

Multilateral Negotiation and Performance of Selected Oil and Gas Companies in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The multiplicity and complexity of multilateral negotiation and the seeming less control of the negotiation process by the parties to the negotiation which have led to less successful negotiation outcomes necessitated this study. Hence, the study sort to examine the type of relationship that exists between multilateral negotiation and performance of selected oil and gas companies in Cross River State. Correlational Survey Research Design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 126, and complete enumeration was adopted for the study. Data were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The result indicated that emotional intelligence has a significant positive relationship with employee retention in the selected oil and gas companies in Cross River State. The study therefore recommended that the people saddled with the responsibility of negotiation on behalf of the organization, communities and government should show more maturity emotionally in order to accommodate the feelings of others, and that the negotiators in a multinational settings should not be self-centred but willing to hear out the other parties so as to hasten settlement and engender good relationship.*

Key Words: *Multilateral Negotiation, Performance, Emotional Intelligence and employee retention.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Organizations are made up of different entities and stakeholders. The mind-set and the disposition of any stakeholder or component of an organization can significantly influence the performance of the organization positively or negatively. These components within an organization, be it employees at different levels, management, owners, shareholders or even customers, sometimes have different agenda and goals to achieve which might breed misunderstanding and crisis within the organization. Boddy (2002) posits that crisis inevitably comes with members of an organization having different perspectives on tasks leading to possible conflicts. These conflicts, however, can be viewed from a different perspective. Organizations can see these conflicts as an opportunity for renewal and productivity if it could be managed and kept within certain boundaries or a distraction that affects organizations' performance (Boddy, 2002, p. 110). Outside stakeholders also, be it community leaders and indigenes, security agencies and the government have different vested interests in the organization which also makes for misunderstanding and create chaotic or problematic situations in the organization which affects the performance of the organizations. These problematic situations call for and require negotiations to resolve the impasse.

Negotiation is the act of finding common grounds to a problematic situation. Murtoaro and Kujala (2007) define negotiation as communication, direct or tacit, formal or informal, between individuals who are motivated to converge on an agreement for mutual benefit. It is a process whereby two or more parties reach a mutually agreeable arrangement. It is one of the most commonly used and beneficial skills that managers can develop (Auer & Racine, 2005). Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy (2009) highlight that research has shown that managers spend twenty-five percent (25%) of their time negotiating to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings. Knowledge of conflict management and negotiations should, therefore, be one of the manager's most robust characteristics. Negotiation could be categorized into two depending on the number of parties with a vested interest in the negotiation process and the complexity of the situation. It could be bilateral negotiations or multilateral negotiations. In the context of this study, the focus is on Multilateral Negotiations (MLN).

Multilateral negotiation (MLN) is always associated with negotiations involving different countries of the world. It is an international strategy in resolving crisis or conflicts among states. This is possibly why there is a paucity of literature on multilateral negotiations that is organizationally based. MLN deals with many sides of negotiators or interests, and the issue in question is always complicated. Zartman (1994) opines that in MLN, numbers are significant but not infinite, generally between 10 and 150. Size matters and parties are not equal as they generally are assumed to be in bilateral negotiation. As a result of the size and the complexity of the issues and the processes involved, being emotionally intelligent is pertinent so that the parties will understand the plight of each other and come to a resolution as quickly as possible so as not to affect the performance of the companies involved.

