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Visionary Leadership and Organisational Performance of Oil and Gas Companies in Rivers State

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Abstract. This study investigated the relationship between visionary leadership and organizational performance of oil and gas companies with specific focus on the six (6) major (upstream) oil and gas companies in Nigeria, whose operational bases can be found in Rivers State. The study employed a cross-sectional survey approach with a quasi-experimental research design. A survey was conducted among fifty-four (54) top and middle level managers of these companies. Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the various hypotheses. Findings of the study revealed a significant and positive correlation between the dimensions of visionary leadership and the measures of *Organizational Performance* of oil and gas companies in Rivers State. It was concluded that *Visionary Leadership* has been empirically validated as a dependable management strategy for enhancing *Organizational Adaptability* and *Employee Productivity*. The study, therefore, recommends that managers of oil and gas companies in Rivers State consider decentralizing activities or processes by actively engaging employees to get fully involved in decision-making, as a means of enhancing organizational performance. This approach entails actively involving staff by assigning them significant responsibilities or duties. This will foster a sense of belonging among organizational members, consequently enhancing their commitment not just to fulfilling their immediate responsibilities but also to the overall attainment of the organization's objectives.

Keywords: Visionary Leadership, Organizational Performance, Employee Empowerment

Introduction

The issue of visionary leadership in the Nigeria oil and gas industry has garnered significant attention in corporate research and among academic scholars (Abdullahi, Tijani, & Sofoluwe, 2020). Nigeria possesses abundant natural resources, including minerals such as petroleum, limestone, tin, natural gas, and others (Muhammad, 2018). With the exception of petroleum, which has been the dominant force in Nigeria's economy since the 1970s, most of these minerals have not been extensively used. The Nigerian oil and gas sector has made a substantial contribution to the Nigerian economy. The National Bureau of Statistics (2018) estimated that the industry accounted for 9.61% of the nation's actual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the first quarter of 2018. According to the study, Nigerian foreign exchange profits were mostly derived from crude oil and other by-products, which made up 87.7% of the total. From 1999 to 2015, the nation generated more than 90% of its revenue by exporting crude oil products. During the same time frame, the money generated from oil increased to account for 70% of the total national income, resulting in an average contribution of 13% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Shahab, Sobari, & Udim, 2018). Furthermore, the industry has played a role in drawing foreign direct investment into the nation, while also providing a cost-effective and easily accessible source of energy. This has therefore contributed to the reduction of unemployment difficulties in the country (Amah & Baridam, 2012).

The significance of an organization's human capital has increased in this contemporary economy, since it is widely seen as the most valuable asset. This is primarily due to its substantial contribution to the advancement of both the organisation itself and society at large. There are several aspects that can contribute to employee happiness, such as remuneration, sense of achievement, autonomy, recognition, communication, working conditions, colleagues, job stability, and team dynamics, among others. All of these aspects are overseen by a leader inside the organisation, and it is imperative that this leader has visionary qualities.

The significance of visionary leadership within an organisation lies in its ability to formulate a vision and mission, establish objectives, and develop strategies, policies, and methodologies to effectively and efficiently attain predetermined organisational goals (Xu & Wang, 2008). According to Harris (2007), visionary leadership encompasses intellectual stimulation and strategic responsiveness to internal and external environmental factors that are crucial for the organization's survival. To effectively adapt to rapid environmental changes and ensure survival, top management must consistently foster an innovative atmosphere that encourages employees to willingly undertake tasks and promotes job involvement. Visionary leaders are, therefore, renowned for their ability to motivate subordinates to embrace such challenges and enhance current work performance. Ebrahim (2018) posited that leadership style encompasses a synthesis of several features, attitudes, and behaviours employed by leaders to engage with subordinates in order to accomplish the collective aims and goals of the group. The author emphasised different leadership styles compared to previous studies. According to Ebrahim (2018), many leadership styles may be identified, such as visionary, transformational, transactional, democratic or participatory, charismatic, autocratic or dictatorial, and bureaucratic. It is imperative to acknowledge that the intellectual significance and pragmatic implementation of various leadership styles may exhibit some degree of overlap. Nevertheless, upon closer examination, each style possesses distinct characteristics, benefits, and drawbacks that are contingent upon varying circumstances or contexts.

