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Business Recovery and Organizational Responsiveness of Telecommunication Firms in South-South, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined the relationship between business recovery and organizational responsiveness of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria. The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. Questionnaire copies were distributed to 28 management staff from the 4 GSM (Mtn, Globacom, Airtel and 9moble) telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria, from which data for the study was collected. The hypotheses 1 - 3 which are considered as bivariate were all tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level. The findings identified the processes and actions concerned with managing and coordinating business life-cycles dynamics as essential in enabling and enhancing the responsiveness of the telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria. The findings revealed that business recovery significantly relate with organizational responsiveness of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria. Therefore, the study recommends that the management and coordination of business recovery by the management of telecommunication firms Nigeria, should emphasize on not only the development and recuperation of operations and other related actions and goals, but should also emphasize on building connectedness integration and embeddedness in the organization through the timely and consistent flow of information and the enactment of platforms that support feedback and involvement from various stakeholders in the organization.*

Keyword: *Business Recovery, Organizational Responsiveness, Adaptability, Innovativeness, Agility*

INTRODUCTION

Organizational responsiveness creates the organizational ability to continuously, adequately adjust and adapt in appropriate time the organization's strategic direction in core business in relation to the changing circumstances of the environment and to cope with the strategic discontinuities and disruptions arising from a highly volatile and uncertain world (Weber & Tarba, 2014). In the 21st century business environment, embracing strategic agility will enhance continuous and adequate adjustment of the organization towards dynamic business environment and adapt in appropriate time, its strategic direction in core business in relation to changing circumstances and sensitive to the business environment (Ofoegbu & Akanbi, 2012). The performance of an organization depends on its strategic insight and foresight towards its competitors, customers, suppliers, partners and governments (Amniattalab & Ansari, 2016).

Subsequently, global competition and open market policies in different industries have led to the downward rigidities of performance (Zafari, 2017). Oyerinde, Olatunji and Adewale (2018) emphasized that poor strategic response to these challenges and weak organizational infrastructures have run down the performance of most firms, particularly those in Africa.

Nevertheless, fast growing service organizations such as telecommunication firms are no exceptions to related crises within the environment. Despite their successes in achieving high growth, if telecommunication firms do not adjust for constraints, they cannot sustain the growth rate that will eventually lead them to a downfall (Lemmon & Zender, 2010; Marshall & Heffes, 2004). Thus, identifying the current life cycle stage of an organization is crucial for both the management and future plans. It is important that they recognize their competencies as well as constrains to overcome the growing pains in the future. The life cycle theory offers expected obstacles for each stage, which can help the firms to diagnose their problems and reframe their strategies accordingly (Lemmon & Zener, 2010).

The business life cycle has many appealing aspects as it describes a life cycle of 'non-living' organization or institution with organismic metaphors such as birth, maturity and death. It states that there are sequential stages of development over a certain period of time and that firms do not only grow in sizes but they 'mature' in their structures as they adapt to support their growing demands both internally and externally (Phelps et. al., 2007). According to Phelps et al. (2007), these theories hold similar assumptions that 'growth is linear, sequential, deterministic and invariant' (Phelps et al., 2007). Phelps et. al. (2007) also explains in his article that each stage in a firm's development is a result of former state implying that the development comes in sequential order. Unless a firm identifies and overcomes the limitations of the current structure, it cannot move on to the next stage of maturity. Recently, these assumptions are challenged more intensively due to the fact that the rapidly changing environment allows companies to be more adaptive and flexible rather than following a certain passage of development.

The purpose of this paper therefore was to examine the relationship between business recovery and organizational responsiveness of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria.

