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Competence Monitoring and Employee Resilience of Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms in South-south Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to ascertain the relationship between competency monitoring and employee resilience in the food and beverage manufacturing firms south-south, Nigeria. This study used a structured questionnaire designed in five Likert scale point of strongly disagreed to strongly agree to collect data from respondents in the food and beverage manufacturing firms in south-south, Nigeria. The study employed a cross sectional research design to study a population of one thousand eight hundred and seven respondents from 21 registered food and beverage manufacturing companies in south-south, Nigeria. Sample size for the study was obtained with the help of Taro Yemen formula to be 328 respondents for the study. Structured questionnaire was distributed to 328 employees as respondents for the study and 289 copies were retrieved out of which 10 copies were considered not useful due to spoilage and 279 were deemed fit for the study. Data were analysed using a spearman rank order correlation with the help of a statistical package for social sciences version 23.0. From the analyses, the study found different degree of positive and statistically significant relationship between competency monitoring and the measures of employee resilience (employee agility, employee responsiveness and employee resourcefulness). Based on the findings of the study, we conclude that competence monitoring enhances employee resilience in food and beverage companies in South-South, Nigeria and recommends that management of food and beverage companies in South-South, Nigeria should endeavour to monitor the competence of their employees, which is required to identify employees' strengths and weaknesses in order to help them better understand their operating environment and companies should put more effort in monitoring employee competence by periodically taking stock of the skills and knowledge of employees to monitor staff competence and take corrective actions where necessary.
Keywords: Competency monitoring, employee resilience, manufacturing firms

INTRODUCTION

Organisations are continuously inventing to contain and succeed in the turbulent global economic unpredictability, erratic advancement and adverse competitive business climate which are obvious in the current business world (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2013; Kirkegaard, 2018). Crucial roles are played by employees in the social development processes of organization across the business sectors. The employees have actually been critical in situations where resources are scarce with political instability, and natural disasters as a result of either predictable or unpredictable environmental circumstances. Organisation operates in an environment with rampant crisis, and level of profit is not equal to the expenses incurred by

the organisation (Wayne, 2010). Most employees in this kind of business environment have assumed significant role when it comes to the selection as well as definition of projects that should be financed (Polidano & Hulme, 2009). Employees have responded to the needs identified by client organisations but practically they have often identified clients' needs for them. With large volumes of resources provided by organisation, monitoring is an action that is essential to avoid wastage of resources and skills.

Again, it is increasingly evident that organisations are in diverse need of employees who are better able to recuperate from striving situations that follows uncertainty that are evident in business environment. Employees with resilient mindset is core to driving performance in contemporary organisations and they overcome routine challenges (Lampel, Bhalla & Jha, 2014). Identifying these skills by organisations is becoming a challenge as employees are constantly feeling that the business world is throwing so much at them to handle at the same time. Though the food and beverage companies in Nigeria is a major driver of the economy, it operates in an environment that is competitive and produces product that fits the needs of dynamic clients. This sector has employees who feel victimized and dwell in troubles environment. These issues have created fear for both the organisation and its' employee affecting their level of recovering from trouble situation making the various party to begin to look for ways to be resilient.

Kuntz, Näswall and Malinen (2016) defined employee resilience as a behavioural capability, supported by the organisation, which reflects resource utilisation and the ability to continually adapt at work. Resilient employees are more likely to experience positive emotions even in the midst of difficult situations like in the food and beverage manufacturing firms. Monitoring the employee activity is an important aspect of business in driving success and company goals. Organisations who hunger for success and wants to survive in a dynamic environment will need to monitor the activities of their employees. Competence monitoring is a management practice process that is particularly important for organizational success through the ability of the organization to be aware of what is happening around it and make proper use of the information to the benefit of the organization (Kets de Vries, Florent-Treacy, & Korotov, 2015). Monitoring of employee competence is highly significant as the organization would be able to measure on the employee strength on the job. To stay relevant, means to effectively monitor employee competence, connected externally with customers and investors, and globally with emerging trends and markets; to anticipate new direction and foresee the writing on the wall that demands innovation. Hence, this study investigates the empirical relationship between competency monitoring and employee resilient in the food and beverage firms in south-south, Nigeria and draws the following hypothesis based on the foregoing argument:

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between competence monitoring and employee agility of food and beverage companies in South-South, Nigeria.

