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EMPLOYEE COMPETENCE MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE VITALITY OF INDIGENOUS OIL AND GAS COMPANIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the moderating role of the administrative environment on the relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality of indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design with primary data generated through a structured 5-point Likert scaled questionnaire. The population of the study consisted of 33 indigenous oil and gas companies with a total number of 132 respondents. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The bivariate hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient while the moderating effect of the administrative environment was tested using the Zero-Order partial correlation with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality of indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria. Therefore, the study concluded that a positive work environment in companies in South-South Nigeria made employees feel good about coming to work and this provided the motivation to keep them throughout the day at the workplace which stimulates corporate vitality. The study recommended that the management of Indigenous oil and gas companies should try as much as possible build a work environment that attracts, retains and motivates its employees so as to help them work comfortably and increase organization productivity.

Keywords: Employee Competence Management, Corporate Vitality, Administrative Environment

CITATION: Employee competence management and corporate vitality of indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 8 (4), 579 – 593.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century business environment is dynamic and ever-changing; this requires corporate executives to develop strong institutions to effectively adapt to the dynamics of the business world in order to ensure organizational vitality, survival and long term success (Hanaysha, 2016). Hence, adapting the organization to a business environment for sustainable corporate growth requires the workplace to have the right skills, knowledge and competences (Tripathi & Agrawal, 2014). Thus, having a workforce with the requisite competencies demand a robust development and management of employees' knowledge base and competences (Tripathi & Agrawal, 2014; Ellstrom & Kock, 2018). Importantly, this developed talent pool in the organization will successfully drive the firm; ensure its vitality and strategic survival (Akpotu & Ozioko, 2020).

Corporate vitality is the business and economic health of the workplace, which contributes to the going concern of the firm. According to Akpotu and Konyefa (2018), the concept of corporate vitality is the energy that drives a company's competitiveness and achievement of goals and objectives. Vitality in general, refers to health or growth and defines the healthy existence of an organization. According to Vicenzi and Adkins (2000), financial, intellectual and creative growth of the organization can be considered as the determining factors of organizational vitality. Thus, a firm's vitality is the operational strength of the workplace that is sustainable for the company's growth and survival. However, the vitality of the firm is largely dependent on the employees' competence and strategic knowledge management (Bishwas, 2015). Effectively managing the firm's competence, developing staff knowledge base will ensure corporate vitality. This is because human capital is the most important asset of the firm, and all other resources of an institution are subservient to the employees at work (Bishwas, 2015).

Employee competence management is an important construct because, devoting resources to

the education, development of skills and competences of the workforce is imperative to the productivity and competitiveness of an organization (Ellstrom & Kock, 2018). Thus, employee competence management therefore, is a means of ensuring that workers skills, knowledge and attitudes are the right fit for the job requirements at all times. If gaps exist between an employee's current competence and the right competence required by the workplace, management training and development is required to improve the knowledge base of workers so as to meet job specifications of the organization (Evwierhurhoma & Oga, 2020). Hence, the expertise needed to implement tasks at work which are the combination of attitudes, knowledge, skills, perception etc should be effectively managed. This will ensure employees' performance, productivity, corporate vitality and growth. However, this can only be possible with the right working environment.

The term competence has attracted an immense interest from both practitioners and scholars from psychology and human resource management (HRM). It cropped up from the studies of psychological characteristics of employees and managers as regard to their task performance (McClelland, 1973; Boyatzis, 1982). According to Shippmann, Ash, Batjtsta, Carr, Eyde, Hesketh and Sanchez (2000) empirical studies revealed that competence received attention from the psychology field in the 20th century. But the work of McClelland (1973) created the foundation for application and investigation of this construct in human resource management practices and studies (Vathanophas & Thai-ngam, 2007; Guerrero & De los Ríos, 2012). McClelland (1973) studied testing for competence rather than for Intelligence. The study revealed that it is possible for students to perform excellently in their lives and careers though they performed poorly during their university years. He posits that traditional intelligence or aptitude tests as well as school grades are not measures for determining either job performance in the organization or other significant life results.