Oil and Gas Companies in Cross River were studied to evaluate the role MLN play in their performance. Cross River State is one of the states in the Niger Delta region that is rich in crude oil deposits, which contributes immensely to the economic development of the country. However, over the years, this region and the state studied in particular have been complaining and agitating against the pollution of their areas by the oil and gas producing firms. Over the past fifty–five years, the oil-producing host communities in Nigeria's Niger Delta region have experienced a wide range of environmental pollution, degradation, human health risks, and socio-economic problems as a result of activities associated with petroleum exploration, development and production (Ite & Ibok, 2013; Ite, Ibok, Ite & Petters, 2013; Ite, 2012). Apart from other anthropogenic sources of petroleum pollutants, some of the significant environmental consequences associated with petroleum exploration and production operations include: (i) atmospheric pollution associated with natural gas flaring and venting (Ogri, 2001; Scheren, Ibe, Janssen & Lemmens, 2002) which may contribute to global climate change, (ii) pollution of marine ecosystem which often result in adverse impacts on wildlife and negative impact on tourism, fishing and other related businesses, and (iii) controlled water (surface and groundwater) sources and soil pollution (Benka-Coker & Ekundayo, 1995; Kharaka, Hanor, Heinrich & Karl, 2007).

In trying to settle issues, the parties appear to be thinking of themselves alone; they want to maximise gains at the expense of others. The indigenes seem to be demanding for too much, and the government officials, community leaders, and representatives appear to be looking to maximise their gains leaving the organization and the employee to pay dearly for it. This is evidence of a lack of emotional intelligence on the part of parties to the negotiation, where the parties think in terms of what will benefit them alone and not trying to understand the plight of the other parties. This situation has led to instances of militancy and kidnapping of expatriates and local staff for ransom on countless occasions in the region, a spate of kidnapping, pipeline vandalism and bombings of some oil installations. This appears to be putting the employees in a jittery and fearful mood as most of the expatriates have either left the companies or relocated to other regions making it difficult for the companies to retain their employees. A situation that places an additional cost on the organization in terms of transportation and accommodation cost for those residing in other regions and the cost of recruitment for employees that have left the organizations. All these affect the overall performance of the organization, and it is against this backdrop that this study seeks to identify the role played by MLN in the performance of the selected organizations which include Bredford Technology, Omni Errands Manufacturing Limited and First Komadi Limited based in Cross River State Nigeria.

1.1 Objective of the Study:

The broad objective of the study is to identify the extent to which Multilateral Negotiation correlates with Performance in the selected oil and gas companies in Cross River State. More specifically, the study seeks to:

a) Identify the extent of the relationship that exists between emotional intelligence and employee retention in the selected oil and gas companies in Cross River State.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Multilateral Negotiation

From the word "Multilateral," it implies multi-party; when parties involved are more than two. In this sense, the term "multilateral negotiation (MLN)" has to do with negotiations that involve more than two parties. It has been associated with international organizations, companies, and governments. Auer and Racine (2005) posit that MLN describes any negotiation that is conducted simultaneously by a large number of governmental entities, usually under the auspices of an international organization. The issues discussed under this type of negotiation are usually very complex and hard to resolve. Kramer (1991) posits that for the fact that it involves many parties, the issues discussed are usually multifaceted, complex, and dynamic. The literature generally stresses that multilateral negotiations often present very different dynamics of development from bilateral negotiations, according to three dimensions:

- a) Wider size
- b) Greater complexity
- c) Stronger diversity.

Unlike conventional bilateral negotiations, multilateral negotiations are characterized by intensive international discussions that involve multiple actors and interests, highly complex agendas, and differentiated international settings (Hampson & Hart, 1999). They argue that MLN is, in essence, a coalition-building enterprise involving states, non-state actors, and international organizations. It is generally assumed that, because of the above-mentioned complexity, an agreement is much more challenging to reach in a multilateral setting. This would explain - if not justify - the fact that most multilateral negotiations are so cumbersome and lengthy and needing more than just skills but emotional intelligence and cognitive skills (Auer & Racine, 2005).

In MLN, actors or parties appear to have less control of the negotiation processes and procedures. Auer and Racine (2005) opine that above all, it appears that each individual negotiator is much less in control of the negotiation process in a multilateral setting. MLN is constituted by several parties, among them heterogeneous ones too, each with

its own configuration of interests and issues. This leads to a widened scope of negotiation and therefore complicates the process (Carnevale & de Dreu, 2006). This could be due to a lack of structure in an MLN setting. There is no apparent structure, and no clear indication of allies and adversary; indeed, most parties are both allies and adversaries, depending on the issue. The presence of many parties and many issues also means that there are many roles to be played (Zartman, 1994).