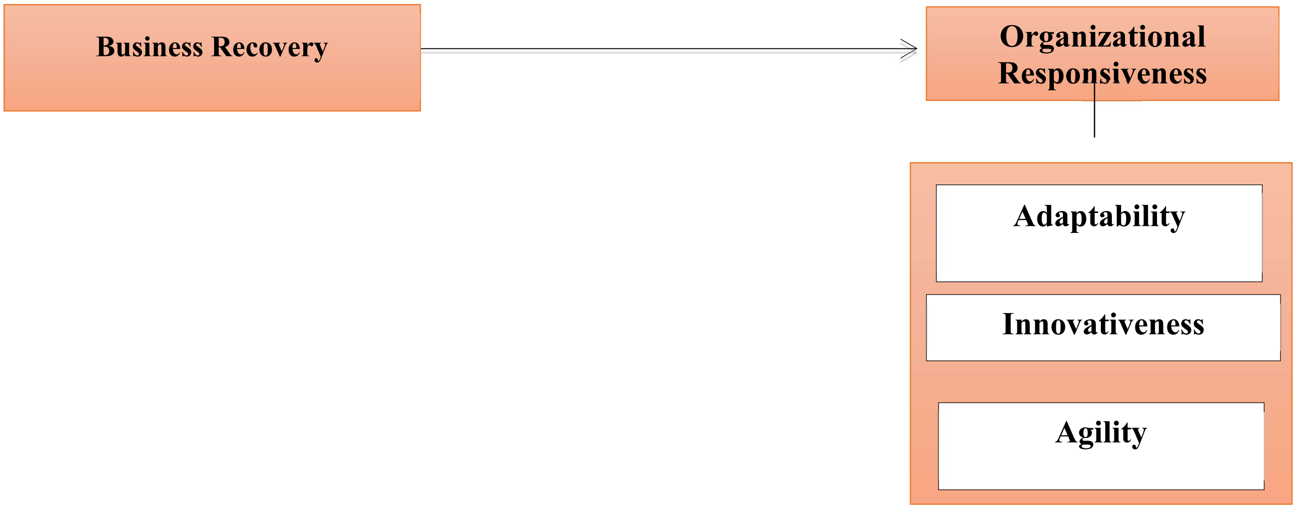

Figure 1: conceptual model for the relationship between business recovery and organizational responsiveness.

Source: Desk Research (2023)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation
Contingency Theory

Contingency theory was developed by Fred Fiedler in the 1960s (Cited in Chenhall, 2003) and it is an approach to the study of organizational behaviour in which explanations are given as to how contingent factors such as technology, culture and the external environment influence the design, structure, operations and function of organizations. The assumption underlying contingency theory is that no single type of organizational structure is equally applicable to all organizations. Rather, organizational effectiveness is dependent on a fit or match between the type of technology, environmental volatility, the size of the organization, the features of the organizational structure and its information system (Woods, 2009; Reid & Smith, 2000).

Contingency theory has been identified as an important area of research in management accounting (Chenhall, 2006). Hofstede classic fieldwork in 1967 was among the earlier management accounting research adopting a contingency perspective. It was found that economic, technological and sociological considerations had a significant impact on the functioning of budgeting systems. In addition, (Chenhall, 2006) report cultural effects on management control systems of an organization. Drawing upon the contingency theory of organizations, Elsayed and Hoque (2010) identify a set of perceived international environmental factors (competitions, socio-political institutions, and accounting standards), and examine how these factors influence a company's voluntary disclosure levels. They collected data from 100 Egyptian non-financial listed companies; the results of multiple regression analysis indicate that the level of a company's voluntary disclosure is positively and significantly associated with its perceived influence of international socio-political institutions, accounting standards, and the financial institutions. Contrary to the expectations, the findings showed no significant association between voluntary disclosure level and competition. They report that the study contributed to the international accounting disclosure field by providing evidence from Egypt that perceived international environmental factors may influence the type and level of accounting disclosures by organizations, and suggest the applicability of the findings to other emerging countries.

Business Recovery

This dimension of business life-cycle dynamics refers to the organizations capacity to bounce back from challenging experiences or conditions. The business life-cycle stage of recovery as demonstrating the organizations resilience and capacity for come-back (Dickinson, 2011). Recovery, according to Dickinson, (2011) builds not only on the organizations competency, but also on its relationships and strategic networks. This is because the ability to bounce back draws on the organizations understanding of the environment and its capacity for learning. According to Adizes (2004), over a long period of their life-spans, organizations will experience recovery at various intervals, resulting from their effective reengagement of their markets or contexts and thus their resilience. Recovery approaches may also differ across organizations, depending on their strengths and weaknesses, as well as approach toward change.