McClelland recommended that it is enviable not to concentrate only on the development of conventional cognitive abilities and knowledge such as writing, reading and calculating abilities rather such variables as interpersonal abilities, ego development, leadership, communication abilities, patience, goal-setting ability etc (Wong, 2020). Boyatzis (1982) expanded the work of McClelland (1973) through his book the competent manager: A mode for effective performance; he developed job competence assessment (JCA) Technique in order to ascertain the attributes that differentiate top performers from average performers in managerial context in United States (Vathanophas & Thaingam, 2007; Omran & Suleiman, 2017). The construct of competency has since spread globally.

Puteh, Kalianna and Alam (2016) studied employee core competencies and organizational excellence: An interpretative analysis. The study was carried out in Malaysian service based industries. The study adopted a qualitative approach using an in depth interview. The information was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. Zeb-Obipi (2007) in his doctoral thesis studied worker competence management and corporate productivity performance. The study employed a quantitative approach and the study adopted a cross sectional survey. The dimensions used are competence planning, competence development, competence monitoring while competence application was introduced in a later study (Zeb-Obipi, 2017).

Manani and Ngui (2019) studied the effect of employee competence on employee job performance in Humanitarian organizations: A case study of the world food programme, Kenya. The study employed descriptive research design, using stratified random sampling and simple sampling

method and the data collected using questionnaire which was analyzed using inferential statistics. The dimensions used are academic competencies, leadership competencies, communication competencies and problem-solving competencies. Salman, Ganie and Saleem (2020) studied employee competencies as predictors of organizational performance: A study of public and private sector Banks. The study employed a cross sectional research design and structured questionnaire. The dimensions used are self-competence, team competence, communication competence and social competence. Gabriel, George and Adim (2021) studied environmental dynamism and corporate vitality of fast moving consumer goods companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study used cross sectional survey design and responsiveness and innovativeness as its dimensions. Most of the aforementioned studies have examined the collective effect of employee competences on organizational performance. However, the relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality, and the moderating influence of the work environment were neglected by previous research works. Having identified these gaps in the existing literature, the researcher developed interest to investigate the correlation between employee competence management and corporate vitality in the indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria.

The purpose for this study is to empirically fill the gap by investigating the moderating role of the administrative environment on the relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality of indigenous oil and gas companies in the South-South, Nigeria.



Figure 1: Conceptual Model
Source: Researchers (2021)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

The Resource Based View

The resource based theory of the firm was propounded or developed by Edith Penrose in 1959. In her thesis which is thought provoking and ground breaking entitled "the theory of the growth of the firm" (Hanssan, 2015), she explored the relevance of the resource based theory to management of organizations. This work was highly recognized as the philosophical underpinning of the resource based view of the firm. Barney (1991) defined these Resources as valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable. The perspective of this theory is that companies are seen as a pool of resources orchestrated in an administrative structure and that the behaviour of people and the development of their knowledge and competences is critical to the growth and development of the organization (Hanssan, 2015).

The resource based theory is an internally focused prescription of the firm. It is an inside-out view of the workplace of how managers leverage internal resources for the survival and growth of the firm (Madhani, 2017). Thus, the resource based theory is dependent on resources existing within the company which enhance work productivity and performance. Importantly, these resources are tangible and intangible assets which are human capital, machines, capital, methods, materials and information which are valuable, rare, inimitable, non-substitutable which are employed in formulating and implementing policies and strategies for the firm's competitive advantages (Mweru & Muya, 2016). Hence, company's owned resources are the basis for strategy decisions while competing in industries Theriou, Aggelidis and Theriou (2009), without resources existing in the workplace, the organization may not take advantage of emerging opportunities in the industry.

The importance of the resources based theory is that, possession of distinctive resources,

competences and capabilities enhance the performance and future competitiveness of the company in the market. Importantly, most times resources and the capabilities of the company are too costly for the competition to replicate and thus, lead to sustainable competitive advantage (Curado, 2006; Hanssan, 2015). It is therefore important for organizations to have resources such as human capital, materials, information, methods of production etc which should be employed for the provision of value for man and society.