Numerous existing works demonstrate that researchers have formulated diverse frameworks to assess visionary leadership in relation to an organization's results, including factors such as survival, competitive advantage, productivity, and return on investment (ROI), among others measures of performance. In their study on the relationship between empowering leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour, Shahab et al. (2018) employed employee empowerment and individual attention as key aspects of leadership style. Additionally, they used sportsmanship and employee participation as indicators to assess organisational citizenship conduct. In their study, Ogala et al. (2017) examined the relationship between visionary leadership and organisational performance. To measure visionary leadership, the researchers employed intellectual stimulation and adaptability as indicators. Furthermore, Chukwudifu and Olori (2020) employed innovativeness and adaptability as indicators of organisational survival, whereas Erengwa et al. (2017) utilised productivity as a metric for assessing corporate success. This research diverged from previous studies by incorporating Shahab et al. (2018)'s conceptualization of employee empowerment and Ogala et al. (2017)'s conceptualization of intellectual stimulation and flexibility to change as characteristics of visionary leadership, in line with the aforementioned studies and other relevant literature, the aim of this study was to examine the correlation between visionary leadership and the organisational performance of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to empirically examine the nature of the relationship between visionary leadership and organizational performance of oil and gas companies in Rivers State. Specifically, the study attempts to:

i. Examine the extent to which employee empowerment relates with adaptability of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.
ii. Unravel the extent to which employee empowerment relates with employee productivity of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.
iii. Investigate the extent to which intellectual stimulation relates with adaptability of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.
iv. Examine the extent to which intellectual stimulation relates with employee productivity of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Concept of Visionary Leadership

The notion of leadership has been a major topic of discussion and analysis among scholars in the field of management since the early 20th century (Guand-Lu et al., 2012). Due to the significant discourse and scholarly attention around leadership, a multitude of leadership behaviours, commonly referred to as leadership styles, have arisen. Among several famous leadership behaviours, (including charismatic leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, and ethical leadership), visionary leadership is arguably the most popular. In the current competitive business landscape, visionary leadership is widely seen as an essential prerequisite for commercial organisations to thrive and attain exceptional outcomes. From an etymological standpoint, leaders have the responsibility to facilitate the development of organisations by establishing a stronger sense of purpose via connecting endeavours to favourable results. Bass (1996) posits that visionary leadership facilitates the creation of an environment that fosters *follower - performance* beyond their individual self-interest.

Visionary leaders, in contrast to transformational leaders, employ their vision as the foundation of their work. According to Nanus (2010), visionary leadership is characterised by the capacity to formulate and effectively communicate distinct visions that imbue the activities of an organisation with significance and direction. Visionary leaders engage in the process of formulating an individualised vision, which is subsequently integrated into a collective vision alongside their colleagues. The dissemination of the vision is what enables individuals to take action. The lack of action among individuals sometimes stems from inadequate communication of the intended vision. Consequently, individuals expend their energy in attempting to discern the appropriate course of action, resulting in fatigue and diminished responsiveness (Heath & Heath, 2010).

Employee Empowerment

The notion of empowering human resources is commonly employed interchangeably with the act of authorising and delegating responsibility, essentially referring to the process of granting power and transferring authority. It is important to acknowledge that this understanding has certain limitations. Empowerment of human resources is critical; however, it is important to include additional factors when discussing empowerment, such as motivation and active participation (David & Lawler, 2000). The process of employee empowerment starts with the engagement of top-level management and extends to the comprehension of the organization's vision, purpose, and values. This knowledge facilitates the creation of an environment in which workers perceive themselves as accountable, autonomous, and capable contributors to the organisation. Employee empowerment is a multifaceted process that encompasses elements such as risk-taking, development, and transformation (Shin & Zhou, 2013). The notion of *empowerment* is delineated and explicated through several facets in scholarly investigations. Vogt (2010) define *empowerment* as the process of enhancing employees' capacity for decision-making through collaborative efforts, knowledge sharing, skill development, educational opportunities, and teamwork. Furthermore, Kas (2016) defines empowerment as the process of delegating suitable responsibilities to people and enabling them to acquire new skills and capabilities. The definitions indicate that empowerment include not only the cognitive dimension, which involves enhancing an employee's potential within an organisation, but also behavioural characteristics that are essential for the employee's job happiness and working environment.