For a discussion to qualify for a negotiation, be it bilateral or multilateral, it must have some properties. Murtoaro et al. (2007) state that negotiations are composed of four mutual characteristics, independently of if it is in the personal or professional life:

- a) There are two or more parties.
- b) The parties can be creative and cooperate to arrive at a joint decision.
- c) The payoffs to any party depend either on the consequences of the joint decision or alternatives external to the negotiations“.
- d) The parties can reciprocally and directly exchange information, honest or not“.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) has to do with seeing things through the other person; acting in such a way that will be beneficial to not just you but to the other party(s) as well. Being emotionally intelligent entails regulating one's emotions as well as that of others. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2008) put it this way; EI basically refers to the ability to recognize and regulating the emotions of oneself and that of the others. It is, however, essential to note that EI has no generally accepted definition as it has been defined differently by different people at different times. What however seems central in all their definitions is that it has to do with acting in such a way that recognizes that there are other parties whose interest in an issue is essential also. Giardini and Frese (2006) posit that EI is the ability to recognize and regulate the emotions in one own self and others and to make use of this information in order to guide one's thinking and actions.

Being high on EI has several benefits to the parties involved, be it employers and employees, management and employees, in the family and or in government. Painting the picture of the importance of EI, Kim, Cable, Kim and Wang (2009) opine that people with a high level of EI can gather and regulate the emotions accurately and then use that information to make decisions and to enhance the performance by changing the behaviours in the desired manner. It changes the moods, actions, and inactions of people involved in a crisis situation and negotiating. It also enhances the moods of employees in teams and groups. Supporting this assertion, Barsade (2002) avers that EI plays a more significant role in changing the moods and behaviours of people when they are working in teams and groups. Fulmer et al. (2004) add that EI advances our understanding of negotiations. The ability to both predict behaviour, outcomes, to analyze emotions and control emotions both in self and others gives the negotiator great possibilities.

Fulmer et al. (2004) present four propositions regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and negotiations:

1. Emotionally intelligent negotiators will more accurately evaluate risk, leading to better decision-making performance within a negotiation context.
2. Emotionally intelligent negotiators are more likely to perceive the opportunity to use and to actually choose negotiation strategies/tactics that involve manipulation of their own emotions or of the emotions of negotiation opponents.

Performance

Performance in an organizational sense could take many dimensions; it could be the performance of the individuals in the organization, performance of the groups or teams that make up the organization or the organizational performance which could be measured in qualitative or quantitative terms. Brudan (2010) posits that when it comes to the performance from management's point of view, it could be about personal performance or individual performance or the performance of the team or it can also be an organization's performance.

Martinelli (2003) views performance as a measure of the state of an organization, or the outcomes that result from management decisions and execution of those decisions by employees of the organization. Greenberg (2011) posits that performance is a set of financial and non-financial indicators that offer information on the degree of achievement of objectives and results. Performance can be measured based on the strength of the organization to attract and retain a quality workforce that will assist the organization to execute its goals and make them competitive in the business environment.

Employee Retention

Top-quality employee attraction and retention has been the centre of attraction of human resources departments in an organization. It could be a result of the sterling roles employees play in achieving organizational goals. Employee

turnover comes with so many negative commentaries as a result of its cost implications, which include the cost of recruitment, training, and placement. It is also associated with lost man-hours and breaking of already existing bonds in the workplace. This is the more reason employee retention is critical to organizations' management. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, and Erez (2001) state that employee retention has the attention of top-level managers in today's organizations because of the personal and organizational costs of leaving a job.

