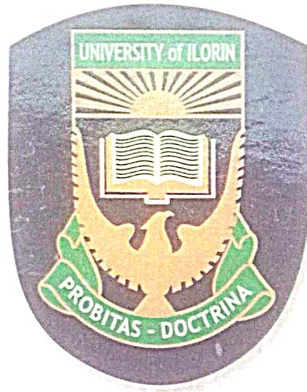




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ADAPTIVE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL: A STUDY OF LUBCON NIGERIA LTD

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Abstract

Organizational culture over time has not only been recognized as one of the critical resources for effective performance but also seen as one of the important tools for success in dynamic business environment. However, apart from limited empirical evidence on the effect of adaptive culture on business survival, there were equally disparities in the conceptualization of the concept all over. Therefore, this study examines how LUBCON Nigeria Ltd uses adaptive culture variables to cope with the changing nature of the business environment. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design by obtaining primary data with the use structured and self-administered questionnaire to 216 respondents out of 470 staff of LUBCON Nigeria Ltd. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis set for the study. The result of the study showed that adaptive organizational culture has significant impact on organizational survival (R-Square of 0.388, $p\text{-value}=0.0001$). The study concluded that cultural adaption has influence on the survival of the organisation. The study therefore recommended that business organizations should promote adaptive cultural variables in order to boost their survival level in dynamic business environment.

Keywords: Adaptive culture, External focus, Organizational survival, Process orientation, Pro-activeness, & Strong sense of ownership

INTRODUCTION

Internationally, an increased research effort has been shifted to the need for organizations to learn and respond flexibly to various demands from dynamic competitive business environments in order to guarantee its sustainability. This is because, the findings of many research efforts have shown that inflexibility and inability of organizations to learn and adapt to the environmental changes are cogent factors hindering organizational success. Nationally, academicians and practitioners have equally shown a keen interest to the nature of a firm's culture. Due to the

functionality of adaptive culture, as it influences learning, effectiveness, and performance. More specifically, the shared values and assumptions associated with the culture in the organization which drive collective perceptions and behavior of employees (Paul & Elman, 2014). Similarly, renowned authors have equally made it clear that adaptive culture is necessary survive and grow (Schein, 1992).

Also, practitioners at the local level have also made it understood that performance of companies with strong culture is not always progressive in nature, because it usually locks decision makers into mental models and barred them from seeing new opportunities. It also suppresses nonconforming subcultural values. This is because subculture encourages constructive conflict that improves creative thinking and offers some level of ethical vigilance over the dominant culture. In the long run, a subculture's growing values could become important dominant values as the environment changes. (Hill & McShane, 2009).

Besides, review of the existing literature, could not differentiate adaptive organisational culture from organisational culture. Likewise, now-future leadership style was mistaken for transformational leadership, whereas they are not (Sabihaini & Pamungkas, 2021). Similarly, the use of small sample equally influences some of the results (Almeida, Caetano, & Porto 2018), whereas, the higher the sample, the better the result. Similarly, over reliance of Costanza, Blacksmith, Coats, Severt, and DeCostanza (2015) on the use of archival sources with lack of accurate information, as well as raters fatigue existed when articulating the dimensions and measures of adaptive cultures. In addition, there was limited use of quantitative method in examining the effect of adaptive culture on organisational performance (Nesbit & Lam, 2014). It is against this background that this current study chooses to see how to use the roles of organizational actors (employees) in identifying the needs of not only the customers and other stakeholders but also to support the initiative to move with the level of the changes can be used to gain organisational survival.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adaptive cultures

Researchers in the field of management throughout the world have found it conflicting in coming up with a generally acceptable definition of adaptive culture, owing to differences in the phenomenon and time. However, this study still considered some of the definitions given by some of the popular authors in the field of the study. According to Child (1972); Miles, Snow, Meyer and Coleman (1978) cultural adaptability is attributed to the ability of a firm to adjust to changes in the external environment in order to maintain organizational sustainability. However, Child did not only further clarify the roles of adaptive organization to be open to

continual redefinition but organization whose colour coordination is by frequent meetings and extensive lateral communication. Likewise, Miles, *et al* (1978) argued that an organization is adaptive when it finds itself addressing any of the three issues of adaptive cycle which is made up of entrepreneurial, engineering and administrative.