Business recovery is a critical aspect of organizational resilience and sustainability in the face of challenges and disruptions. According to Herbane, Elliott, and Swartz (2004), business recovery refers to the process of restoring a company's operations and functions to a pre-disruption state or to a new and improved state following a crisis or a disruptive event. The importance of business recovery cannot be overstated, as it allows organizations to mitigate the negative impacts of disruptions, maintain customer trust and loyalty, and ultimately, ensure their long-term survival in a competitive market. The process of business recovery involves several key steps, such as assessing the impact of the disruption, developing and implementing recovery strategies, and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the recovery efforts. By systematically addressing these steps, organizations can enhance their ability to recover quickly and effectively from disruptions, minimizing the financial and reputational damage they may incur. Therefore, understanding the importance and process of business recovery is crucial for businesses to navigate through crises and emerge stronger and more resilient (Herbane, Elliott, & Swartz, 2010).

Organizational Responsiveness

Businesses are influenced by major changes in their environment, those events and developments external to the organization which considerably and structurally affect (a) the attainability of an organization's strategic objectives and/or (b) the strategic choices open to the organization. The financial crisis of 2008–2009 and the subsequent global recession constitute a major environmental change with an impact on a variety of different industries and countries at the same time. Upper echelons theory (Hambrick and Mason 1984; Carpenter, Geletkanycz and Sandres 2004; Hambrick 2007; Rost and Osterloh 2010) posits that the strategic choices that organizations make – and thus also decisions on how to strategically adapt to major economic crises – are considerably influenced by the characteristics of their top executives, specifically also by their cognitive base and values. These influences can be direct – when managers act upon their individual preferences – or indirect, when values affect executives' perceptions which are subsequently shaping managerial action (Brockner 2003).

Managers' cognitive bases and values, in turn, can be influenced by the national cultures in which they were socialized (Brockner 2003; Dickson, BeShears and Gupta 2004).Several authors (for instance Schneider 1989; Haiss 1990; Ross 1999) support the argument that strategic decision-making can be influenced by national culture. Barr and Glynn (2004) found that cultural differences could have an influence on strategy, however, only at the level of specific cultural dimensions, thereby concluding that strategy research should take these fine-grained differences into account. Following this advice, the aim of this paper is to explore whether the difference in one dimension of national culture, uncertainty avoidance, has an influence on strategic action as the output of the strategic response process when companies are faced with a major economic crisis.

Measures of Organizational Responsiveness

Adaptability

As organizations adapt to the external environment, they often engage in strategic planning for the purpose of assessing the external environment, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and developing a response to the environment in the form of services that are likely to resonate favorably with the environment (Alkhafaji, 2003; Allison & Kaye, 2005). Bess and Dee (2008) refer to this as the adaptive model of strategy, which enables organizations to better adjust to the environment and therefore have a competitive advantage over other organizations in the same field. Organizations achieve a competitive advantage by offering a product or service that meets the needs of a specific market segment (Porter, 1996). Hatch (1997) summarizes that adaptive strategy provides an important link between the organization and its environment.

Adaptability has emerged as a relatively new concept in management literature and like many other concepts carry diversity in its definition. Different studies have used different definitions, values, factors, and dimensions to explain and measure adaptability. Scholars coming from strategy perspective define adaptability as an ability to adjust to external changes to uphold organisational sustainability. Orton and Weick (1990) identified three facets of adaptability namely experimentation, collective judgment, and preservation of dissent. They assert that these three dimensions of adaptability are required for an organization to conceive and adopt change. Adaptability helps firms attain superior performance through continuous environmental adjustments (Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992). Adaptability can be interpreted in many ways. According to Miles, Snow, Meyer and Coleman (1978), an adaptive cycle addresses to solve three basic organization problems: entrepreneurial, engineering, and administrative where solution to the administrative problem lies at the panicle to all so that it (the administrative system) facilities the organization ability to adapt by reaffirming and reinforcing ways of innovative activities. Adaptability through a cultural perspective means a set of shared values.

