ENTREPRENEURIAL PROACTIVENESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE IN MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Coleman, R. O., & Adim, C. V.

1, 2 Department of Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Rivers State University [RSU], Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, PMB 5080, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and organizational resilience in mobile telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The methodology was quantitative and the research design was the cross-sectional survey. The study population was the Regional Offices or Mega Centres of four major communication firms identified in this study, namely: MTN Nigeria, GLOBACOM Nigeria, AIRTEL Nigeria, and 9Mobile Nigeria. A total of 177 senior staff (managerial and supervisory) was identified through personal visits and inquiry from these offices and centres. The sample size of 123 was determined using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of the SPSS version 23 package for the bivariate relationship between the entrepreneurial proactiveness and the measures of organizational resilience at a 0.05 level of significance. The results from the analysis revealed that entrepreneurial proactiveness influence significantly the measures of organizational resilience. The study recommended that learning and knowledge development are key to the proactiveness of the organization and as such should focus on the market changes and the satisfaction issues that prevail in the market.

Key words: Entrepreneurial Proactiveness, Organizational Resilience, Adaptive Capacity, Situation Awareness, Vulnerability Response

INTRODUCTION
In recent times, the complexities and frequent changes experienced within the environment have necessitated managers to continuously strive for improvement in their product or service offerings. Such changes essentially call for renewal of operations and sustainable market positioning of goods and services. Incidentally, the changes could emanate from threats or shocks within the environment which may lead to organizational failures if not well managed. It is therefore expedient for organisational actors to understand and deal with the changes as they occur. Clearly, organisations are becoming more vulnerable to environmental threats and shocks, irrespective of their varied objectives or type. It is the duty of managers or heads of organisations to pursue the necessary means through which it can thrive and surmount pressures or changes prevalent in the environment taking into cognisance the nature of such change; be it sudden or otherwise. Changes could come as a result of shock, crisis, or organisations disconnection with the environment. Notably, the telecommunications industry is not immune to changes as a result of threats and shocks as well. Challenges such as labour turnover, non-conformance to standards and lack of indigenous experts have in some way affected telecommunication firms negatively. Sustained performance is therefore critical when faced with negative or detrimental environmental crisis. Thus, organizational resilience ensures survival and assured continuity in business (Alastir, 2010).

Mallak (1999) noted that organizational resilience begins at the individual level. Sharing decision making power brings about a sense of shared responsibility by the workers within the organization. Employees who are resilient put less time accepting change which makes them improve in terms of productivity and service quality (Mallak, 1999). At the organizational level, it comprises the abilities an organization exert to contain disconnections with its external environment and the will to change plans. Organizational resilience is simply the capacity to deal with unplanned or unforeseen systematic changes, the capacity to adapt to new methods and techniques as well as recent market demands or preferences (Mallak, 1999). Resilience is a function of differing factors relating to structure, age of existence, size (complexity) of the organization.

Pizarro-Moreno, Real & Sousa-Ginel, (2007), argued that companies need to regenerate themselves as a result of frequent environmental changes experienced by businesses through entrepreneurial proactiveness. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) suggest that entrepreneurial behavior of firms is supported by five processes within an organization, which they call entrepreneurial orientation. In their framework, entrepreneurial orientation consists of five factors namely autonomy, innovativeness, risk taking, proactiveness and competitiveness. Entrepreneurial orientation as a firm level strategy is used by entrepreneurial firms to enact their organizational purpose, sustain their vision and create competitive advantage (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). Proactiveness is a firm’s strategic orientation that captures specific entrepreneurial aspects of decision-
making styles, methods and practices (Frank, Kessler & Fink, 2010).