H_{o2}: There is no significant relationship between competence monitoring and employee responsiveness of food and beverage companies in South-South, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on human capital theory initially formulated by Becker (1962) and Rosen (1976), the theory argues that individual workers have a set of skills or abilities which they can improve or accumulate through training and education. This theory views human capital as a form of resource that organizations can invest in and is of value to the organization to the extent that it makes the organization to be competitively productive (Kessler & Lülfesmann, 2006). This theory examines how organizations and individuals make decisions regarding investments on human capital (Tarique & Schuler 2010).

One of the benefits of human capital theory is that it assumes that monitoring increases productivity in the organization and provides insight into the strategic initiatives that reduces resources wastage in the organisation. The human capital theory is relevant to the study as the organization needs to appreciate the fact that the employees which are human resources are reservoirs of untapped resources and therefore the need to monitor the activities in order to reduce wastage and tap out the resources contained in them, thus improving the performance of the organization. It also supports the independent variable, competence monitoring which require participatory approach in an organisation.

CONCEPTS OF COMPETENCE MONITORING

Periodically it is necessary for organizations to manage their resources by taking stock of employees' current competences and how they meet up with their key performance indicators (Stoner, Freeman, & Gilbert, 2013). This process is referred to as competency monitoring and is highly significant as the organization would be able to measure on the employee strength on the job. Moussa, Çaha and Karagöz, (2016) defined competence monitoring as an intensive care and review of employees' skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours on the job. Sousa (2019), defined employee competence monitoring as the supervision of employees' current skills, knowledge and capabilities in the works of the organization. Hence, competence monitoring is the process by which the human resource management group of an organization regularly takes stock of employees' current skills, knowledge, attitude and behaviour to ascertain their level of meeting with job specifications and performance requirements. The essence of competence monitoring is to identify competence gaps in terms of employee capacity and define ways of filling the gaps through training and adequate mentorship by the organization's leaders (Moussa, et. al., 2016). Hence, monitoring employee competence and behaviour at work is highly laudable for any institution that wants to be sustainably successful.

Another reason for monitoring is to identify areas of employees' competence weakness, competence challenges and prescribe ways of tackling these shortcomings or challenges at work. Importantly, the focus of competence monitoring is to ensure compliance and enforcement for high quality performance. Employees in an organization need keep up with the expectations of performance on their job task which will help to inform and improve productivity and performance (Lekshmi & Radhika, 2016; Ellstrom & Kock, 2018). Hence, competence monitoring is a veritable tool and strategy for performance appraisal. Whenever employee competences are accurately monitored, opportunities tend to ensue. Kets de Vries, et. al. (2015). averred that competence monitoring is feedback strategy used by organisations to help most employees gain greater insight concerning their own subjective experience, which can lead to better management of emotions and eliminate subjective distortion of events that can bring ability of an organization to quickly and efficiently respond to market changes.

Diamante-Camacho (2012) agreed, adding that increased self-awareness gained through the process of assimilating feedback is a means to worker maximum performance. Also, Maurer, Bartsch, and Ebers (2011) found that feedback concerning good performance helped to enhance subsequent performance. It can also help the organization to achieve flexibility through the identification of more opportunities in the environment and by taking advantage of those opportunities, thereby enabling the organization to profit in environments with which non committed employees won't prosper. In the workplace, the manager may provide feedback to the employee, elicit feedback from the employee, or manage the process of receiving, reviewing, and utilizing feedback from internal and external workplace sources (Christensen, 2013). This might be due to its position that is an important role in enhancing workers performance towards the ability to effectively react to the business environment.

Employee Resilience

Resilience has been defined to mean almost the same thing in different field ranging as personal resilience, trait resilience, psychological resilience, emotional resilience, career resilience, and ego resilience in individual and organizational contexts (Bolton, 2004; Fredrickson & Tugade, 2003; Waugh, Fredrickson & Taylor, 2008). Resilience is described as an individual characteristic that ensures adaptation to adversity, and measured using trait variables (Robertson, Cooper, Sarkar, & Curran, 2015). Given the rising interest in organisational resilience, particularly the ways in which the employee can contribute to a resilient organisation (Lee, Vargo & Seville, 2013; Nilakant, Walker, Kuntz, de Vries, Malinen, Näswall, & van Heugten, 2016). Employee resilience is defined as the capability to ―bounce back from setbacks combined with remaining effective in the face of tough demands and difficult circumstances, and grow stronger in the process (Cooper, Liu, & Tarba, 2014). Employee resilience is defined as a behavioural capability, supported by the organisation, which reflects resource utilisation and the ability to continually adapt at work (Kuntz et al., 2016).