As for Orton and Weick (1990), adaptability of an organization is seen in terms of its functions that enables it to assimilate and accommodate change. They identified three functions to include experimentation (actions that open connection), collective judgment (agreement on preferences), and preservation of dissent (the retention of multiple understandings and minority influence). But to Kotter and Heskett (1992), adaptive culture is a collection of set of cultural attributes that enable organizations to become more adaptive to environmental changes.

In the recent time, the position of authors on what constitutes the adaptability of the organization has now been redefined and specified from the organization to its actors (specifically, the employees). For instance, Walker, Holling, Carpenter and Kinzrg, (2004) described cultural adaptability as the capacity of actors in a system to influence flexibility. This suggests that a company has cultural adaptability when it has ability to quickly return to better position after being affected by the environmental changes. Other authors sharing the similar perspective are McShane and Glinow (2003); Hill and McShane (2009), who conceptualized organizational cultural adaptability as a situation that manifest when employees focus on the changing needs of customers and other stakeholders, and support initiative to keep pace with these changes.

Upon the close examination of all the definitions reviewed above, it can be said that the perspective of earlier authors focus on how the entirety of the organization's ability in terms of its functions, attributes and ability can be used to cope with the changing need in the market environment so as to maintain sustainability. But the recent authors in the field emphasized more on the use of the roles of organizational actors particularly the employees are used in identifying the needs of not only the customers and other stakeholders but also to support the initiative to move with the level of the changes. This (the perspectives of the recent authors) form the basis upon which this study adopted the definition of McShane and Glinow (2003); Hill and McShane (2009). At the same time, it informs the target audience.

Elements of Adaptive Culture

McShane and Glinow (2003) explained the following elements of adaptive culture:

- i. **External focus:** Employees hold a common mental model that the

organisation's success depends on continuous change to support stakeholders. A typical example is Nokia that moved from toilet paper and rubber boots to cellular telephones. This firm has been keeping with an adaptive culture because employees believe that change is both necessary and inevitable to keep pace with a changing external environment (McShane & Glinow, 2003).

- ii. **Process orientation focus:** Employees in adaptive cultures pay much attention to organization processes just as they do to organizational goals. They adhere to paying maximum attention to continuous improvement in internal process (production, customer service, etc.) to serve external stakeholders.
- iii. **Strong sense of ownership:** Employees in adaptive cultures have a strong sense of ownership when they assume responsibility for organisation's performance. In other words, they believe that "it's our job" rather than "it's not my job."
- iv. **Proactive and quick:** Here, employees seek out opportunities, rather than wait for them to arrive. They act quickly to learn through discovery rather than engage in paralysis by analysis (McShane & Glinow, 2003).

Organisational Survival

Organizational survival and growth are inherent goals of the organization that require investment of energy and resources. As a result, it becomes necessary for organization that doesn't have survival as a primary objective or goal to re-think. This is because the goal of organizational survival supports all other goals. However, paying attention to this goal contributes to the satisfaction and execution of other organizational goals. It was argued further that the concept of survival is an unwritten law of every organization as a result, every organization should see survival as a total requirement for serving any interest whatsoever (Osinbanjo, Abiodun & Obamiro, 2011).

In a more diverse view, Babalola and Abel (2013), see business survival as the process with which organisation manages to stay in business. Hence, organisations usually engage in the process of structuring and restructuring when responding to the activities that will enable them to survive in the continuous changing market environment. Doing this, will enable them to keep fit with the activities in terms of complex leadership styles, changes, uncertainty, conflict, culture, technology, structure, competitive market, profitability and workplace motivation.