Intellectual Stimulation

According to Avolio and Bass (2002), visionary leaders inspire their subordinates to think innovatively and creatively by challenging assumptions, redefining challenges, and adopting fresh approaches to familiar circumstances. Under the guidance of an intellectually stimulated boss, subordinates' errors are not subjected to public criticism, but rather, inventiveness is actively promoted. Transformational leaders actively seek input and innovative solutions from their followers, therefore including them in the process of problem-solving. The leader who fosters intellectual stimulation motivates their people to explore novel ways. Intellectual stimulation is a crucial element of transformative leadership. Transformational leaders promote intellectual stimulation by encouraging followers to critically examine their own ideas, assumptions, and values, as well as those of the leader, which may no longer be relevant or suitable for addressing present challenges (Anjali & Anand, 2015). Anjali & Anand (2015) argue that providing intellectual stimulation promotes the growth of employee dedication to the organisation. Consequently, this has ramifications for the organization's capacity to accomplish objectives via the commitment and diligence of its personnel. Furthermore, leaders who provide intellectual stimulation encourage ongoing critical analysis of existing assumptions, promote a shift in problem-solving approaches, and advocate for the use of analogy and metaphor (Stone et al., 2003). Transformational leaders consistently seek new information, intellectually stimulate their followers, and encourage the generation of innovative ideas from all parts of the organisation (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Organisational Performance

The evaluation of performance is in relation to predetermined goals and objectives. There are differences between the private and governmental sectors. Within the private sector, there are three fundamental performance outcomes: financial performance, market performance, and shareholder value performance. On the other hand, the public sector is primarily preoccupied with the provision of services, the assessment of public sentiment and satisfaction, and the equitable advancement of the economy. The primary objective of a Performance Management system is to enhance the outcomes of individuals' endeavours by establishing a connection between their efforts and the goals and objectives of the organisation. One crucial factor in enhancing employees' performance is the implementation of suitable recognition and incentive systems to acknowledge their achievements. Additionally, strengthening communication channels, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and enhancing working circumstances are other vital aspects to consider. The discussion of the three Es, namely Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness, is a prevalent topic in the literature on performance management in the public sector (Gondal & Shahbaz, 2012). According to Beirut (2003), the concept of performance encompasses both the execution of tasks and the outcomes that are attained. The term "outcomes of work" may be described as the results or achievements that are closely aligned with an organization's strategic goals, customer happiness, and economic contributions. According to Jain et al. (2015), performance may be defined as the execution of actions and activities with the purpose of achieving a desired outcome. Our society is characterised by a culture that places a strong emphasis on performance, both in personal and professional contexts. In order to attain enhancement in a certain performance, it is necessary to possess a comprehensive understanding of the criteria that delineate a performance of high quality.

Hence, it is imperative to comprehend the variables that exert a significant influence on performance outcomes.

Adaptability

The concept of adaptability has been recognised as a significant factor in responding to environmental uncertainties and has been deemed worthy of investigation and evaluation. To ensure their continued relevance in the sector, organisations and their personnel must consistently adjust to varying levels of environmental uncertainty (Amah & Baridam, 2012). Adaptability, in essence, pertains to the ability to modify oneself in order to align with and accommodate novel circumstances. The notion of adaptability has recently gained attention in the field of management literature, and, similar to other concepts, it exhibits variations in its definition. Various studies have employed diverse definitions, values, criteria, and dimensions in order to elucidate and assess adaptation. Adaptability, as defined by scholars approaching the subject from a strategic viewpoint, refers to the capacity to effectively respond and accommodate external changes in order to maintain the long-term viability and resilience of an organisation. Parker, Mullarkey & Jackson (2012) proposed a conceptual framework that delineates three key dimensions of adaptability: experimentation, communal judgement, and preservation of dissent.

