant skills that are requisite for the effective functioning of employees are lacking. Knowledge transfer to Nigerians is not as much as it should be because most multinational corporations licensed to operate in the oil and gas sector believe that their home country or other employees in highly economically developed nations are better than Nigerian employees. This has clearly resonated the argument that, the stewardship of key actors has not translated to the delivery of reasonable value to a broad range of stakeholders, due to slow growth rate of the Nigerian economy (Ejiofor 2014; Ugbomen & Atubi 2010). This view has been further advanced on the basis that the oil and gas sector is supposed to produce positive returns for all stakeholders; most especially, the Nigerian government and the generality of its citizens. However, the inability of the sector to live up to its expected bidding as a result of a plethora of observed failures have eroded the whole essence of having such a robust industry.

The oil and gas sector in Nigeria is also facing the challenge of foreign company and expatriate dominance; these resultant biased interests have literally overshadowed the need to strike a fair balance in relation to indigenous employment and empowerment in the sector (Tamuno & Felix, 2006). Thus, organisations, their employees and operations should be ready for changes because firms that decide to be unassuming in very unpredictable business environments could easily be thrown out of business. Furthermore, Arokodare and Asikhia (2020) maintained that organisations in many countries are always looking to maintain business performances, as their survival is contingent on it. According to Eilers, Möckel, Rump & Schabel (2018), today's organisations face an extremely competitive, quickly changing and complex environment. The idea of creating an agile workforce (employees) to enable firms deal with these growing and hydra-headed improbabilities and capricious circumstances in the business environment has been one that have attracted the most popular interest (Sherehiy & Karwowski, 2014). A further reflection on the positions of these scholars, reveal that the ability of firms to develop the knack for nurturing speed, adaptableness and enhancing innovation through rolling out diversity of agile strategies, and executing agile practices that create an agile mindset among their employees will become an easy tool to help unlock organisations from the brook of challenges steering them in the face.

Employee agility is essentially a knowledge based proactive strategy put forward to enhance the competence of individuals that work in today's organisation in a bid to accomplish competitive advantage in the long-run. Hence, agility from the perspective of employees is known to depend on the ability of individuals to acquire requisite knowledge useful in foreseeing market alterations through inter organisational co-operation. An individual is seen to attain agile state if such a person develops the unique aptitude such as speed, nimbleness, proactivity, adaptive capacity, resourcefulness and resilience which can be employed in contributing to the bottom line of a firm; that is to say that such organisational ambience consistently creates room for developing and restructuring human and technological assets necessary to help it react promptly in response to spontaneous changing customer expectations (Dove, 2009). It has been previously shown that, agility is a strategy that is realized through the use of urbane technologies such as computer-integrated systems, but findings from studies have revealed that agility as a proactive strategy revolves around men and not machines (Youndt, Snell, Dean Jr. & Lepak, 2006). One of the most essential mechanisms at ensuring alterations in organisations process which facilitates survival, attainment of goals and missions is the transformation of the human element (Ghafuri & Mansouri, 2014). Since human resources are the most valuable source of production and capital, the source of competitive advantage and the creation of basic capabilities in each organisation; one of the most effective ways to achieve competitive advantage in the current situation is the use of more efficient and agile employees in the organisation (Ghafuri & Mansouri 2014). There is a direct relationship between employee empowerment and productivity in any organisation. One major concern of successful businesses in the world is the educated and skilled human capital that can change the organisation. A successful organisation consists of individuals who are compatible with the organisational culture, ideas and objectives of the organisation and through using experience, knowledge and teamwork in their organization can lead to the progress of it (Horabadi, Farahani & Salimi 2015).