The implication of the resource based theory to the present study; employee competence management and corporate vitality is that critical resources such as land, labour, capital and management are relevant and provide a good working environment for the management of employee competence and the vitality of the firm. Again, for the survival of the firm for which employees are developed, other resources are needed to drive the organization. Management of the competence of employees cannot be successful if company's management disregards the use and deployment of other resources at work. Hence, the relevance of the resource based theory of the firm.

Employee Competence Management

Competence is the utilization of inherent and acquired knowledge, skill and attitude entailed on the job for maximum performance and achievement of the set goals and objectives. Zeb-Obipi (2007) posits that competence management is the expertise level on a job that includes an exceptional mixture of knowledge, skill and attitude demanded for or involved in the performance of a given job. Boyatzis (1982) defined competency as an intrinsic characteristic of an individual arbitrarily related to an effective or high-level performance such as skills, motivations, knowledge own image etc in completing one or more identified tasks. These definitions bring us to the comparison between these two terms.

There have been misperceptions about the more accurate term to use competence or competency when analyzing competent work (Zeb-Obipi, 2007).

Scholars have argued that the term competency is a fuzzy concept that is capable of causing diverse confusions (Delamare-Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). This occurs when competency is used in place of competence in studies without adequate justification (Wong, 2020). Hence, implying that there is no distinction between these two terms and that it can be used interchangeably (Vazirani, 2010). However, empirical review has shown that competence and competency are two distinct paradigms of studies in the Human resource management field. The first one is a task-oriented functional approach while the second one is a person-oriented approach. The former is dominant in the United Kingdom while the latter is dominant in the United State of America (Wong, 2020).

Employee competence management is the efforts of firm's leaders in the identification and building of employees' skills, knowledge, attitudes required for maximum execution of task in order to improve the performance of members of the organization and the firm (Lekshmi & Radhika, 2016). Hence, employee competence management focused on the practice of the optimization of employees' job roles and objectives through the management of staff skills, knowledge and abilities to successfully drive the performance of the workplace. It is a judicious way of using the skills and knowledge of employees to bring about higher productivity and performance of the organization. Employee competence management apart from being a standard performance, it also has to do with change towards employee individual guidance, focus and responsibility that propels excellence as a result of adequate management of skills, knowledge and abilities (Lekshmi & Radhika, 2016).

Employee competence management is distinct from performance management from the premise that while competence management deals with inputs and behaviour dimensions of employees, performance management is the results or output of the job roles performed by organization's members (Ewrierhurhoma & Oga, 2020). Hence,

both variables are important to the growth and vitality of the firm as well as its over-all performance. In other words, employees' competences and their performances should be consistently managed by executives of corporations and institutions. This will help corporate agility and success in the workplace (Ngai, Chau & Chan, 2011). Thus, competence and performance management are twin concepts for a firm's attainment of competitiveness and superior performance in the industry.

Employee competence management is the planning, development, monitoring and application of employees' skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours with a view to ensuring that the organization performs at optimal levels (Zeb-Obipi 2017; Akpotu & Konyefa, 2018). Hence, the competence of the employees at work should be well planned, it must be developed through training and education, the skills and knowledge should be applied on the jobs and this should be monitored by supervisors for corrective competency behaviours (Zeb-Obipi, 2017). Thus, the organization should have a culture that will support effective management of employee competencies. Top echelon management should institute a policy framework for employee competency management and this framework should be effectively and efficiently implemented for organizations superior performance (Kupczyk & Stor, 2017).

Corporate Vitality

Globalization and trade liberalisation has made the world a global village with industries national and global competitiveness. This has made the business environment to be dynamic, turbulent and ever-changing. Executives of organizations are required to manage institutions with the right energy and vitality for growth, resilience and management dynamics of change in the face of the dynamics of the business environment (Hanaysha, 2016). Hence, managing a successful business in the face of a changing business environment requires the institution of a vital corporation. Corporate vitality is the business and economic health of the

organization which ensures the stability and going concern of the workforce (Akpotu & Konyefa, 2018).