Proactiveness involves attempts to discover future opportunities, even when these opportunities may be somewhat unrelated to existing operations (Venkatraman, 1989; Rauch, Wiklund & Frese, 2004). Proactiveness is achievement oriented, emphasizing initiatives taking, anticipating, creating change, and predicting evolution towards a critical situation and early preparation prior to the occurrence of an impending uncertainty of risk (Boohene, Marfo – Yiadom & Yeboah, 2012). Proactiveness as a dimension of entrepreneurial orientation is an opportunity-seeking and forward-looking perspective that involves acting in anticipation of future demand and trends, and thereafter capitalizing on these opportunities to gain benefit (Kropp, Lindsay & Shoham, 2008). A strong proactive behavior gives SMEs the ability to anticipate needs in the market place and the capability to anticipate competitor’s needs (Covin & Slevin, 1991; Eggers, Kraus, Hughes, Laraway & Syncerski, 2013). This study examined the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and organizational resilience of mobile telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. This study was also be guided by the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and adaptive capacity of mobile communication firms in Rivers State?
- What is the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and vulnerability responsiveness of mobile communication firms in Rivers State?
- What is the relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and situation awareness of mobile communication firms in Rivers State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial Pro-activeness

In recent times, there has been a surge of interest of pro-activity at work, partly reflecting academic development, and partly reflecting the increasing importance of this type of behaviours in today’s organizations. Academically, there has been a flurry of proactive concepts, albeit varying in whether pro-activity is seen as a stable disposition (Grant, 2000), a pattern of behaviours (Free & Fay, 2001), or a way of behaving at work (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Practically, organizations are increasingly decentralized, change is fast-paced, there is a demand for innovation and operational uncertainty is greater than ever, all trends that mean employees need to use their initiative and be proactive (e.g. Campbell, 2000; Wall & Jackson, 1995). Proactiveness implies action and result-oriented behaviour, instead of one that waits for things to happen and then tries to adjust (react) to them.

Proactiveness from an organizational point of view as Parker & Collins (2010) observes, implies organizations being able to act in advance to deal with expected circumstances, rather than waiting for them to occur first. Proactiveness means taking control and making things happen rather than just adjusting to a situation or waiting for something to happen (Adam & Susan, 2008). Furthermore, Grant & Ashford (2008) describe proactive behaviour as referring to anticipatory action that employees take to impact themselves and/or their environments. Indeed, Bindl & Parker (2010) view Proactiveness by organizations as that behaviour at the workplace that makes things happen. It involves self-initiated, anticipatory action aimed at changing either the situation or oneself. Examples include; taking charge to improve work methods, using personal initiative, proactive problem solving.

Proactiveness shows a firm’s aggressive pursuit of market opportunities and a strong emphasis of seeking to implement innovation in its industry (Rauch et al., 2009). Pro-activeness is an opportunity-seeking, forward looking perspective characterized by the introduction of new products and services ahead of competitors and acting in anticipation of future
demand (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Rauch et al., 2009). Miller (1983) defines pro-activeness as an indication of a company’s determination to pursue promising opportunities, rather than merely responding to competitors’ moves. According to Lumpkin & Dess (1996), Pro-activeness refers to how a firm relates to market opportunities in the process of new entry and how they aggressively pursue opportunities and aggressively respond to competitors (Kuratko et al., 2014). Pro-activeness involves taking initiative by anticipating and pursuing new opportunities and participating in emerging markets (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). It entails the attitude and capabilities that facilitate the implementation and control of the new products, services, or processes ahead of competitors (Morris & Paul, 1987). This dimension emphasizes first-mover advantage (Lieberman & Montgomery, 1988) and a posture of anticipating and acting on future wants and needs in the marketplace (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Proactiveness consists of an aggressive stance towards competition, focusing on the aggressive implementation and tenacity of tactics to achieve the company’s objectives. Proactiveness implies a forward-looking, opportunity-seeking perspective and a “propensity for action” characteristic of a market leader that acts in anticipation of future demand or other trends that indicate emerging opportunities (Venkatraman, 1989).