Many studies portray empowerment as intrinsic task motivation (Gilaninia, 2012). In other literature, empowerment has been defined as perceptions and as commitment-based designs. Researchers have also defined empowerment in terms of job structure, as the transfer of power or authority. Empowerment of employees mean creating the collection of required capacity in human resources to enable them create added value in the organisation. It is also believed that empowering employees help them to easily develop agile behaviours that are necessary in the attainment of both individual and organisational goals. In lieu of the accentuating views, this paper is poised to examine the relationship between Empowerment and Employee agility of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The theoretical foundation of this study is drawn from the Resource based view (RBV) theory and Dynamic capabilities theory. The Resource based view theory was initiated in the mid-1980s by Wernerfelt (1984), Rumelt (1984) and Barney (1986), it has since become one of the dominant contemporary approaches to the analysis of sustained competitive advantage. The central premise of the resource-based view is that organisations compete on the basis of their internal resources and capabilities (Peteraf, 1993). It proposes that organisations can achieve and maintain competitive advantages through the assemblage and combination of scarce, valuable, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources (Sirmon, Hitt, Ireland and Gilbert, 2011). The theory is relevant to this study due to its view on the superiority of resources in organisational performance, which navigates a firm towards its competitive advantage. To attain greater agility amongst employees, organisations should be aware of their internal capabilities through employee empowerment and continuous investment on the development of employees' capabilities. The Dynamic capabilities theory is traceable to the works of Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997). They assert that the acquisition of distinctive resources is not enough for an organisation to accomplish competitive advantage; rather, a firm should convert such resources into dynamic capabilities. Dynamic capabilities evolved to explicate how firms act, find their feet and react in response to changes in unstable environments (Winter, 2003). The dynamic capabilities approach is considered in this study due to the unexpected changes in the business environment which an organisation has to bear to make the necessary adjustments in its internal resources, by adopting excellent human resources practices such as employee empowerment, that motivates and enhances the essential resources to ensure that the firm and its employees remain agile.

### **The Concept of Empowerment**

Fernandez & Moldogaziev (2013), viewed employee empowerment as a relational paradigm that designates how managers in organisations deliberately share power, information, resources and rewards with those lacking them. Ghafuri & Mansouri (2014), state that employee empowerment consists of a collection of structures, plan of actions, and procedures which are aimed at the development of employee capability and competency for refining and increasing productivity, excellence, and prospering the organisation and human resources. It is power that is vehemently transferred to committed employees to enable them meaningfully attain set goals, it allows the employees to act in accordance with their own higher values, by taking risks and indicating imitiveness and creativity in the service of these goals. Baird, Su and Munir (2018), discusses employee empowerment as involving the official delegation of decision-making responsibilities to lower-level employees in the organisational hierarchy, with employees provided with the autonomy to make day-to-day decisions about job-related activities. Idris, See, and Coughlan, (2018), state that employee empowerment approach is composed of practices aimed at sharing information, job related knowledge and authority with employees.

The two main types of employee empowerment, namely structural empowerment and psychological empowerment have been scholarly discussed. While structural empowerment refers to organisational mechanisms that make the board of directors' transfer responsibility and decision power from management to employees, psychological empowerment defines the increase of the incentive for work or the increase of self-efficacy emotions by satisfying the need of employees (Nouri & Mousavi, 2020). Building on the structural perspective, empowerment eliminates the barriers between managers and subordinates, and provides better communication and information sharing that enables employees to participate in the decision-making process. On the other hand, psychological empowerment usually involves a sense of belonging of employees in the organisation where they work (Idris *et al.*, 2018).

Employee empowerment is mostly understood as the ability of managers to share knowledge and improve intellectual capability of employees, and autonomy through decision making (Karim & Rehman, 2012). Empowerment is a fundamental and important aspect for successful accomplishment, increased productivity, and growth in organisations (Hunjra, UIHaq, Akbar, & Yousaf, 2011). Employee empowerment is regarded as a motivational practice that aims to intensify performance by growing the opportunities of participation and contribution in decision making. It is mainly concerned with developing trust, motivation, participating in decision-making, and removing any boundaries between an employee and top management (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012). Empowerment is the mechanism used in giving an employee the authority to make decision; it is often associated with the dissemination of obligation from managers to other employees (Saif & Saleh, 2013). Empowerment was described earlier as providing an employee with relevant authority to deal with matters related to their daily job activities. The advantages of employee empowerment have been widely acknowledged in literature, Jacqueline (2014) asserts that empowered employees are probable to cultivate feelings of enthusiasm that will help them gain the power, control and utilize crucial knowledge and skills in handling customer expectations. As the

empowerment programme aims to give power and authority to employees through managers to share the responsibility with them, this will eventually help empowered employees in refining their acknowledgements and standing. Such employees would develop positive thinking and have a habit of putting in their best to perform well at the workplace (Wadhwa & Verghese, 2015).