Innovativeness

Innovativeness otherwise referred to as Innovation capability of a company is linked to the internal efforts of human, technological and organizational resources, combined with the ability to interact with the external environment to pursue resources, knowledge and skills to be incorporated into the organization to create new products and processes that are perceived and valued by stakeholders (Lawson & Samson, 2001). From the operational viewpoint, building capability of innovation is not a simple task, as it requires a decision-making process that drives the company efforts towards innovation and creates a culture of innovation among employees and within the organization as a whole.

Lawson and Samson (2001) define innovativeness as "the ability to continuously transform knowledge and ideas into new products, process and systems for the benefit of firm and its stakeholders" Their study conclude that innovativeness has seven aspects. These include vision and strategy, harness the competence base, organizational intelligence, creativity and idea management, organizational structure and systems, culture and climate, and the management of technology. Therefore, innovativeness is considered combination of factors internal and external to organization which makes firm ability to innovate. Innovativeness is internal to organization as it's the factor over which management has considerable control. As described earlier Drucker (1985) stressed the importance of innovativeness, he declined the innovation as inspirational rather described it as outcome of hard work.

The very survival of firm depends on the innovativeness as it helps managers to devise solution to business problem and come out with new thing which is effective and contribute to business performance. Innovativeness is major source of competitive advantage to contemporary organization. Per se a competitive advantage means performance sustain over time and will determine how the firm is different vis- à- vis its competitors (Hurly & Hurt 1998). Porter (1990) concludes from its four years research of ten important trading countries that nation competitiveness depends on the capacity of its industry to innovate and upgrade. As an example, he explains that having strong domestic rival puts great pressure on companies making them to come up with better way of doing things. He argued that the creation and assimilation of knowledge had changed the fundamentals of competition.

Agility

Irrespective of a firm's size, industry, or age, the concept of organizational agility cannot be ignored. These businesses operate in open systems where interactions with other businesses and stakeholders present diverse challenges and uncertainties that ought to be handled to guarantee business continuity (Arokodare, Asikhia & Makinde, 2019). Strategic agility enables businesses to respond to global trends as it enables firms to continually and adequately adjust to the business environment that is both very unpredictable and uncertain (Arokodare, Asikhia & Makinde, 2019). In the same breath, Aminattalab and Ansari (2016) posit that a company's performance is dependent on its strategic agility approaches towards its rivals, clients, suppliers, partners, and government policies.

Organizational agility refers to firm's ability to sense opportunities and threats and respond by assembling the needed organisational resources with rapidity (Wamba, Akter & Guthrie, 2020). Agility, as a business concept, was coined in a manufacturing context – particularly in relation to flexible manufacturing systems (Del Giudice, et al. 2021). Agile organization has the ability to survive and prosper in a competitive environment of continuous and unpredictable change by reacting quickly and effectively to changing markets, driven by customer-defined products and services. An agile system has capabilities (hard and soft technologies, human resources, educated management, and information) to meet the rapidly changing needs of the marketplace (speed, flexibility, customers, competitors, suppliers, infrastructure, and responsiveness) (Schirrmacher & Schoop, 2018). Organizational agility emphasizes on speed and flexibility as the primary attributes (Žitkienė & Deksnys, 2018). An equally important attribute of agility is the effective response to change and uncertainty. Responding to change in proper ways and exploiting and taking advantages of changes are the main characteristics of an agile organization.

Business Recovery and Organizational Responsiveness

Machuki and Aosa (2011) did an empirical investigation of strategic responses to the external environmental changes on the selected strategy concepts on company's performance in large private manufacturing corporations in Kenya. The study employed cross-sectional survey. The study revealed the responsive strategies adopted by large private manufacturing firms in Kenya to include low pricing of products and service, good customer care services, offering quality goods and services, speed in delivery of goods and services and focus strategy. In addition, the study established that these strategies had a positive impact on the firm competitiveness of the firms studied. However, the study focused on external environment changes and thus it did not show the clear relationship between the responsive capability and firm competitiveness and thus the need to undertake this study to bridge this gap. Additionally, the study was limited to large private manufacturing firms and thus its findings cannot be generalized to the SME's sector owing to the fact that they operate in a different environment.