Employees' resilience entails the capability to manage resources well, deal with excessive workloads, respond to and learn from mistakes in crises situation, utilizing changes as a chance for development (Kuntz, Connell & Näswall, 2017). An employee who is resilience, can effectively respond and adapt to changing circumstances and challenges (Franken, Plimmer & Malinen, 2020). Employees demonstrate resilient behavior when they utilize their personal and job-related resources to respond swiftly to uncertainty and change. Studies have demonstrated the impact of resilience in lessening job-related stress, psychological stress, and burnout, and attrition (Kuntz, et.al., 2016; Chen, McCabe & Hyatt, 2016; Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2018). The development of resilience in employees involves a constant interaction between an individual and their work context (Mansfield, Beltman, & Price, 2014). At this level, resilience is generally understood as "the capacity of employees to utilise resources to continually adapt and flourish at work, even when faced with challenging circumstances" (Kuntz et al., 2016). This study measures employee resilience in terms of agility, and employee responsiveness.

Employee Agility

Agility is the disposition of an individual to renew his/herself ability towards adapting and adjusting quickly as well as to manage a constantly changing, uncertain, chaotic culture in the work environment (Alavi, Wahab, Muhamad & Arbab Shirani, 2014). Agility is a key enabler for organisations to attain competitive advantage in an uncertainty market (Ganguly, Nilchiani, & Farr, 2009). Employee agility is a skill that encompasses different approaches than training for traditional skills. Employees with agile mindset are known to have high performance attitude, innovative, proactive, and are prompt in delivering services to customers. Daly (2022) defined employee agility as the capacity of an employee in gathering and disseminating information about the changes in their environment and respond to that information quickly and expediently. Muduli and Pandya (2018) averred that 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 a very helpful strategy with which employees are encouraged in making the best use of changes and turning them into opportunities for organisations improvement and success (Patil, & Suresh, 2019; Pitafi, Kanwal & Pitafi, 2018). The development of agility in employee also helps in fast tracking acquisition skills that encourages the reinforcement of success and survivability of firms within and outside a crisis situation (Muduli, 2017). Earlier on, Muduli (2013) believed that employee agility is important in creating a level playing ground for individuals to adapt quickly and easily to new opportunities and market conditions that can make the difference through maintaining good relationship with well-trained and flexible workforce. Employee agility is influenced by different factors such as management of family members, involvement, self-motivation, richness of task, information, technicality in skills (Oliva, Couto, Santos & Bresciani, 2019). Employee agility can continuously improve strategies that are unavoidable good for organisational survival and sustainability.

Employee Responsiveness

Organisations are unceasingly experiencing dynamic and spontaneous changes in their present business environment, which underscore the significance of heightened organisational flexibility and adaptation. The term responsiveness is put forward as a manner for organisations to take advantage of environmental changes. Responsiveness makes organizations resort effectively to nonstop changes. Employee responsiveness is the organization's ability to excel quickly and flexibly in response to changing market needs, as well as responding effectively to these changes both in the local and global environment (Sherehiy, & Karwowski, 2014). Employee responsiveness is a set of ideas that seek continuous improvement in the organization and efficient use of physical and intangible resources efficiently and effectively (David, 2009). However, the organizations are saddled with the responsibility of meeting the needs and wishes of its customers quickly and with appropriate quality (McCarthy, Lawrence, Wixted & Gordon, 2010).

Responsiveness is used as the ability to respond to unexpected changes in the turbulent business

environment. Employee responsiveness is the organization's ability to function distinctly in a changing environment, delivering products efficiently and effectively. It is the capability to survive under changing environment conditions, through rapid response to the needs and desires of consumers (Javanmardi, Zanjirchi, Karbasian & Khaboshabani, 2011). Employee responsiveness is a combination of knowledge and virtual structure to exploit opportunities in a changing business environment.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

John (2020) empirically examined the effect of monitoring and evaluation to project performance in Rwanda. The purpose of the study was to find out the major problems facing world vision development of projects in Rwanda and if Rwanda is lacking effective monitoring and evaluation that affects their performance. The study adopted a survey research design to study a sample size of 22 respondents. Data were obtained using interview with the director of finance, monitoring and evaluation departments. The study employed both structural equation modelling and multiple regression. With the structural equation modelling, the study revealed three techniques of monitoring and evaluation, which are compliance to quality standards, compliance to activity cost and compliance to activity duration. Indicating that Rwanda world vision has all the activities of improving these techniques that can help in project performance. The correctional coefficient showed a positive and significant relationship between monitoring and evaluation and project performance with a correctional coefficient of 0.786**.