Employee retention is a business management term that refers to the effort made by organizations to keep their employees in the organization. The performance of employees which could be triggered by their desire to remain in the organization could be influenced by many things, one of which is emotional intelligence. A recent research study by Schmidt and Hunter (2004) reveals that EI predicts employee's performance well in a diverse variety of jobs, not specifically only for those that require considerable intellect power. They are of the view that EI is one of the critical determining factors of evaluating employees' performance. Hasanzadeh, (2009) stated that EI develops innovational creativity in individuals and as a result, helps in the improvement of people's job performance and increase their desire to remain in the firm.

Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on **Game Theory**. The earliest example of a formal game-theoretic analysis is the study of a duopoly by Antoine Cournot in 1838. The mathematician Emile Borel suggested a formal theory of games in 1921, which was furthered by the mathematician John von Neumann in 1928 in a "theory of Parlor games" (Turocy & Stengel, 2001). Game theory was established as a field in its own right after the 1944 publication of the monumental volume *Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour* by von Neumann and the economist Oskar Morgenstern. However, in the 1950s and 1960s, game theory was broadened theoretically and applied to problems of war and politics. Since the 1970s, it has driven a revolution in economic theory. Additionally, it has found applications in sociology and psychology and established links with evolution and biology (Turocy & Stengel, 2001).

Game theory talks about strategies available to players in making decisions when faced with competition or negotiation. Understanding the various concepts, in theory, will aid in fully appreciating the theory. The first fundamental concept here is a game that is a formal model of an interactive situation. A game here could be a negotiation between or among people, firms, organizations, or a combination of all the above mentioned. It typically involves several players, which is another important concept in the theory. A player is an agent who makes decisions in a game; a participant in a game. Worthy of understanding also is the concept of rationality because it is assumed that all players are rational in game theory. A player is said to be rational if he seeks to play in a manner that maximizes his own payoff. Payoff implies a number, also called a utility, that reflects the desirability of an outcome to a player, for whatever reason (Turocy & Stengel, 2001).

The theory links correctly to the study as it talks about players, self-interest, rationality, and payoffs. This is embedded in multilateral negotiations that involve different players; in this case, the oil firms, the communities, well-meaning individuals, and government. They have their own individual interest, which could be to maximize profit for the organization, to protect the environment for the communities or to improve earnings and GDP for the government. In doing these, various decisions are made which have the potential of affecting the position and interest of the other parties, but in the end, the players or parties want a payoff that most satisfies their interest.

Empirical Review

Caputo (2012) carried out a study on integrative agreements in multilateral negotiations: the case of Fiat and Chrysler. The aim of the study was however to understand the role that the third party who joins (a key stakeholder in this case) can play in multilateral negotiations in achieving integrative agreements, through the analysis of the case studies relating to the treaty put in place between Fiat and Chrysler to establish a strategic alliance in the automobile sector. The primary sources of information in order to build up the case study were the Fiat Group company documents and the databases of IISole24Ore; The New York Times, The Financial Times, Forbes, UNRAE and Italian Stock Exchange. In addition, dossiers developed by consulting firms and banks such as Deutsche Bank, Unicredit, Intesa Sanpaolo, and Merrill Lynch were consulted. The study found a new insight, which was that the idea of the negotiating parties might change during the process, not only internally but also in number.

Gilligan and Simonelli (2006) studied international multilateral agreement negotiations. The study stated that negotiations of multilateral agreements are often long and laborious endeavours, but international relations scholars know very little about what occurs during the bargaining of such agreements, and systematic empirical work is severely lacking. Little empirical work on how multilateral agreements are negotiated exists because data on the negotiations of a large number of agreements across multiple issue areas has not been collected. The paper introduced a new database of facts related to the multilateral agreement making process. The dataset included data on what occurred during the negotiations of 170 multilateral agreements, across several different issue areas. Three variables unique to the dataset were coded: the length of negotiations, the first proposal maker, and the number of negotiating states. Descriptive

statistics on these variables were also provided, and it revealed that multilateral negotiation is an integral part of international negotiations.