### **The Concept of Employee Agility**

The observed alterations in the business environment have resonated the interests of managers in organisations towards paying more attention on how to not only improve their work environment, but also how to cope with them; while focusing on important features such as vision, knowledge, courage and trust (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Organisations' managers are today paying serious attention on how to keep firms more competitive by increasing their level of agility, which is very essential in today's changing, spontaneous and global business environment (Heckler, & Powell, 2016). Agility in the organisation was first employed in production department of organisations in the early 1990's, since then it has systematically been used in different departments of companies. Scholars have acknowledged the trajectory of spread of agility and its relevance to organisations in their various studies overtime, spanning from manufacturing organisations (Zhang & Sharifi, 2000), and has attributes of sustainable competitive advantage.

Sherehiy *et al.*, (2007) state that in the present and future organisations there was no place for obedient employees and the ones who do the permanent and monotonous works. But the organisation was a place for innovative and creative people who can react appropriately to the changes that occur. This makes studying the degree of employee agility and also the factors and the organisational and non-organisational hardships influencing agility in order to face the changing environment more important than ever. Ghasemi (2009), in his research, studied the factors effective in employee agility in governmental section. The results indicated that in general employees had a rather desirable condition in their agility. By and large, he comprehended that factors such as positive attitude toward changes and new technologies, new inventions and information systems, reaction to the environmental changes and customers' tastes and human relations had an effect on employee agility. It is essential to voice out that, very few studies were conducted to study the impact of organisational practices in the form of organisational learning and training, reward system, involvement, team work and information system on employee agility. Further, the majority of such studies were conducted with an assumption of a direct, linear relationship between organisational practices and employee agility (Alavi, Wahab, Muhamad, & Shirani, 2014; Sherehiy & Karwowski, 2014). Employee agility is known to be the capacity of individuals or employees to react in response to and bend to alterations appropriately and without delay. Agility is very helpful to employees because it encourages them to make the best use of changes and turn them into opportunities for organisations improvement and success (Patil, & Suresh, 2019; Pitafi, Kanwal & Pitafi, 2019). It bequeaths in individual the aptitude to develop the capacity to sense changes and obtain relevant information that is germane in the improvement of work process, as a result contributing in the attainment of competitive advantage.

Employees with agile mindset are known to have high performance attitude, innovative, proactive, and are prompt in delivering services to customers. Therefore, the concept of workforce, individual or employee agility as often interchangeably applied in literature is important and a pointer to how organisations attain agile status and competitive advantage. According to Muduli and Pandya (2018), an agile mindset illustrates a constructive attitude that is open to learning and self-development, as well as a positive attitude toward withstanding change in the organisation. Agility is seen to manifests in individuals who have the capacity, knowledge, and competence to enable them to proactively seek opportunities in their business environments and quickly adjust to new situations (Doeze Jager-van Vliet, 2017; Razmi & Ghasemi, 2015). Such individuals are known to be equipped with the skills that enable them to foresee, execute and make the most of changes seen in the business environment (Braun *et al.*, 2017; Chonko & Jones, 2005). Then again, it is important to underscore the fact that agility in individuals are common traits that develop in individuals as they grow and most times it is not learned; however, this is not in any way suggesting that it cannot be learned through participation in teams or in organisational work process. This paper adopted resourcefulness, team culture and adaptability as important measures of employee agility.