Ngigi (2020) empirically examined the effect of monitoring and evaluation practices on project implementation in ACTED Kenya organisation. The study adopted a descriptive research design and a stratified random sampling procedure to determine a population sample of 125 respondents. Data were collected primarily with a structured questionnaire. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, mode, tables, figure, charts and percentages with the help of a statistical package for social sciences. The findings of the study showed all significant of monitoring and evaluation on project implementation. Asghari, Salehi, and Niazazan (2018) examined the relationship between competence monitoring and task alertness of employee responsiveness at Islamic Azad University of Tehran. The study adopted survey research method with sample size of 352 gotten through purposeful sampling method. Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics of mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution, Pearson product moment correlation. The result of the analysis showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between competency management (monitoring) and employee responsiveness.

Constantin and Constantina (2016) studied the influence of competence monitoring and flexibility on job performance. The study was a survey research with a sample size of 30 employees using questionnaire as the research instrument. Data in the study was analysed using structural equation model of partial least square and result revealed that competence monitoring and flexibility significantly enhances organisational performance. KIHUHA (2012) carried out an empirical examined Monitoring and Evaluation routine at United Nations Environment Program Global Environment Facility Projects in Kenya and its effect on Project Performance. The broad aim of this study was to ascertain the influence of the practices of monitoring and evaluation on the performance of UNEP GEF Kenyan chapter projects. The specific aims of this research were to determine influence of planning process, technical expertise, stakeholder involvement and Management involvement on performance of UNEP GEF projects in Kenya. The population of the study is 55 employees with three categories namely 15 project managers, 32 support staff, 5 monitoring, and evaluation staffs. The data collected were analysed with both descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviations and logistic Regression model analysis with the help of a statistical package for social sciences version 19.0 to establish the relationship between M & E practice and project performance. The result of the study revealed a positive association between M & E practice and project performance at 95% confidence intervals and PV < 0.05. The study established adaptability of planning process and technical expertise on allocation of funds for M & E, development of clear M & E plans/tools, regular collection and analysis of M & E information, training of M & E staffs and attracting skilled M & E staffs with average flexibility

on M & E needs assessment.