In view of these complex challenges, organisation needs to strategically plan and develop the most appropriate and adaptive structure that will enable it to utilize and maximize its resources and ultimately to achieve its objectives in which survival is

one (Babalola & Abel, 2013). The outcome of strategic plan and structure as essential for adaptive culture, translated into innovation actions of various forms within the organization and this form the basis upon which this study measures survival. Therefore, the more organisation executes innovative actions well strategically planned and structure the better it chances to survive in the changing market environment.

However, it should be noted that innovation remains a key to growth and competitiveness in the modern economy as the benefit attached to it for both corporations and economy as a whole is enormous. For instance, it leads to new products, processes and services, which allow a firm to reduce its production costs, access new markets or develop new ways of doing things. Innovative companies augment the general competence base in their field, and trigger learning processes, which may benefit, or spill over into, other areas or sectors (Ibe & Olori, 2016; Rukevwe & Oke, 2014).

Adaptive Organizational Culture and Business Survival

The nature of connectivity that exist between adaptive organizational culture and business survival is in several folds of which this current study focuses on only theoretical and empirical views. Looking this relationship theoretical wise, there would always be the need for organizations to respond to the changing need of its immediate environment in order to survive. Failure of which may result to disorderliness, decline, and possible death. However, maintaining a high functioning adaptation process can automatically help organization in coping with change (Sørensen, 2002).

Empirically, it is the position of the existing researchers in the field shared a view that an effective adaptive process can be used to enable members of the organization to easily detect environmental threats, so that it would enable them to come up with the best solutions which will enhance a desired response (Barney 1986; Cheung et al. 2012; Fiol 1991; Ostroff et al. 2013; Schein 2010; Schneider et al. 2013). While for researchers such as Abebe et al. (2011) and Levinson (1994), a culture must support recognition and respond quickly to environmental changes in order to acclimatize itself to those changes failure of which may put it out of operation, even when members are equipped with adequate information on how to respond via a mutual understanding of both processes and procedures when environmental changes occur (Chatman et al. 2014; Schein 2010). Taking for example, an organizational culture that not only encourages proactive attention to environmental threats but also create structures to address them will be more probably to change to their environments.

Theoretical review

Organizational Ecology theory: This theory emphasizes the relations between organizational characteristics, environmental conditions, and firm mortality. According to the ecologists, young and new organizations have a higher risk of failure than older organizations due to the liability of newness. Lin (2014) reported that it was a well-known fact that survival is positively related to age and Jovanovic's (1982) selection model was the first to predict such a positive relationship. But this age-dependent surviving profile is likely to follow an inverted U-shaped pattern instead of continuously declining mortality rate with increasing age (Lin, 2014). Moreso, while relating to the liability of smallness, larger new businesses have better survival prospects than smaller new firms. This could be due to several factors such as the advantage in raising more capital or in a better position to recruit qualified labor. Hence, the likelihood of surviving seems positively relate to the size of the firm (Lin, 2014). Organizational ecologists also attribute firm survival to organizational strategies. Lastly, in connection with the markets where firms compete, organizational ecologists argue that organizational selection processes are driven by environmental forces such as environment variability and environmental grain (Freeman & Hannan, 1983). Hence, the study adopted this theory because it highlights variables under consideration.

Adaptability Theory: This theory centers on the idea of the norms and beliefs that enhance organization's ability to receive, interpret and translate signals from the external environment into the internal environment of the organizational and behavioral changes which promotes its survival, growth and development (Njugi & Nikson, 2014). Conversely, organizations that are well integrated are often the most difficult ones to change due to the deep levels of adaptability acquired over time (Njugi & Nikson, 2014). Moreso, adaptable organizations are driven by their customers, take risks and learn from their mistakes and have the capability and experience at creating change. Such organizations are continuously changing their systems to promote improvements and provide value for their customers (Njugi & Nikson, 2014). Hence, the study adopted this theory because it emphasizes variables such as customer focus, risk taking, learning and creating changes which are features of adaptive organisations.