Organizational Resilience
In recent years, there has been growing concern for the concept of organizational resilience as an indispensable trait that organizations require to overcome serious challenges (Sheffi, 2005). As a result of discontinuities and other environmental turbulences that can have a direct impact on organizational ability to deliver substantial products and services to customers (Juttner, 2005; Burnard & Bhamra, 2011), efforts are geared towards generating continuity and contingency plans in organisations (Cerullo & Cerullo, 2004). However, it is argued that continuity plans can only work if response is immediate and easily monitored. Consequently, operating systems should be swiftly adjusted to cope with perceived threats when faced with serious environmental challenges (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2007). Moreover, since it is a bit difficult for organizations to exactly predict the future, building organizational resilience capability is therefore the key for preparedness and survival (Ates & Umit, 2011).

Situation Awareness
This measure describes an organization’s understanding of its business landscape, its awareness of what is happening around it, and what that information means for the organization now and in the future (Pellissier, 2011). When we lose touch with the environment (situation awareness), there is the likelihood for social mistakes. Coast Guard analysis of navigational accidents for cutters and boats reveals that 40% were due to a loss of situation awareness. The loss of situation awareness usually occurs over a period of time and will leave a trail of clues. It is important that organizations stay alert for the clues that will warn of potential losses or diminished situation awareness such as confusion in market decisions, use of improper procedures, departure from regulations, failure to meet planned targets, unresolved discrepancies, ambiguities and fixation or pre-occupation. Situation awareness is dynamic, hard to maintain and easy to lose. Staying in touch all the time is very difficult for most organizations, especially during complex high stress and complex operations. Therefore, it is important that we know what behaviour is effective in keeping us aware of situations (McManus, Seville, Vargo & Brunsdon, 2008).

Vulnerability Responsiveness
The understanding of the concepts of poverty and vulnerability and their linkage is important in the efforts to improve the standards of living in the world. Whilst vulnerability has often been associated with
poverty, it has been seen as being distinct (Moser, 1998). However, the increasing realization that poverty itself is dynamic, that some of the poor are not poor all of the time (Yaqub, 2000) means that a useful comparison has been established between poverty and vulnerability. Poverty is mainly viewed as an indicator of lack of access to resources and income opportunities, but it has other aspects of social positioning such as geographical location, age, gender, class, ethnicity, community structure, community decision-making processes and political issues that determine poor people’s vulnerability (Yodmani, 2001).

Adaptive Capacity
The concept of adaptive capacity remains contestable but it can be defined as broadly as the ability of individuals, communities, organizations, nations and other actors to adapt to the current and likely future effects of changes in the global climate (Eakin, Lemos & Nelson, 2014). Therefore, adaptive capacity refers to the ability of a system to respond to change and has become widely acknowledged as a fundamental component of vulnerability to climate change. Furthermore, Adger (1999) defines the concept as the ability of a system to adjust to climate change in order to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or cope with the consequences. In a broad sense, adaptive capacities actually represent those social and technical skills and strategies of individuals and groups that are directed towards responding to environmental and socio-economic changes. Indeed, entrepreneurs and organizational leaders deploy adaptive capacity in order to adapt to challenges they face in their environments.

Lim, Spanger-Siegfried, Burton, Malone, Huq (2005) defines adaptive capacity as the property of a system to adjust its characteristics or behaviour in order to expand its range under existing climate variability, or future climate conditions. Thus, from an organizational point of view, the adaptive capacity inherent in a system represents the set of resources available for adaptation as well as the ability or capacity of that system to use these resources effectively in pursuit of adaptation. In addition, adaptive capacity describes the organization’s ability to constantly and continuously evolve to match or exceed the needs of its operating environment before those needs become critical to its survival (Lengnick-Hall, Beck & Lengnick-Hall, 2011). According to McManus, Seville, Vargo & Brunsdon (2008), adaptive capacity is context-specific and varies from country to country, from community to community, among social groups and individuals and over time. It varies not only in terms of its value but also according to its nature. Adaptive capacity has been analysed in various ways, including its thresholds and coping ranges as well as by the conditions that a system can deal with, accommodate, adapt to, and recover from (Jaaron & Backhouse, 2011).