Employee Productivity

The notion of productivity, which is often understood as the ratio between output and input, has been in existence for more than two centuries and has been utilised in many contexts and at different levels of analysis within the economic system. There is a contention that productivity is a fundamental factor that governs economic production activities, potentially holding the highest level of significance. Nevertheless, while productivity is widely recognised as a crucial determinant of a manufacturing company's competitiveness, scholars contend that it is frequently given less priority and overlooked by those who have the power to shape production procedures. The inherent worth of knowledge management is in its ability to enhance the efficiency of individuals, teams, and organisations by implementing various principles associated with knowledge management. According to Lee and Choi (2003), there is a positive correlation between the degrees of knowledge capture, whether explicit or tacit, facilitated by information technology tools, and the quality of knowledge management outcomes. Productivity may be defined as the synergistic outcome of using accuracy and effectively utilising existing people and material resources, whereas efficiency is ascertained by evaluating performance.

Visionary Leadership and Organisational Performance

The significance of comprehending the impact of leadership on performance lies in the perception of leadership as a crucial catalyst for enhancing a company's performance, as posited by some studies. According to Paul (2016), effective leadership is widely seen as a powerful catalyst for management growth and the attainment of sustainable competitive advantage, leading to enhanced organisational performance. Transactional leadership is a leadership style that aids organisations in effectively attaining their present objectives by establishing a connection between work performance and desirable incentives, as well as by ensuring that staff possess the necessary resources to do their tasks (Zhu et al., 2005). According to McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2015), visionary leaders possess the ability to develop a strategic vision for a desired future state. They effectively communicate this vision by employing framing techniques and utilising metaphors. Furthermore, these leaders demonstrate the vision by consistent actions and work towards fostering commitment among their followers in relation to the goal. According to Zhu et al. (2005), several researchers argue that the presence of visionary leadership inside an organisation may lead to increased levels of cohesiveness, commitment, trust, motivation, and therefore, enhanced performance within changing organisational contexts.

Employee Empowerment and Organisational Performance

Numerous researchers have undertaken investigations to explore the relationship between employee empowerment and various performance indicators, such as survival. Rukevwe and Oke (2014) conducted a study on the relationship between organisational longevity and workers' mental capacity. In their research, they utilised employee empowerment and innovativeness as two variables to measure employee mental ability. The researchers discovered a favourable and substantial correlation between employee empowerment and both innovativeness and organisational survivability. According to Rukevwe and Oke (2014), it was discovered that when leaders demonstrate a commitment to sharing their vision with subordinates, it enables them to effect change, ultimately leading to enhanced organisational performance. This conclusion was corroborated by the research conducted by Draught (2001), who expressed the viewpoint that senior executives hold the belief that relinquishing centralised authority will enhance the velocity, adaptability, and decisiveness of workers' activities, as well as the adaptability of the organisation. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Chen and Chen (2008), which demonstrated a robust and favourable correlation between psychological empowerment and the longevity of organisations. This suggests that when senior management delegates decision-making authority by actively engaging employees in organisational processes, to the extent that they are empowered to establish their own metrics and align them with the firm's strategies, the outcome of their decisions will not only enhance productivity and commitment, but also have a positive influence on the organization's survival. We therefore, state the following hypotheses:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between employee empowerment and adaptability of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between employee empowerment and employee productivity of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Intellectual Stimulation and Organisational Performance

Numerous existing empirical findings have demonstrated a substantial correlation between intellectual stimulation and both employee innovativeness and organisational survival (Elkins & Keller, 2003; Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009; Ryan et al., 2012; Ganga et al., 2017). In their study, Boerner, Eisenbeiss, & Griesser (2017) discovered a robust and positive correlation between the intellectual stimulation aspect of visionary leadership and the level of inventive effort exhibited by employees. In addition, it was discovered that visionary leaders fostered the development of their followers' ability to seek intellectual approaches in addressing organisational challenges, engaging in situational analysis, critically examining deeply ingrained beliefs or assumptions, and ultimately encouraging innovative and creative problem-solving methods for conventional issues (Bycio, et al., 1995). According to Turunc et al. (2010), employees that are intellectually motivated are expected to exhibit a heightened level of dedication, enhanced performance, and a propensity for engaging in creative practices. Therefore, leaders who demonstrate effectiveness in fostering the dissemination of creativity are seen as successful in cultivating a climate conducive to innovative dynamics (Aryee et al., 2012). With respect to the above postulates, we hypothesized as follows:

H_{03}: Intellectual stimulation has no significant relationship with adaptability of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

H_{04}: There is no significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and employee productivity of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

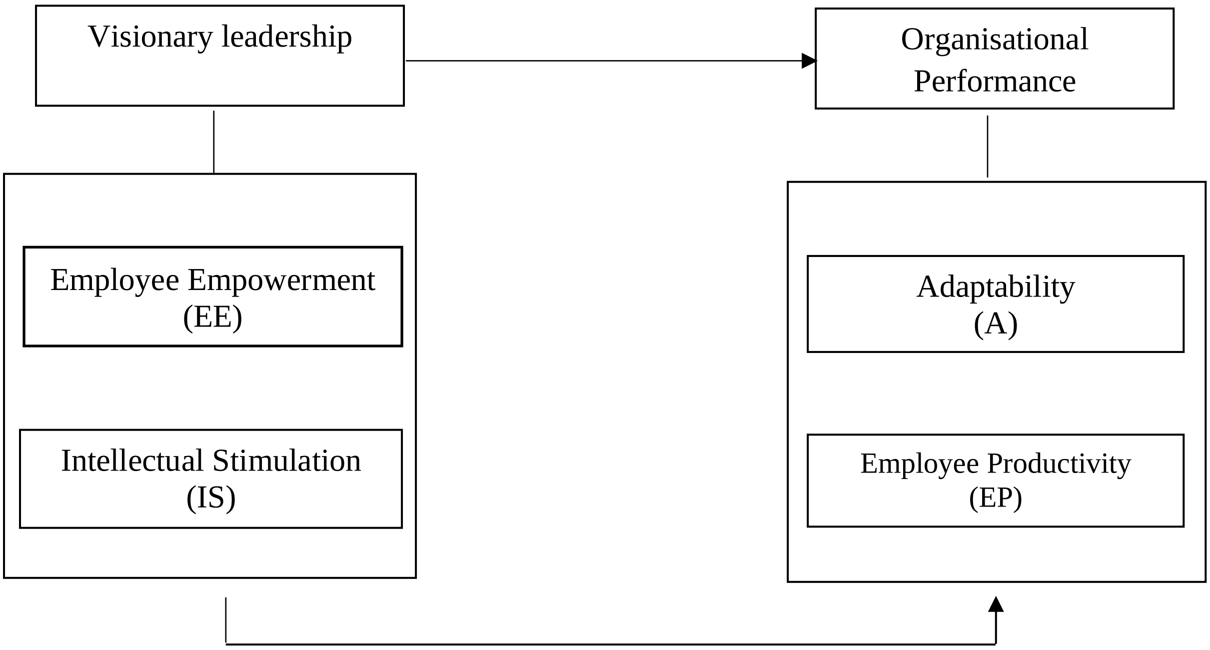

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study
Source: Adapted from Conger (2017); Shahab, Sobari & Udim (2018).

Theoretical Review

Transformational Leadership Theory

This research is grounded in the theoretical framework of transformational leadership theory. Bass (1996) is credited as the pioneering academic who introduced the paradigm of transformative leadership. Bass and Avolio (1996) made significant advancements to this idea. The existing body of research provides evidence supporting the proposition that information sharing behaviour may be predicted by transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1996; Conger, 2017). The integration of many components of transformational theory aligns effectively with the management of knowledge. According to Suresh & Jaleel (2015), the productivity of employees tends to increase when they are granted the autonomy to generate novel ideas, communicate these ideas with colleagues, and experiment with their innovative concepts. Transformational leadership fosters an environment that is favourable for the generation, dissemination, and use of knowledge. Transformational leaders engage their staff to generate and disseminate information through the utilisation of charisma, fostering intellectual growth, and providing individualised attention to employees. Bass (1996) defines transformational leadership as the act of guiding followers to transcend their immediate self-interests. It enhances the maturity and ideals of those who follow it, while also fostering a sense of success, self-actualization, and care for the well-being of others, the organisation, and society as a whole. Transformational leaders have the ability to motivate and inspire their followers via the utilisation of four distinct yet interconnected behavioural elements. These elements include idealised influence, individualised concern, inspiring motivation, and intellectual stimulation (Bass & Avolio, 1996; Jung et al., 2003).

Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design. A cross-sectional survey is conducted to assess the degree to which the independent variable may be utilised for the purpose of explaining or predicting the variability observed in the dependent variable. This particular study design allows the researcher to have access to specified research items located within a defined geographical area during a given moment in time. The population of this study consists of top and middle level managers of oil and gas companies in Rivers State. This study focused on the upstream oil and gas companies. Available information obtained from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources in Nigeria, indicated that there are six (6) major oil and gas companies in the Nigeria, whose operational base can be found in Rivers State. These companies include; Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC), Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MOPNU), Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL), Nigeria Agip Oil Company Limited (NAOC), Total Petroleum Nigeria Limited (TPNL), Texaco Overseas Petroleum Company of Nigeria Limited (TOPCN). Due to their established experience and knowledge, certain departmental heads and top positions such as plant managers, operations managers, procurement managers, head admin, accountants/auditors, head business units, head security, foremen, and head safety officers; across the six (6) companies were considered in this study. This gives a total of fifty-four (54) employees (respondents); hence the study's population size. In addition, the study adopted census sampling technique as all fifty-four employees were administered copies of the questionnaire for their objective opinion about the subject matter.

Both primary and secondary data were used for this study. The chosen instrument utilised a five-point scale consisting of the following categories: Strongly Agree (SA) with a value of 5, Agree (A) with a value of 4, Undecided (U) with a value of 3, Disagree (D) with a value of 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) with a value of 1. The Cronbach alpha coefficients provided for the constructs are as follows: employee empowerment (0.75), intellectual stimulation (0.78), adaptability (0.71), and employee productivity (0.77). All of the coefficient values above 0.7, so satisfying Nunnally's (1978) guidelines of being more than 0.70. The Spearman rank order correlation is a statistical measure used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between visionary leadership and organizational performance. It is a non-parametric method that is based on the ranks of the data rather than the significance of the coefficients was assessed in order to test the four (4) proposed hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Respondents Questionnaire Distribution Rate

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distributed	54	100
Retrieved	51	94
Not retrieved	3	5
Retrieved usable	49	91
Retrieved not usable	2	4

Source: Field Data, 2024.

The table above displayed questionnaire distribution rate to respondents. Accordingly, a total of fifty-four (54) copies representing 100% were administered, however, only fifty-one (51) copies representing 94% were retrieved. More so, out of the number that were retrieved, only forty-nine representing 91% were found useful to the study.

Hypotheses testing

Test of Hypothesis One

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between employee empowerment and adaptability of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis between Employee Empowerment and Adaptability

Correlations				
			Employee Empowerment	Adaptability
Spearman's rho	Employee Empowerment	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.867**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	49	49
	Adaptability	Correlation Coefficient	.867**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	49	49

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

Decision: The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted based on the significance level (alpha value) of 0.01% and the obtained P value of 0.000. The findings of this study suggest that there exists a statistically significant and favourable correlation between the empowerment of employees and the flexibility of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between employee empowerment and employee productivity of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis on Employee Empowerment and Employee Productivity

Correlations				
			Employee Empowerment	Employee Productivity
Spearman's rho	Employee Empowerment	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.812**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	49	49
	Employee Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	.812**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	49	49

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

Decision: Given that the P value (0.000) is smaller than the alpha value (0.01%), which represents the predetermined threshold of significance, we may conclude that the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. The findings of this study indicate a statistically significant and robust positive correlation between employee empowerment and employee productivity within the context of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Test of Hypothesis Three

H_{03}: Intellectual stimulation has no significant relationship with adaptability of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis on Intellectual Stimulation and Adaptability

Correlation				
			Intellectual Stimulation	Adaptability
Spearman's rho	Intellectual Stimulation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.899**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	49	49
	Adaptability	Correlation Coefficient	.899**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	49	49