Empirical review

In Indonesia, Sabihaini and Pamungkas (2021) conducted a quantitative survey research on the ongoing efforts of building an adaptive organisational culture and now-future leadership during the new normal era at KPPN Yogyakarta through work motivation with the main aim of determining the direct effect of now-future

leadership and organizational culture on achievement of employee and indirect effect of now-future leadership and organizational culture on achievement of employee through work motivation. In doing this, the study measured achievement of employees with proxies such as quality of yield, quality of result, timeliness of result, presence, and cooperative ability; for now-future leadership it uses charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and personal attention; while for organizational culture it utilizes integrity, professionalism, synergy, services, and perfectness. To facilitate the objectives the 52 employees of the State Treasury Service Office (KPPN) Yogyakarta were all served with self-administered questionnaire, out of which the responses from the usable ones (48) were analyzed using Partial Least Square (PLS) through SMARTPLS 3.2.7. Therein, the findings revealed that both now-future leadership and organizational culture could be used to improve achievement of employee respectively, while work motivation mediated the relationship between now-future leadership and organizational culture on achievement of employee. More importantly, the study was observed to have demonstrated not only a good use of strong statistical techniques in the analysis of data collected but also showed how work motivation could be used as a mediating variable for Now-future and Organizational culture. However, as the study failed to differentiate adaptive organisational culture from organizational culture, it also regarded now-future leadership style as transformational leadership, whereas they are not. Hence, there exists the need for future studies to engage on the use of large samples for a better generalisation. At the same time, comparative study would be a better explorable areas by the future researchers among the bio-data.

In the same vein, Almeida, Caetano, and Porto (2018) applied survey research to satellite companies consisting of fashion, food and service department in a Shopping Center of the city of Anápolis-Goiás in Brazil with the main aim of identifying if there was an association between the organizational management model based on McGregor's X and Y Theory with the construct of the adaptive and non-adaptive culture approach of Kotter and Heskett. In doing this, the study adopted both exploratory and descriptive survey research design based on bibliography and field research. In measuring the data collected, the study used Alpha Cronbach for the evaluation of the density of the questionnaire data; Pearson Correlation Coefficient for verifying through analysis of the correlation and linear regression between the data surveyed and F statistic for obtaining the significance test of the hypotheses and make the decision to accept or reject the null hypothesis. It was the findings of the study that organizations with an emphasis on Theory X is not likely to embrace changes in the organizational environment(non-adaptive culture), while those with an emphasis on Theory Y are more likely to adopt changes in the organizational environment(adaptive culture). However, there is need for future researchers to conduct this type of study with a large samples for a reliable generalization of the results. This is because, the larger the sample size, the better the

results.

Similarly, Costanza, Blacksmith, Coats, Severt, and DeCostanza (2015) used histometric approaches to not only identify, define, and develop a measure of adaptive organizational culture, but also demonstrated its effect on organizational survival in the United States. The study achieved its objective by conceptualizing adaptive culture with the used of variables such as External focus, Anticipation, Confidence, Open to change, Development of capabilities, Collaborative action planning, executing change, Sustaining change, and Risk-taking as independent variables proxies. During the process, the study developed adaptive culture rating scale from the review of the existing literature and by rating Ninety-five organizations established before 1940 with nine common characteristics of adaptive culture which were further used to predict likelihood of survival using a Cox regression and proportional hazards survival analysis. In line with the study's objective, values toward change and action-orientation were identified as the major measures of adaptive culture. It was equally the findings of the study that organizations with adaptive cultures would be more likely to survive. It is however worthy of stating not only, that the study was the first of its kind to use histometric method in developing and using a measure of adaptive culture, but went further to look at its impact on long-term organizational outcomes using survival analysis, a scarcely employed statistical technique in the field of organizational studies. However, the study is limited by some of the following weaknesses: development of the dimensions and measures of adaptive cultures through thematic categorizations via existing definitions, use of archival sources with lack of accurate information, as well as raters fatigue and others. There is need for future effort to be concentrated on how the adaptive culture variables designed can be empirically used at a case study for better generalization of the results.