Entrepreneurial Proactiveness and Organizational Resilience
Genius animation is the ability to act before others in item presentation or catching new markets or asset tapping. These are basic components a business visionary receives in looking for new open doors which are new to the present activities of the business (Olson, Slatter & Hult, 2005). Associations that embrace star liveliness in their methodologies can accomplish, keep up and increase improved flexibility and aggressiveness in developing business sector situations. Proactiveness in an overwhelmed market requires a firm to be the first in building up new needs or presenting new items and embracing of new ways to deal with achieve maintainable focused edge over different firms (Olson, et al, 2005).

Harun & Veysel (2009) characterize professional liveliness as a forward-looking, open door looking for endeavor which includes the presentation of new administrations and items before the contenders and having the capacity to act fully expecting future support. The idea of the expert animation of a
business or individual is characterized as the capacity of the business or individual to act fully expecting future changes, needs or issues (Lumpkin & Dess, 2001). In this way, by being the principal individual or business to move in quest for new chances and take part in creating markets, such an individual or business can be intently connected with authoritative dimension enterprise exercises.

From the foregoing argument, the study hypothesized thus:

**Ho$_1$:** Pro-activeness and adaptive capacity of mobile communication firms have no significant correlation.

**Ho$_2$:** Pro-activeness and keystone vulnerability of mobile communication firms have no significant correlation.

**Ho$_3$:** Pro-activeness and situation awareness of mobile communication firms have no significant correlation.

**Figure 1: Operational framework for the hypothesized relationship between entrepreneurial proactiveness and organizational resilience**

*Source: Author’s Desk Research, 2018*

**METHODOLOGY**

The methodology was quantitative and the research design was the cross-sectional survey. This study adopts an accessible population of the regional offices or mega centres of four major communication firms identified in this study, namely: Nigeria, GLOBACOM Nigeria, AIRTÉL Nigeria, and 9Mobile Nigeria. A total of 177 senior staff (managerial and supervisory) was identified through personal visits and inquiry from these offices and centres. The sample size of 123 was determined using the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of the SPSS version 23 package for the bivariate relationship between the entrepreneurial proactiveness and the measures of organizational resilience at a 0.05 level of significance.
Table 1: Reliability statistics for the instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions/Measures of the study variable</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Pro-activeness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adaptive Capacity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Situation Awareness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Vulnerability Responsiveness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.805</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Research data, 2018

RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using the Spearman rank order correlation tool at a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the tests covered the hypotheses that were bivariate and declared in the null form. Based on the statistic of Spearman Rank (rho) we carried out the analysis. The level of significance 0.05 was adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in (p>0.05) or rejecting the null hypothesis in (p<0.05). We began by presenting first a test of existing relationships.

The scatter plot graph showed at $R^2$ linear value of (0.764) depicting a strong relationship between the two constructs. The implication was that an increase in entrepreneurial proactivity simultaneously brings about an increase in the level of organizational resilience. The scatter diagram provided vivid evaluation of the closeness of the relationship among the pairs of variables through the nature of their concentration.

Figure 2: Scatter plot relationship between entrepreneurial proactivity and organizational resilience
Table 2: Pro-activeness and Organizational resilience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proactive</th>
<th>Adaptive</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Vulnerable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.650**</td>
<td>.541**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.650**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.533**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spearman’s rho</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.541**</td>
<td>.533**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.501**</td>
<td>.495**</td>
<td>.450**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Pro-activeness and adaptive capacity: The relationship between pro-activeness and adaptive capacity was revealed to be significant with a p = 0.000 and rho = .650. The result indicated a strong level of influence by pro-activeness on the adaptive capacity of the communication firms. It indicated that activities which express trend setting and change initiatives impact strongly on the organizations capacity to adapt and adjust to the changes in its environment. In this sense, it suggested that pro-activeness contributes significantly towards enhancing the adaptive capacity of communication firms in Rivers State; hence, the hypothesis of no significant relation is rejected.