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

Decision: Given that the P-value (0.000) is smaller than the alpha value (0.01%), which represents the predetermined level of significance, we may conclude that the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This implies that there exists a statistically significant and robust positive correlation between intellectual stimulation and adaptability within the context of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Test of Hypothesis Four

H_{04}: There is no significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and employee productivity of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis between Intellectual Stimulation and Employee Productivity

Correlations				
			Intellectual Stimulation	Employee Productivity
Spearman's rho	Intellectual Stimulation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.911**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	49	49
	Employee Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	.911**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	49	49

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

Decision: The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted based on the observed P value (0.000), which is lower than the predetermined alpha value (0.01%), representing the level of significance. This finding indicates a statistically significant and robust positive correlation between intellectual stimulation and employee productivity within the context of oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Employee empowerment has a positive and significant relationship with performance

The findings from hypotheses one and two indicate a statistically significant level of rho = 85.70% and 81.20 %, respectively. The findings of this study indicate a statistically significant and favourable correlation between employee empowerment and the organizational performance of oil and gas companies in Rivers State. The findings of this study align with those of Cheung & Wong (2010), which revealed a robust and favourable correlation between psychological empowerment and organisational longevity. This suggests that when senior management delegates decision-making authority by actively engaging employees in organisational processes, to the extent that they are empowered to establish their own metrics and align them with the firm's strategies, the outcome of their decisions will not only enhance productivity and commitment, but also have a positive impact on the organization's survival.

Intellectual stimulation has a positive and significant relationship with performance

The results obtained from testing hypotheses three and four indicated a correlation level of rho = 80.8% and 81.2% respectively. These findings suggest that there exists a statistically significant positive association between intellectual stimulation and the performance of oil and gas companies in Rivers State. This result is consistent with the research conducted by Bycio et al. (1995), which demonstrated a significant and favourable association between the intellectual stimulation aspect of visionary leadership and employees' level of inventive effort. In addition, it was discovered that visionary leaders fostered the development of their followers to explore intellectual approaches in addressing organisational challenges, engaging in situational analysis, challenging established beliefs or assumptions, and ultimately encouraging innovative and creative problem-solving methods for conventional issues (Bycio, et al., 1995). Furthermore, it is often believed that individuals who are intellectually motivated exhibit a heightened degree of dedication, enhanced performance, and a propensity for engaging in creative behaviour (Turunc et al., 2010).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Visionary leadership has been empirically validated as a dependable management strategy for enhancing organizational adaptability and employee productivity. Furthermore, visionary leaders promote intellectual stimulation by encouraging subordinates to critically reassess their own established views, assumptions, and values, as well as those of the leader. This process is essential for identifying and addressing any outdated or incorrect perspectives that may hinder the effective resolution of present challenges. Furthermore, the study unveiled that intellectual stimulation is an essential characteristic of a visionary leader to improve organizational performance. This entails inspiring subordinates to fulfil their assigned duties in alignment with the institutional norms and values of the organisation. Consequently, this fosters the enhancement of employees' productivity and adaptability.

In view of the conclusion of this research, the following recommendations were advanced:

i. In relation to the first and second study goals, it is recommended that managers of oil and gas companies in Rivers State consider decentralising activities or processes by actively engaging employees to get fully involved in decision-making, as a means to enhance organisational performance and ultimate survival. This approach entails actively involving staff by assigning them significant responsibilities or duties. This will foster a sense of belonging among organizational members, consequently, enhancing their commitment not just to fulfilling their immediate responsibilities but also to the overall attainment of the organization's objectives. This suggests that it is important for management to grant authority and autonomy to their employees in order to foster motivation, dedication, satisfaction, and ultimately contribute to the organization's attainment of its objectives and goals.

ii. In order to achieve the third and fourth objectives, it is recommended that managers of oil and gas companies in Rivers State actively promote the process of self-reflection among their subordinates. This process should involve a critical examination of personal beliefs, assumptions, and values, including those held by the leader, which may no longer be relevant or suitable for addressing present challenges. Organisations should provide workers with the chance to address work-related challenges by leveraging their cognitive abilities.

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