In the study of strategic learning and corporate vitality, Akpotu and Ozioko (2020), opined that corporate vitality is the energy that drives organization's competitiveness and achievement of its goals and objectives. It is the activated pool of energy across the organization's functions, strategic business and support systems that enhance the achievement of corporate goals and objectives. Corporate vitality according to Smith, Ehala and Giles (2017) is defined as the energy that propels and makes groups and organizations thrive to success. The authors articulated that, the more vitality an organization perceives itself to have, the more likely the firm will thrive as a collective entity or an organization. Thus, the vitality of the corporation should have the support of various demographics, institutional support and status (Smith *et al.*, 2017). However, corporate vitality is a function of the existence of organizational resources; human capital, machines, methods and material utilized by management to achieve tactical and strategic objectives of the firm.

Corporate vitality according to Smith *et al.* (2017) is defined as the energy that propels and makes groups and organizations thrive to success. The authors articulated that, the more vitality an organization perceives itself to have, the more likely the firm will thrive as a collective entity or an organization. Thus, the vitality of the corporation should have the support of various demographics, institutional support and status (Smith *et al.*, 2017). Hence, corporate vitality has the disposition to stemming the capacity of organizations for competitiveness and attainment of corporate goals and objectives (Akpotu & Konyefa, 2018). Therefore, the vitality of the firm activates the energy of their entire work system and drives the system towards achievement of goals.

Corporate vitality makes available the needed capacity and competences that drive actions at goals. It also looked at the ability of corporate

management to harness resources that are needed for industry competitiveness. It therefore means that a vital organization should be able to meet the firm's stakeholder's needs and at the same time make modalities that ensure total goal attainment for the company (Jeruz, 2014). The focus of corporate vitality is to initiate, prosecute and sustain action at goals and objectives. The characteristics of the firm's vitality are resourcefulness, responsiveness and practice of innovativeness. These are the pillars upon which a vital organization can remain focused and competitive in the industry.

Corporate vitality therefore, is a laudable construct in the management of human organization. A vital organization is associated with the right strength, energy and resources to work and remain competitive in their chosen industries. Vitality helps to enhance corporate competitiveness and performance in the industry. The next section will discuss operational definitions of corporate vitality from different lenses.

Administrative Environment

The concept of administration or administrative is the activities of groups cooperating to accomplish common or predetermined goals and objectives. It is the cooperative human action or cooperative group behaviour that helps an organization to achieve set goals, aspirations and objectives (Dunock & Dimock, 2015). Thus, administration can be public or private administration. Public administration entails managing the affairs of the public such as the government of a state, municipality, nation and its agencies or institutions (Ackoff, 2008). In contrast, private administration means the management of private corporations.

Employee competence management in the work organization usually enhances the good health of the firm. Effective management of the competence of the workforce improves organizational vitality. This foregoing has been empirically validated by studies. Zeb-Obipi (2007), investigated the nexus between worker competence management and corporate productivity performance in the context

specific of manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The study employed the Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) and the findings of the study is that worker competence management is positively and significantly related with corporate productivity performance. It is important to note that, workplace management should effectively manage workers or employees' competence through education and training; this will improve productivity performance of the organization. This also corroborates the works of Zeb-Obipi (2017), thus, employee competence management is a laudable construct for workplace or institutional vitality.

Furthermore, Sita and Pinapati (2013), studied the relationship between competence management and organizational performance in the context of Indian IT organizations. The study employed exploratory research design and the findings of the study is that, competence management positively and significantly correlates with organizational performance of Indian IT organizations. This findings is highly supported by the works of (Akpotu & Konyefa, 2018; Akpotu & Ozioko, 2020). The scholars investigated managerial mentoring, strategic learning as correlates of corporate vitality. The studies employed regression analysis and the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient respectively. It was revealed that managerial mentoring positively impacts corporate vitality. Again, it was also proved that strategic learning in an organization significantly correlates corporate vitality in the aviation industry in Nigeria.

The management of employee competence through strategic knowledge management has improved organizational vitality. Bishwas (2011) investigated the foregoing relationship with the help of the qualitative research paradigm. It was revealed that employee knowledge management positively and significantly enhances organizational vitality. This findings is also in agreement with the empirical works of Tripathi and Agrawal (2014), the study examines competence based management and organizational performance, using qualitative

research approach. The findings of the study is that competence based management is positively and significantly relates with organizational performance.