From the foregoing discourse, the study hypothesized thus:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between business recovery and adaptability of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between business recovery and innovativeness of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria**.**

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between business recovery and agility of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the cross-sectional research survey design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. Questionnaire copies were distributed to 28 management staff from the 4 GSM (Mtn, Globacom, Airtel and 9moble) telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria, from which data for the study was collected. The hypotheses 1 - 3 which are considered as bivariate were all tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 0.05 significance level.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Recovery and Organizational Responsiveness

			Recovery	Adaptability	Innovativeness	Agility
Spearman's rho	Recovery	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.880**	.868**	.896**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	28	28	28	28
	Adaptability	Correlation Coefficient	.880**	1.000	.840**	.819**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	28	28	28	28
	Innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	.868**	.840**	1.000	.956**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	28	28	28	28
	Agility	Correlation Coefficient	.896**	.819**	.956**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	28	28	28	28

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

Source: Survey Data, 2023

The result on the correlation between business recovery and the measures of organisational responsiveness (adaptability, innovativeness and agility) shows that business recovery significantly impacts on outcomes of organizational responsiveness where evidence reveals that business recovery significantly contributes toward adaptability (R = 0.880 P = 0.000), innovativeness (R = 0.868 P = 0.000), and agility (R = 0.896 P = 0.000). Evidence from the analysis demonstrates the significance of business recovery in advancing outcomes that drive the responsiveness and effective change behaviour of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria. The evidence also shows that all relationships are positive in nature – suggesting that the more these firms express business recovery, the more their capacity for effectively advancing responsiveness. On this basis, all related null hypothetical statements are rejected as the results show that:

i. There is a significant positive relationship between business recovery and adaptability of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria.
ii. There is a significant positive relationship between business recovery and innovativeness of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria.

iii. There is a significant positive relationship between business recovery and agility of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between business recovery and organizational responsiveness of telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria. This is as recent decades have been characterized by unprecedented wealth creation, and large segments of the global population have been pulled out of poverty. These economic outcomes have been driven in part by new forms of technologically enabled organization that allow coordination, communication, control, and the generation of wealth on a global scale. Yet, growth in prosperity for many has not yielded increased sustainability. There has been an alarming escalation in wealth inequality, social unrest, and associated geo-political uncertainty and instability, environmental degradation, and the ravages of climate change. Advanced technology has led to an era of intelligent automation that is advancing productivity and delivering value. At the same time that it enables new business models, it disrupts and threatens many established businesses, and changes work systems in ways that are obsoleting skills, displacing workers, and, some believe, reinforcing the position and imperatives for change behaviour that drives recovery (Davenport & Kirby, 2016).

In reality, addressing business recovery has always recognized that organisations are open systems, and organisations have been increasingly operating across boundaries for decades. Yet there has primarily been an organization-centric view of goals, outcomes, and relationships, often with the perspective that how well the organization performs depends on its ability to exploit the resources in its market context. That context has been characterized by continual advances in communication and information technology that have enabled new ways of doing work, accessing resources and knowledge, collaborating and coordinating, and wielding power across organisational boundaries and geographies. These technologies have fueled new business models in which organisations design cross-organisational supply chains, alliances and partnerships, and new, often virtual, forms of connection with customers and vendors.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEDNATION

The established relationship between business life-cycle dynamics and organisational responsiveness in telecommunication firms in South-South, Nigeria, demonstrates the imperatives of business life-cycle dynamics in bridging functional and operational gaps in the organization and enhancing its capacity for recovery, and as such survival. In this vein, one could therefore argue that the effective coordination of business life-cycle features in the organization, advances capacities that are necessary for its improved positioning within its context.

The study recommends that the management and coordination of business recovery by the management of telecommunication firms Nigeria, should emphasize on not only the development and recuperation of operations and other related actions and goals, but should also emphasize on building connectedness integration and embeddedness in the organization through the timely and consistent flow of information and the enactment of platforms that support feedback and involvement from various stakeholders in the organization.

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