**Resourcefulness** according to Jui-Chang and Chien-Yu (2017), is a situational trait that individuals make use of while functioning in workplaces. This situational trait emerges from the dual influences of elemental and of known traits such as conscientiousness, openness, competitiveness and activity needs. Resourceful

individuals are known to be effective in situations where inadequate work resources lay bare the ability and creativity to carry out their job-related tasks successfully (Karatepe & Douri, 2012). Being resourceful is an essential trait that when utilized effectively by employees make them to be distinguished from others; with this in mind, the outcome of such skill use is always considered very important to organisations.

**Team Culture** fosters teamwork by respecting, encouraging, enthusing and caring for people, rather than exploiting or dictating to employees. Infact teamwork, in addition to being potentially more creative, tends to result in a greater ability to manage new information and new challenges (Jehn & Bezrukova, 2004). What is more is that, the transfer of greater responsibilities to working groups engender more efficient management of the different skills and knowledge, which enhances group performance and as a result, improve organisational effectiveness (Saji, 2004). Team culture engenders learning culture in organisations; it is the orientation towards the promotion, facilitation, sharing and propagation of individual learning (Rebello & Gomes, 2011a). This type of team bears features such as openness, experimentation and error acceptance as ingredients that support both individual and collective aspirations towards goal attainment. Team effectiveness is often explained on the basis of input-process-output models that describe the impact of input such as organisational culture, team composition, structure of communication, task design, communication, coordination, respect, and conflict leadership on team output such as team performance, job satisfaction and well-being, cost effectiveness, quality of care and treatment outcome.

**Adaptability** is referred to as an individual's ability to adjust to the environment in which such individuals live or work (Lourenco & Casey, 2013). It is very important in helping the individual perform effectively in the organisation. Martin, Nejad, Colmar and Liem (2012), describes adaptability as an employee's capability to fruitfully control the psycho behavioral functions in reaction to novel, fluctuating, and/or indeterminate circumstances, conditions and situations. Outstandingly, Martin *et al.*'s (2012), model of malleability is a multilateral one comprising of cognitive, behavioral and emotional adaptability, and refers to the ability of transforming one's thinking, behavior, or emotions respectively to deal with changing, new, or uncertain situations.

#### **Empowerment and Employee Agility of Indigenous Oil and Gas Servicing Firms in South-South, Nigeria**

Employees are known to regularly interact and identify more closely with their workgroups than the organisation as a whole, their approach and behaviors are likely to be strongly affected by the culture of their immediate workgroup (Lok *et al.*, 2005; Ostroff, Shin, & Kinicki, 2005). More so, employees build around themselves shared precedents of meanings and explanations of their experiences in the work place (Morgan & Ogbonna, 2008). Such collective sense-making process shapes the team-culture in the work unit, which is apparent from that of other work units in the organisation. Thus, team members tend to direct their collective efforts toward task execution in a manner that avoid mistakes and follow rules, thereby producing a higher level of task performance (van Dyck, Frese, Baer, & Sonnentag, 2005). By contrast, in a team with an open system culture that emphasizes long term goals, risk-taking, and innovation, members are less subject to control mechanisms. A high level of flexibility displayed in an open system culture encourages team members to deviate from existing procedures and implement innovation (Buschgens *et al.*, 2013). Drawing from Chen and Kanfer's (2006), theory of team motivation, we propose team cultures as crucial team ambient inputs that can influence team performance.

The ambient input is classified as variables that can affect team performance into ambient and flexible inputs. Ambient inputs are team-oriented stimuli that permeate the team as a whole, whereas discretionary inputs are stimuli directed and presented to specific team members. Specifically, they isolated leadership; group norms, work design, and team feedback are key ambient inputs that can promote team performance. The decision whether or not an organisation will adopt a team culture is made within the existing structure of the organisation, in this case the decentralization of decision making is seen by this study to affect team culture. The findings of Muduli (2016), showed that organisational practices, including organisational learning integrated with psychological empowerment, were strongly related to employee agility. Thus, psychological empowerment is a significant mediator between organisational learning and employee agility. Muduli (2016), found that psychological empowerment variables such as meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact promote employee agility. An organisation needs to adopt suitable practices, such as skill development, for enhancing psychological empowerment that can foster employee agility. Empowerment also showed to have a positive and significant impact on affective commitment to change, which means that through empowerment, employees will commit to changes and adapt to organisational changes (Mangundjaya, 2019). Moreover, empowerment provides necessary conditions for organisations' improvement of the employee agility in a