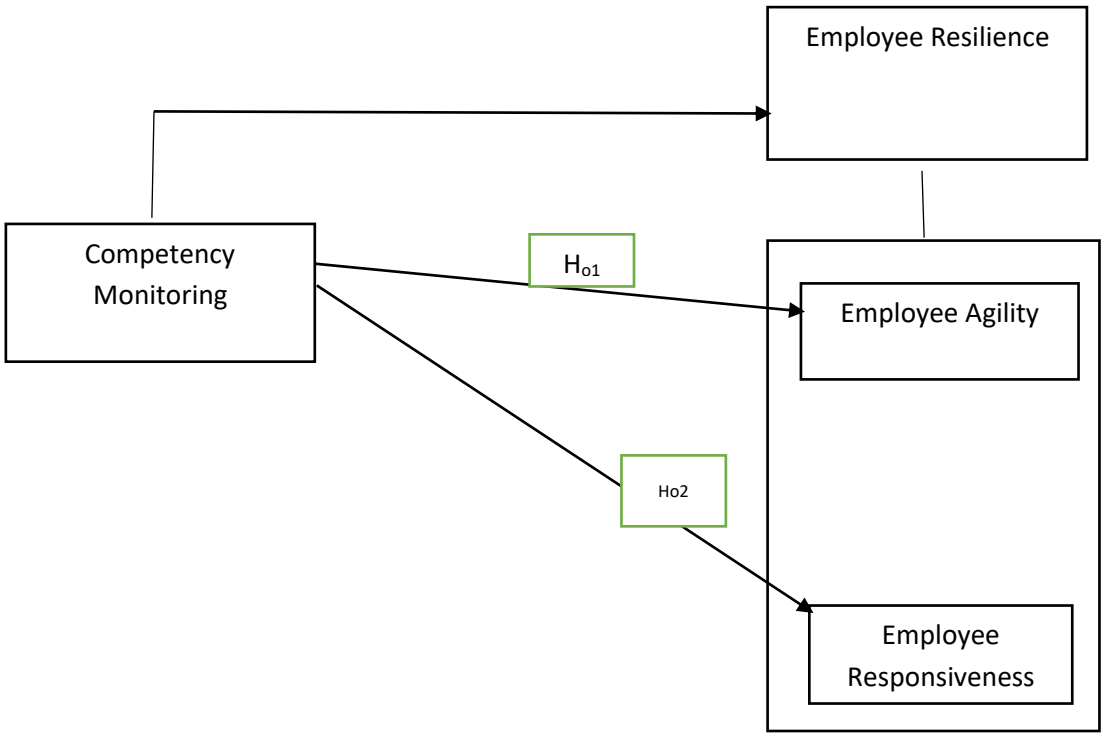

Figure 1: Operational framework showing the relationship between competency monitoring and employee resilience
Source: Researcher conceptualisation, 2024.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross sectional survey research design of descriptive attributes with a correlational style of investigation in a non-contrived setting to study a population of one thousand eight hundred and seven employees from 21 registered food and beverage firms in south-south (Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta and Edo State) in Nigeria (Nigeria Directory, 2021). The sample size of the study was drawn from Taro Yemen sample determination table 1970 to represent sample respondent of 328 employees. The study validity and reliability were validated by three experts in the field of human resources management and the reliability of the data in the study were tested with alpha Cronbach method, of which competency monitoring =0.796; employee agility =0.799. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire in a five-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agreed to strongly disagreed. Data collected were analysed using spearman rank order correlation with the help of a statistical package for social sciences version 23.0. The Spearman's rank-order correlation was used since it is a non-parametric test. Spearman's correlation coefficient, (ρ, also signified by r_s) measures the strength and direction of association between two ranked variables. Since our scale is at the ordinal level of measurement, it is suitable to be tested using the Spearman's correlation coefficient.

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 4.23 Correlations Matrix for Competence Monitoring and Employee Resilience Measures

			Competence Monitoring	Employee Agility	Employee Responsiveness	Employee Resourcefulness
Spearman's rho	Competence Monitoring	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.799**	.693**	.761**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	279	279	279	279
	Employee Agility	Correlation Coefficient	.799**	1.000	.829**	.721**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	279	279	279	279
	Employee Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.693**	.829**	1.000	.647**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	279	279	279	279
	Resourcefulness	Correlation Coefficient	.761**	.721**	.647**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	279	279	279	279

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

Source: SPSS Output, 23.0

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between competence monitoring and employee agility in food and beverage companies in South-South, Nigeria.

The result from table 1 showed the correlation matrix obtained for competence monitoring and measures of employee resilience. The correlation coefficient (rho) result in table 1 revealed the result for the hypothesis testing for H_{o1}, and Ho2. The result for H_{o1} showed a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.799 p = 0.000 < 0.05 on the relationship between competence monitoring and employee agility. This value implies that a strong relationship exists between the competency monitoring and employee agility. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in employee agility was as a result of the adoption of competence monitoring. Therefore, there is a strong positive correlation between competence monitoring and employee agility of food and beverage companies in the south-south Nigeria. Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated was rejected and an alternate hypothesis accept. Hence, there is a significant relationship between competence monitoring and employee agility in food and beverage companies in South-South, Nigeria.

H_{o2}: There is no significant relationship between competence monitoring and employee responsiveness in food and beverage companies in South-South, Nigeria.

The result of H_{O2} shows a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.693** p = 0.000 < 0.05 on the relationship between competence monitoring and employee responsiveness. This value implies that a moderate relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive, indicating that an increase in employee responsiveness was as a result of the adoption of competence monitoring. Therefore, there is a strong positive correlation between competence monitoring and employee responsiveness of food and beverage companies in the south-south

Nigeria. Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is was rejected and an alternate hypothesis accepted, stating that there is a significant relationship between competence monitoring and employee responsiveness in food and beverage companies in South-South, Nigeria.

The findings are in agreement with the findings of other scholars specially, the findings of John (2020) who listed three techniques of monitoring and evaluation as compliance to quality standards, compliance to activity cost and compliance to activity duration and explained that the three monitoring and evaluation strategy helps in improving the performance of projects of an organisation. The result of the findings, is in corroboration with the findings of Ngigi (2020) on the effect of monitoring and evaluation practices on project implementation in ACTED Kenya organisation. Stating that monitoring helps organisation to properly implement their strategy to achieve their stated objects. Asghari *et al*. (2018) explained that employee competency in the view of monitoring helps employees respond either positively or negatively towards organisational activities. Again, Constantin and Constantina (2016) explained that competence monitoring and flexibility enhances organisational performance. This is also in line with the study findings of Alsabbah and Ibrahim (2018), concluded that, competence monitoring helps in identifying gaps in employee competence which prescribes potential training needs. That helps to promote and achieve organisational performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the research findings, that showed positive and significant relationship of different degree between competency monitoring and the measures of employee resilience (employee agility, employee responsiveness. The study concludes that competence monitoring enhances employee resilience in food and beverage companies in the South-South, Nigeria. Recommends that Management of food and beverage companies should put more effort in monitoring employee competence by periodically taking stock of the skills and knowledge of employees to monitor staff competence and take corrective actions where necessary.

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