Pro-activeness and situation awareness: The relationship between pro-activeness and situation awareness was shown to be significant with a p = 0.000 and rho = .541. The evidence from the analysis showed a moderate level of impact by pro-activeness on the situation awareness of the communication firms. It revealed that behaviour which reflects seeking for change or leading in organizational change, influences at a moderate level, the organizations sense of awareness and understanding of its market and the dynamics of its environment. This indicates that pro-activeness contributes significantly towards improving the situation awareness of communication firms in Rivers State; hence, the hypothesis of no significant relation is rejected.

Pro-activeness and vulnerability responsiveness: The relationship between pro-activeness and vulnerability responsiveness was revealed to be significant with a p = 0.000 and rho = .501. The result from the analysis revealed a moderate level of influence by pro-activeness on the vulnerability responsiveness of the communication firms. This indicated that behaviour which can be described as change initiating impacts moderately on the organizations responsiveness and reactive behaviour especially in line with its key vulnerable features. This suggested that pro-activeness contributes significantly towards improving the vulnerability responsiveness of communication firms in Rivers State; hence, the hypothesis of no significant relationship is rejected.

The results for the hypotheses with regards to the relationship between pro-activeness and the measures of organizational resilience were stated as follows:

- Pro-activeness and adaptive capacity in mobile communication firms relate significantly.
There is a significant relationship between pro-activeness and situation awareness in mobile communication firms relate significantly.

There is a significant relationship between pro-activeness and vulnerability responsiveness in mobile communication firms relate significantly.

CONCLUSION

The evidence presented herein affirmed that a significant relationship exists between pro-activeness and organizational resilience in mobile communication firms in Rivers State. This was as pro-activeness was observed to significantly impact on all three dimensions of organizational resilience positively. In a similar study, Parker and Collins (2010) examined the extent to which proactive behaviour significantly impacted on the functionality and effectiveness of the organization. Using the factor analyses, they further observed the existence of a significant relationship between pro-active behaviour and structure of organization.

The findings supported the position that behaviour or actions which are pro-active in nature serve to propel the organization towards change and initiative. Such behaviour comprises of taking charge of events, driving for change, and also ensuring organizational pacesetting through the adoption of new technologies or systems (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit & Dutton 1998). Pro-active behaviour supports activities related to environmental scanning, anticipation of happenings in existing markets as well as the introduction of concepts or models in new product design (Parker & Collins, 2010). These products or services serve to fill observed satisfaction gaps and, in this way, enhance the organizations fit with its environment and improving its resilience capacities.

Proactive organization has a stronger and more significant fit with its market and with its environment. This is because pro-activeness offers the organization a set of self-initiated behaviours or actions which are geared towards the achievement of unique service improvements, enhanced organizational attributes, and improved competitive positioning within the environment. It is equally important for organizations to actively seek and obtain feedback about their market offerings through inquiry or monitoring (Ashford, et al, 1998).

Also, pro-activeness enhances the organizations capacity for change and as such, some of its major emphasis is on resilience factors such as situation awareness and the organizations capacity for adaptability. By organization-environment fit, organizations are able to remain in touch and in tune with their environment. This attribute fosters and enhances their capacity for adaptability and is a strong indicator of resilient behaviour. Grant and Parker (2009) further identified pro-activeness as essential to the organization’s receptivity towards change and how it copes with change.

The findings reiterate that of Parker & Collins (2010) who from their argument, identify pro-activeness as a primary feature and antecedent of successful organizations which overtime have learnt how to survive through resilience. This emphasis on the benefits or pro-activeness is also shared by, Pace and Frese (2004), who also identified responsiveness and situation awareness as apparent consequences of organizations that are pro-active in nature.

This study concluded that entrepreneurial proactiveness is required for organizational resilience. It affirmed that pro-activeness contributes significantly towards the realization and manifestation of measures such as adaptive capacity, vulnerability responsiveness and situation awareness. Obviously, the study affirmed that entrepreneurial proactiveness is critical to the sustenance, recovery and ability to deal with unplanned change.

The study recommended that learning and knowledge development were key to the pro-activeness of the organization and as such should focus on the market changes and the satisfaction issues that prevail in the market.
REFERENCES