bid to help them become more competitive (Shah, MajidianFard, Lataifian, Farahani, & Sahebi, 2017). Putri and Mangundjaya (2020), in their study found that organisational learning has a positive and significant relationship with psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment has a positive and significant relationship with employee agility, and psychological empowerment fully moderates the relationship between organisational learning and employee agility. Based on the results of this study, psychological empowerment has an essential role in organisational learning to increase employee agility. Given, this study examined the relationship between empowerment and measures of employee agility. The following hypothetical statements are made:

- H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between empowerment and resourcefulness of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria.
- H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between empowerment and team culture of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria.
- H0<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between empowerment and adaptability of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

**Methodology**

This study aligns with the positivist approach and paradigms (Kumar, 2011; Ahiauzu and Asawo, 2016). The study adopted a cross sectional survey approach with the micro level unit of analysis. The data used for analysis was collected from the employees of seventeen (17) indigenous oils and gas servicing firms studied. Primary data was collected using questionnaire as the applicable research instrument. The population of the study was one thousand, five hundred and five (1,505) employees, drawn from seventeen (17) selected indigenous oil and gas servicing firms, that are registered with the Petroleum Technology Association of Nigeria (PETAN) and have been operational for at least twenty (20) years, with their head offices in the South-South region of Nigeria. The sample size of three hundred and fifteen (315) respondents was derived using Taro Yamane Statistical Formula (1967), while the sample size for the individual firms for distribution of copies of questionnaire were generated through the use of Bowley’s (1964) proportional allocation technique. However, from the total of three hundred and fifteen (315) copies of questionnaire administered to the respondents, only two hundred and sixty-six (266) copies were retrieved, out of which a total of two hundred and fifty (250) retrieved copies were considered useful for the analysis. The validity of the research instrument was carried out and approved by my supervisors while the reliability was determined using the Cronbach alpha statistics with a threshold frequency of 0.70. Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (SROCC) was adopted to analyse the data; after being justified by the normality test, with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, 23.0) to analyze the hypothetical statements.

**Table 1. 0: Reliability Coefficients of Variable Measures**

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Dimensions/Measures of the study variable</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>
1	Empowerment	5	0.953
2	Resourcefulness	5	0.974
3	Adaptability	5	0.762
4	Team Culture	5	0.815

*Source: SPSS Output*

**Measures**

A 5 items scale for empowerment was adapted from Ameyaw, Peprah and Anowuo, (2019), scales with slight modifications. On the other hand, for employee agility, which is the criterion variable; with measures such as resourcefulness, adaptability and team culture, fifteen (15) questions were developed: resourcefulness (5); team culture (5) and adaptability (5) were derived from literature. The respondents were asked to show high degrees of understanding of how the independent variable relates with each of the measures of the dependent variable. This was accomplished by espousing the Likert-scale item approach, which has five rating

scales from end points “strongly agree to strongly disagree.” The measuring scales for the study are nominal and ordinal scales on the socio-demographic data and bivariate analysis respectively.

**Results**

Table 2 shows the result of correlation matrix obtained for empowerment and measures of employee agility. Also displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes us able to answer our research questions and generalize our findings to the study population.