In relation to the above, Nesbit and Lam (2014) carried out a longitudinal case study of a non-governmental organization (NGO) in the social service sector in Hong Kong China that underwent a two-year quality improvement program to explore the relationship between adaptive culture and organizational change. The study assessed adaptive culture via questionnaire developed by Denison (1990, 1995, & 2001) which segment adaptive culture (1) ability to create changes, (2) a focus on customers, and (3) learning at an organizational level. In doing this, the study adopted the quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interview and focus group) methods to determine the adaptability of the organization's culture prior to and after the change program. It was the findings of the study that survey method did not show a substantial cultural change, though interviews and focus groups analysis did not only exemplify a significant improvement in learning processes at the team level but at the same it increased adoption of participatory leadership behavior. Moreover, the extent of change, most especially in term of organizational level learning, was not

much. It is worthwhile to say that the study was the first of its kind to use mixed methods of design, though failed to fully concentrate on quantitative method with the use of substantial statistical techniques and no theoretical justification to explain the relationship among the variables in the study. However, the need for further researches to repeat this type of study using only either qualitative or quantitative research design in order to avoid spurious results exist.

Comparatively, it appears that adaptive organisational culture has effects on organizational performance. A survey of 52 staff and rating of 95 organizations (Sabihaini & Pamungkas, 2021; Costanza, Blacksmith, Coats, Severt, & DeCostanza, 2015) found out that organizational culture could be used to improve achievement of employee and guarantee survival level. Similar relationship was equally found by Almeida, Caetano, and Porto (2018) where those organizations with an emphasis on Theory Y are more likely to adopt changes in the organizational environment (adaptive culture). It was only the work of Nesbit and Lam (2014) where the survey result did not show a notable effect of cultural change. This might be due to over concentration on qualitative method of adopted by the researchers.

Gaps identified from the existing studies

Since the main objective of this article is to determine how adaptive organisational culture can be used to achieve organisational survival, it therefore becomes important for the researchers to articulate some of the notable issues in the existing studies. After a careful reviewed of each of the considered existing article, the researcher come up with the following gaps that needed to be filled by the future researchers.

In reviewing the existing literature, particularly the work of Sabihaini and Pamungkas (2021) it was noted that their study could not differentiate adaptive organisational culture from organisational culture, likewise, it mistakenly took now-future leadership style as transformational leadership, whereas they are not. Similarly, the use of small sample was equally observed from the work of Almeida, Caetano, and Porto (2018), whereas, the higher the sample, the better the result. Similarly, over reliance of Costanza, Blacksmith, Coats, Severt, and DeCostanza (2015) on the use of archival sources with lack of accurate information, as well as raters fatigue existed when articulating the dimensions and measures of adaptive cultures. Not only that, Nesbit and Lam (2014) failed to fully concentrate on quantitative method with the use of substantial statistical techniques. But generally speaking, all the works reviewed failed to identify suitable theory which could explain the relationship between among the variables considered by the study. Hence, this current article aims at proffering solution to any of the gaps identified.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This is because, the research used primary data to generate the necessary information needed through structured questionnaire. The targeted population of this study is the total no of all the staff in the managerial cadre of LUBCON Nigeria which is 470 (Company Human Resource Manager as at 2021). Hence, the sample size was calculated using the Guilford and Flruchter (1973) formula for sample estimation, due to the fact that the whole population is too large to be studied. A random sampling technique was also employed to ensure that every member of the population has an equal chance in the selection process. Guilford and Flruchter (1973) formula:

$$\frac{N}{1 + Q^2 N}$$

Where:

N=Population=470

Q=Alpha=0.05

$$\frac{N}{1 + Q^2 N} = \frac{470}{1 + 0.05^2 (470)} = 216$$

So, copies of structured questionnaire with 5-point Likert scale of “5 = Strongly Agree” to “1 = Strongly Disagree” were administered to 216 respondents out of which 202 returned were found useful for the analysis. The questionnaire was equally divided into two sections. Section A covers Bio Data while section B covers basic questions regarding Adaptive culture elements and organizational survival. In the B part, adaptive culture elements developed by Denison (1990, 1995, & 2001) as modified by McShane and Glinow (2003) was used. Adaptive culture components of Denison (1990; 2001), includes: (i) ability to create changes (Modified as External focus and Process Orientation, (ii) a focus on customers (Modified as strong sense of ownership), and (iii) learning at an organizational level (modified as proactive and quick). More so, three (3) questions each were raised from each dimension cumulating into twelve (12) questions under adaptive culture survey. While the questionnaire for organizational survival (dependent), was adapted from the various items of Organization Success Scale (OSS) developed by (Simon et al., 2011). The measurement instrument was subjected to Cronbach Alpha test of reliability which gave a high reliability alpha of above 0.7 which according to Nunnally (1978), it ensures internal consistency and reliability. To empirically demonstrative the effect of adaptive organisational culture on organizational survival, multiple linear regression analysis was employed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

H_0 : Adaptive Organisational Culture does not have significant impact on organizational survival

Table 1: *Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.623 ^a	.388	.376	.48510

a. Predictors: (Constant), Proactive & Quick, Process Orientation, External Focus, Strong Sense of Ownership

The table 1 above presents the model summary of the effect of Adaptive organisational culture on Organisational Survival. The table shows Correlation coefficient (R) and R-square to be 0.623 and 0.388 respectively. This explains that, Adaptive organisational culture is highly positively related to Organisational Survival and Adaptive organisational culture variables explain for about 38.8% of the variations in the Survival of the Organization while the remaining 61.2% was explained by other factors not included in the model.

Table 2: *Coefficients^a*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.636	.337		1.886	.061
External Focus	.260	.084	.202	3.095	.002
Process Orientation	.076	.071	.072	1.078	.282
Strong Sense of Ownership	.143	.054	.183	2.654	.009
Proactive & Quick	.356	.074	.332	4.842	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Survival

Sources: SPSS Printout, 2021

From the above regression coefficient table 2, External Focus, Strong Sense of Ownership, and Proactive and Quick were statistically significant to Organisational Survival with probability value of less than 0.05, while on the other hand, Process Orientation was statistically insignificant to Organisational survival as its probability value is greater than 0.05. With this, it is sufficing to say that Adaptive organisational culture variables have significant influence on Organisational Survival. Therefore, the Null hypothesis is rejected while the Alternative hypothesis which states that Adaptive Organizational Culture has significant impact on

organizational survival is accepted.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the objective of this study was to determine the effect of Adaptive Organizational Culture on Organizational Survival with special attention to LUBCON Nigeria Limited, the study concluded based on the finding that adaptive organizational culture had significant a positive and significant influence on organizational survival with 0.623 as correlation coefficient value and 0.388 as R-square value. As a result, it could be concluded that organization can increase its chance of survival in the changing market environment if critically looked into the variables that constitutes its concept of adaptive organization culture. This is because, for organisation to be adaptive in its culture, it has to be efficient and effective at responding to environmental demands. The finding of this study in line with the finding of Costanza, Blacksmith, Coats, Severt, and DeCostanza, (2015) who shows that organizations with adaptive cultures were more likely to survive.

This study recommend that business organizations should promote adaptive culture to survive in dynamic business environment. In particular, LUBCON Nigeria Limited and other firms in the industry should ensure that process orientation is reviewed so as to reflect the contemporary trend of its content. This should also be tailored towards increasing their chance of survival and gaining competitive advantage over other firms in the industry.

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