The development of employee competences through skills, knowledge and attitude development at work brings about corporate performance. Ellstrom and Kock (2018), studied the relationship between employee competence development and workplace performance. The study made use of qualitative research design and the findings of the study is that competence development in the workplace relates with workplace performance. This findings is highly supported with the study of Evwierhurma and Oga (2020), this study investigated the impact of employees' competence management on organizational agility of deposit money banks in Rivers State of Nigeria. The study employed the spearman rank order correlation coefficient and the findings of the study are that employee competence management has a strong and significant influence on organizational agility of deposit money banks in Rivers state Nigeria.

From the expositions above, employee job competence implemented by the indigenous oil and gas companies in the South-South, Nigeria organizations in Nigeria will bring about corporate vitality of such firms. We therefore state the following hypotheses.

Moderating Role of Administrative Environment on Employee Competence Management and Corporate Vitality

Organizations' work environment can have an impact on employee competence management and corporate vitality in most industries. The works of Mohammed and Faruq (2017) is highly supportive to the foregoing. This study investigated the moderating effect of the physical working environment on job attitude and employee performance. The study employed the regression analysis and the findings of the study is that the physical work environment positively moderates the relationship between job attitude and employee performance. Again, job attitude and

employee performance are positively and significantly related. Thus, John-Eke and Bayo (2021) posit that any firm that wants to be sustained and remain relevant in business must continually adapt to all the factors of their operational environment.

The foregoing is highly supported with the study of George and Jayan (2013), who studied organizational culture as a dimension of the working environment, its moderating influence on job attitude and personal effectiveness. The study employed the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient. The study findings revealed that organizational culture which is a critical component of the working environment positively and significantly moderates the relationship between job attitude and personal effectiveness. Again, this findings is also corroborated with the study findings of Chandrasekhar (2011), the author studied the impact of workplace environment on organizational performance in public sector organizations. With the use of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation, it was discovered that, workplace environment positively and significantly impacts organizational performance.

Furthermore, the influence of the physical environment of an organization on workplace performance cannot be over-emphasized. McGuire and McLaren (2009) studied the impact of the physical environment on employee commitment in the context of call centre. The study also investigated the mediating role of employee well-being and team performance management. It was revealed that the physical working environment impacts positively on employee commitment through the mediating role of employee well-being and team performance management. This is corroborated with the work of Asghar, Alexander and Hussai (2019), the authors posited that environmental conditions help to shape the vitality of employees and their sustainable behaviours. It was revealed that a good working environment will positively improve employee vitality and positive behaviour of employees. In contrast, a physically

dangerous work environment creates negative employees' vitality and unacceptable employees' behaviours in the work organization.

- **H₀₁**: There is no significant relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality of indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria.
- **H₀₂**: Administration environment does not significantly moderate the relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality in indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design with primary data generated through a structured 5-point Likert scaled questionnaire. The population of the study consists of 33 indigenous oil and gas companies with a total number of 132 respondents. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The bivariate hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient while the moderating effect of administrative environment was tested using the Zero-Order partial correlation with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 level of significance. Out of the 132 questionnaire distributed, 115 were retrieved and treated for further analysis. This represented a 87.12% response rate. The Bivariate relationship was tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. While the moderating effect of the administrative environment was tested using a zero order partial correlation coefficient.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

The secondary data analysis was carried out using the Spearman rank order correlation tool at a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the tests cover hypotheses H_{01} to H_{02} which were bivariate and all stated in the null form. We have relied on the

Spearman rank order correlation coefficient to undertake the analysis. The 0.05 significance level is adopted as criterion for the probability of either accepting the null hypotheses at ($p>0.05$) or rejecting the null hypotheses at ($p<0.05$).

We commenced by first presenting a proof of existing relationships.