**Table 4.21: Correlations Matrix for Empowerment and Employee Agility Measures**

		Empowerment	Resourcefulness	Team Culture	Adaptability
Empowerment	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.841**	.659**	.389**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	250	250	250	250
Resourcefulness	Correlation Coefficient	.841**	1.000	.680**	.263**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	250	250	250	250
Team Culture	Correlation Coefficient	.659**	.680**	1.000	.236**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	250	250	250	250
Adaptability	Correlation Coefficient	.389**	.263**	.236**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	250	250	250	250

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

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

The correlation coefficient (rho) result in table (2) shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.841 on the relationship between empowerment and resourcefulness. Therefore, there is a positive and very strong correlation between empowerment and resourcefulness of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms

in South-South, Nigeria. Similarly, Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient ( $\rho$ ) of 0.659 on the relationship between empowerment and team culture. Therefore, there is a positive and strong correlation between empowerment and team culture of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Furthermore, Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient ( $\rho$ ) of 0.389 on the relationship between empowerment and adaptability. Therefore, there is a positive and weak correlation between empowerment and adaptability of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings as presented in table (2) for the hypotheses revealed that there is a very strong, positive and significant relationship between empowerment and resourcefulness of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Also, the hypothesis revealed that there is a weak, positive, significant relationship between empowerment and adaptability of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Similarly, the findings revealed that there is a strong positive significant relationship between empowerment and team culture of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria. These findings agree with the study of Zhang, Tsui, Song, Li and Jia (2018), which revealed that employee empowerment has a significant effect in achieving profitability in organisations. These findings reinforce the views of Cuthie (2010) and Wang, Lawler and Zhang, (2019) that the best employee relation practices for improving organisational performance are embedded in employee empowerment which has a significant effect on profitability and having motivated employees include: conflict resolution, commensurate compensation, and structural empowerment, among others. Adding to the discourse is the findings of Seibert, Silver and Randolph (2014), who found significant and positive relationship between empowerment climate and work-unit performance and profitability.

Similarly, the current findings are in alignment with the study of Dewettinck, Singh and Buyens (2006) who concluded that whilst employee empowerment has a significant and considerable relationship with employee affective outcomes; empowerment only marginally explains the variance in profitability. Also, the finding of Peter *et al.* (2012) is in tandem with the current finding by explaining that the different dimensions of employee empowerment and integrated power, decision making, information sharing, autonomy, initiative and creativity, knowledge and skills development, and responsibility.

Likewise, the current finding resonates with Kim and Beehr (2017) who found out that the greater the empowerment, the greater the motivation and satisfaction towards work, among employees. This also led to less job stress and increased employee commitment to organisational goals. Also, the finding validates the earlier study of Hanaysha and Tahir (2016) who found that there is a positive and significant relationship between employee empowerment and job satisfaction. Similarly, Raza, Mahmood, Owais and Raza (2015), and Wadhwa and Verghese (2015) also showed that employee empowerment has a significant effect on job satisfaction. In the same vein, Jacob, Yu and Chavez (2016) found that empowerment has a significant positive effect on employee satisfaction. The study of Syallow, Mberia and Bosire (2017) also showed that empowerment has a positive effect on job satisfaction. On the contrary however, the finding contradicts Abraiz, Tabassum, Raja and Jawad (2012) who found that employee empowerment has a negative effect on job satisfaction. Similarly, the finding does not align with Aysit and Saziye (2014) who revealed that employee empowerment has no significant effect on employee satisfaction.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The overall objective of the study was to examine the relationship between empowerment and employee agility of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in the South-South region of Nigeria. While empowerment is the predictor variable, employee agility is criterion variable and was measured in terms of resourcefulness, adaptability and team culture. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. The major finding of this study revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between empowerment and employee agility of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria. Employee empowerment encompasses the enlargement of an employee's job duties by giving them the independence and authority of decision-making about their own job without the approval of their immediate supervisor. Therefore, the effective deployment or utilization of human resources practices such as employee empowerment can create a positive influence on employee agility. This finding led to the conclusion that empowerment affects employee agility (resourcefulness, adaptability and team culture) of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms in South-South, Nigeria. The researchers recommended that, management of indigenous oil and gas servicing firms should embrace adequate employee empowerment strategies and programmes to improve the agility level of employees and increase organisational



productivity. This is because organisational performance is a function of employee performance. Also, organisation effectiveness depends on constantly improving the performance of organisation members and maintaining human potentials that serve as the backbone of the organisation.

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