Kinnander (2011) carried out a study which focused on investigating different kinds of approaches and methods when dealing with conflicts. One area that has been highlighted is methods that can prevent conflicts and develop the behaviours of team members. It was a non-experimental. The data gathered from literature and interviews were analyzed and evaluated. Through the interviews, the participants showed a tendency towards being stricter and objective at their workplaces compared to how they are acting in their private lives. The study recommended that the project manager should ensure that emotionally charged issues do not evolve into a conflict that could develop and become dysfunctional. In order to resolve a conflict, a conflict competent project manager should be able to see the conflict from an independent perspective.

Aniefiok, Usenobong, Margaret, Idongesit and Udo (2016) carried out a study on the petroleum industry in Nigeria: environmental issues, national environmental legislation, and implementation of international environmental law. They said that the Nigerian government and other African countries had played tremendous roles in the emergence of international environmental law that regulates the establishment of environmental institutions and legislations as well as strategies for the conservation and management of natural resources. They examined some of the contributions of multinational oil companies' operation towards environmental degradation and the role of the Nigerian Government in the implementation of the petroleum-related environmental policies in the Niger Delta region.

In a study carried out in the Nigerian Banking Industry, Atuma and Agwu (2015) examined workplace emotional intelligence and return on investment. A cross-sectional survey design was employed for the study. The sample size of the study consisted of 210 branch managers in the South-South area of Nigeria, which was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. Data were collected through department interviews and questionnaire instruments. Spearman rank correlation coefficient with the aid of SPSS was employed in testing the hypotheses. The findings revealed that workplace emotional intelligence is significantly related to return on investment. A positive and significant relationship was found among the three dimensions of workplace emotional intelligence and the bank's return on investment indicated that the more workers of an organization are emotionally intelligent, the more likely the organization will achieve a return on investment. Similarly, the interview analysis also revealed that most managers demonstrated competencies associated with emotional intelligence, which impacted on the employee performance and the overall performance of the bank.

3. METHODS:

This study adopted a Correlational Survey Research Design. The study population consists of 121 employees (Bredford Technology 45 employees, Omni Errands Manufacturing Limited 26 employees, and First Komadi Limited 50 employees). The study made use of complete enumeration. The instrument used in data collection was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured in a Likert Scale format. It has five scales; Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). It contains ten (10) items, five (5) each for the dependent and independent variables. The instrument was validated using face and content validity. Crombach Alpha coefficient was used in determining the internal consistency (reliability) of the research instrument. The coefficient obtained was .899, which is higher than the acceptance benchmark of .7. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used in analysing. The significance level used was .05 (5%). A total of 86 (71%) copies of the questionnaire were analysed because some of the 121 distributed copies of the questionnaire were not returned while some of the returned ones were not answered correctly or mutilated.

Data Analysis

Test of Hypothesis

Emotional intelligence has a significant positive relationship with employee retention in the selected oil and gas companies in Cross River State.

Table 1: Correlation Output.

		Correlations	
		EMOINT	EMPRET
EMOINT	Pearson Correlation	1	.783**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	86	86
EMPRET	Pearson Correlation	.783**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	86	86

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Keys:

EMOINT= Emotional Intelligence

EMPRET = Employee Retention

From the result obtained in table 4.3, it showed that there is a significant positive relationship existing between emotional intelligence and employee retention in the selected firms, and therefore, the research hypothesis is accepted.

4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The findings from the analysis showed that there is a significant positive relationship existing between emotional intelligence and employee retention with a correlation coefficient of .983 and a p-value of .000 (p-value < .05).

5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following re recommended:

- I. That the people saddled with the responsibility of negotiation on behalf of the organizations, communities and government should show more maturity emotionally in other to accommodate the feelings of others.
- II. That the negotiators in a multinational setting need not to be self-centred but willing to hear out the other parties so as to hasten settlement and engender good relationships.

6. CONCLUSION:

The study concludes that the more the people in multilateral negotiation show that they are aware of the feelings of others, more empathic and are willing to shift grounds for the greater good of all, that the performance of the organizations will also increase by retaining knowledgeable and expatriate workers in the firms and region.

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