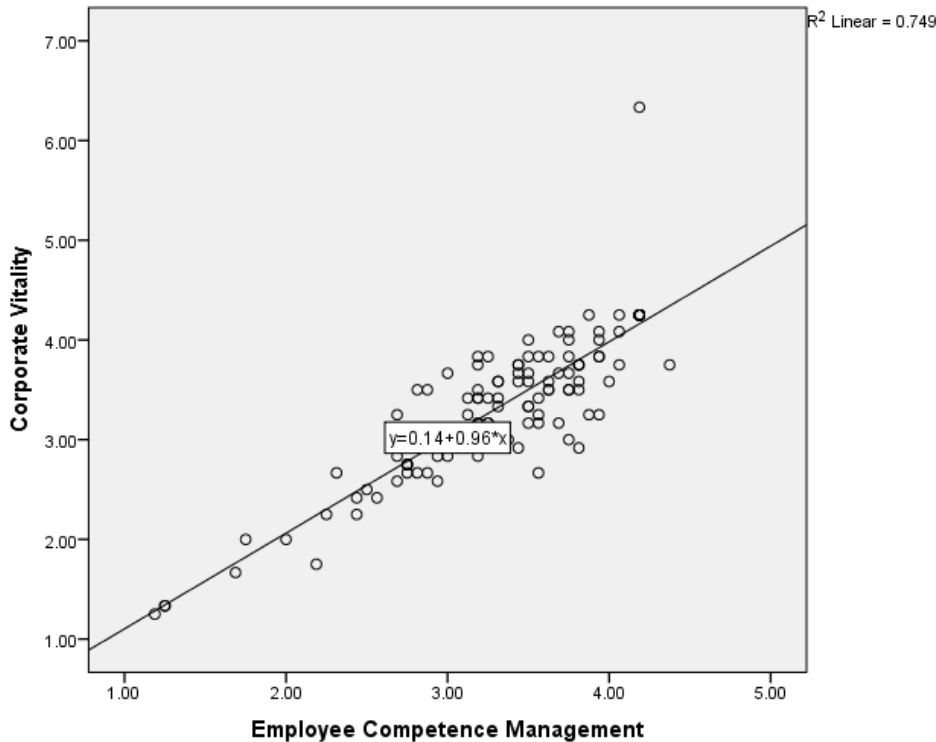


Figure 2: Scatter graph for the relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality

The scatter plot graph shows an R^2 linear value of (0.749) depicting a strong viable and positive relationship between the two constructs. The implication is that an increase in employee competence management simultaneously brings

about an increase in the level of corporate vitality. The scatter diagram has provided vivid evaluation of the closeness of the relationship among the pairs of variables through the nature of their concentration.

Table 1: Correlations for Employee Competence and Corporate Vitality

			Employee Competence Management	Corporate Vitality
Spearman's rho	Employee Competence Management	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.865**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	115	115
	Corporate Vitality	Correlation Coefficient	.865**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	115	115

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

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

Table 1 showed a Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.865 on the relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality. This value implies that a very strong relationship exists between the variables. The direction of the relationship indicates that the correlation is positive; implying that an increase in corporate vitality was as a result of the adoption of employee competence management in the indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria. Similarly displayed in table 1 is the statistical test of

significance (p-value) which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. From the result obtained the sig-calculated is less than significant level ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality in the indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 2: Correlations Matrix for the Moderating Effect of Administrative

Control Variables			Employee Competence Management	Corporate Vitality	Administrative
-none ^a	Employee Competence Management	Correlation	1.000	.865	.826
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		Df	0	113	113
	Corporate Vitality	Correlation	.865	1.000	.645
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		Df	113	0	113
	Administrative	Correlation	.826	.645	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		Df	113	113	0
Administrative	Employee Competence Management	Correlation	1.000	.772	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		Df	0	112	
	Corporate Vitality	Correlation	.772	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	
		Df	112	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

Source: SPSS Output version 23.0

H₀₂: Administrative environment does not significantly moderate the relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality of the indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria.

Table 2 depicts the zero-order correlation between employee competence management and corporate vitality shows that the correlation coefficient when the administrative environment is not moderating the variables; and this is positive and very high at 0.865. The partial correlation controlling for the administrative environment, however, is also high with a rho value of 0.772. The observed positive

"relationship" between employee competence management and corporate vitality is due to underlying relationships between each of those variables and administrative environment. Therefore, the administrative environment has a positive and strong moderating effect on the relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality in indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria.

Reflecting on the zero correlation, we found that both employee competence management and corporate vitality are positively correlated with the

administrative environment, the control variable. Removing the effect of this control variable increases the correlation between the other two variables to be 0.772 and significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, therefore based on the $p=0.000<0.05$ we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that, Administrative environment significantly moderate the relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality of the indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results revealed that the administrative environment significantly moderates the relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality in indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South, Nigeria. This finding corroborates with the finding of Mohammed and Faruq (2017) who investigated the moderating effect of the physical working environment on job attitude and employee performance and found that the physical work environment positively moderates the relationship between job attitude and employee performance.

This corroborated with the work of Asghar, Alexander and Hussai (2019), the authors posited that environmental conditions help to shape the vitality of employees and their sustainable behaviours. It was revealed that a good working environment will positively improve employee vitality and positive behaviour of employees. In contrast, a physically dangerous work environment creates negative employees' vitality and unacceptable employees' behaviours in the work organization.

Mehbood and Bhutto (2012) argue that the concept of work environment is a comprehensive one including the physical, psychological and social aspects that mark up the working condition. Also, the work environment involves all the aspects which act and react on the body and mind of an employee. They also described work environment as the environment in which people are working and a wide category that incorporates the physical

scenery(noise, equipment, heat), fundamentals of the job itself (work load, task, complexity),extensive business features (culture, history) and even extra business background (industry setting, workers relation).

Similarly, Abdul and Raheela (2015) study on the impact of the working environment on job satisfaction corroborates our study finding. The results indicated a positive relationship between working environment and employee job satisfaction. Skalli, Theodossions and Vasileious (2008) showed that there is a positive link between work environment and intrinsic aspect of job satisfaction. Buhai, Cottini, and Westergaad-Nielsen (2008) found that a firm can increase its productivity through the improvement of physical dimensions of the work environment (internal climate) and may have a positive impact on firms' productivity.

Also, the finding was in tandem with Hammer, Saksvik, Nytro, Torvatn, and Bayazit (2004) which focused on the extent to which employees perceive their workplace environment as fulfilling their intrinsic, extrinsic, and social needs and their need to stay in the organization. They also analyzed the impact of perception of workplace environments on employee commitment and turnover in the organization, he concluded that if the employees are provided with enabling workplace environmental support, they will be highly satisfied and show high level of commitment towards their organization and hence low turnover rate. More so, a research by Roelofsen (2002) indicates that improving the working environment reduces complaints and absenteeism while increasing productivity further authenticates our study findings. Better physical workplace environment will boost the employee morale and ultimately their performance. A study carried out by Chevalier (2004) revealed that when environmental supports are sound, employees are better equipped to do what is expected of them. Chandrasekar (2011) in her study found out that the workplace

environment plays a big role in increasing employees' performance.

Findings by Ajala (2012) indicated that workplace environmental elements such as sufficient light, absence of noise, proper ventilation and layout arrangement substantially increase employees' productivity. Khan, Azhar, Parveen, Naeem and Sohail (2011) investigated the impact of workplace environment and infrastructure on employees' performance from education in Pakistan and concluded that incentives at the workplace had a positive impact on employees' performance. To achieve high levels of employee productivity, organizations must ensure that the physical environment is conducive to organizational needs facilitating interaction and privacy, formality and informality, functionality and cross-disciplinarily. Consequently, the physical environment is a tool that can be leveraged both to improve business results (Mohr, 1996) and employee well-being (Huang, Robertson and Chang, 2004). Ensuring adequate facilities are provided to employees is critical to generating greater employee commitment and productivity. The provision of inadequate equipment and adverse working

conditions has been shown to affect employee commitment and intention to stay with the organization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, the study concluded that worker competence management is significantly related with corporate vitality in indigenous oil and gas companies in the South-South, Nigeria. The study further concluded that the administrative work environment significantly moderates the relationship between employee competence management and corporate vitality in indigenous oil and gas companies in South-South. Implying that implies that a positive work environment makes employees feel good about coming to work and this provides the motivation to keep them throughout the day at the workplace.

The study recommended that the management of indigenous oil and gas companies should try as much as possible to build a work environment that attracts, retains and motivates its employees so as to help them work comfortably and increase organization productivity.

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