CONTEXT DIAGNOSIS AND RESPONSIVENESS OF COMMERCIAL BANKS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the relationship between context diagnosis and responsiveness of Commercial banks in South-south, Nigeria with organizational flexibility, speed and innovativeness as proxies of organizational responsiveness. The research was carried out using a quantitative methodology, with a structured questionnaire instrument adopted as the means of data collection. The study was also designed as a correlational study with the units of measurement comprising 42 regional and operational managers. Related tests for validity and reliability were also carried out with all instruments identified as clear, consistent and replicable. The tests for hypotheses were carried out using the Spearman's rank order correlation (bivariate). The results revealed bivariate hypotheses to be false and hence the rejection of all previously stated assumptions about the relationship between the variables. Findings thus affirmed a positive and significant relationships between context diagnosis and organizational responsiveness. It was concluded that context diagnosisis was important for advancing the change and responsiveness needs of the Commercial banks in South-south, Nigeria.

Keyword: Context Diagnosis, Organizational Flexibility, Organizational Speed, and Organizational Innovativeness

INTRODUCTION

Commercial Banks (DMBs) in South-South Nigeria operate in a dynamic and rapidly changing business environment characterized by economic, regulatory, technological, and competitive shifts. To thrive and remain competitive, these banks must possess high levels of organizational responsiveness, which is contingent on the contextual intelligence of their managers. Contextual intelligence refers to the ability of managers to comprehend and adapt to the complex and evolving contexts in which their organizations operate (Dhami, 2003). This study explores the relationship between managerial contextual intelligence and the organizational responsiveness of DMBs in the South-South region of Nigeria. The banking sector in Nigeria has witnessed significant transformations over the years, with the South-South region emerging as a vital economic hub. The region's growing importance, fuelled by oil and gas resources and increased economic activities, has attracted several DMBs. However, these banks face numerous challenges, including regulatory changes, fluctuating oil prices, and the need to adapt to technological innovations in the industry. Consequently, the capacity to respond effectively to these dynamic forces has become a crucial determinant of success in the South-South Nigerian banking sector. Managerial contextual intelligence has gained recognition as a key factor that can influence organizational responsiveness (Bhatia, 2010). Contextual intelligence enables managers to understand the unique social, economic, and political factors shaping their operating environment, helping them make informed decisions and adapt their organizations accordingly (Duncan & Weiss, 2007).

Organizational responsiveness is a key factor in the survival and competitiveness of banks. In the face of economic fluctuations, regulatory adjustments, and market dynamics, banks must possess the agility to adapt quickly and efficiently to changes in their external environments (Adewuyi *et al.*, 2015). Contextual intelligence refers to the ability of managers to understand and respond to the intricate web of social, economic, and political factors that shape their operating environment (Bhatia, 2010). In the context of Nigerian DMBs in the South-South region, contextual intelligence is vital due to the region's unique challenges and opportunities.While previous studies have explored various aspects of organizational responsiveness and contextual intelligence in different contexts, there is a paucity of research specifically examining the relationship between managerial contextual intelligence and organizational responsiveness within the South-South region's banking sector. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating how the contextual intelligence of managers in South-South Nigerian DMBs influences their banks' responsiveness to the complex and dynamic environment in which they operate.

In the dynamic landscape of modern organizations, effective decision-making and strategic planning require a profound understanding of the contextual factors that influence business operations. This concept of context diagnoses intelligence, a cognitive framework that encompasses the ability to systematically analyze, diagnose, and interpret the intricate web of contextual factors that shape an organization's external environment. Context diagnoses intelligence equips individuals with the capacity to make informed decisions, anticipate challenges, and formulate strategic responses in light of these external dynamics. Context diagnosis is a strategic management concept that refers to the systematic analysis and evaluation of the external environment in which an organization operates. It involves the collection, interpretation, and assessment of various contextual factors, including economic, political, social, technological, and environmental influences. The primary goal of context diagnosis is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the external forces and trends that may impact an organization's operations, performance, and strategic decisions. Context diagnosis begins with environmental scanning, which is the ongoing process of systematically monitoring and gathering data about the external environment (Daft, 1982). This includes identifying key trends, changes, and potential disruptions that could affect the organization.

The diagnosis of the environment, follows the development of knowledge on the particular ails and prevailing conditions of such. Huo (2014) observed that through diagnosis, managers can be design the required structure and emphasize on the necessary functions or processes that enable the organization cope and thrive within such an environment or context. Diagnosis emphasizes on problem identification, thus related practices border on understanding the pervading characteristics of change within the environment and implications of such for the organization. This agrees with Ismail (2011) view that related processes of context diagnosis are such that focus on the organization’s weak-points and the strengthening or effective management of such during change events. Thus, context diagnosis is a strategic management practice that empowers organizations to navigate the complexities of their external environment. By systematically collecting and analyzing data, identifying trends, and understanding the implications of external forces, organizations can make informed decisions, enhance strategic planning, and maintain a competitive edge in an ever-evolving business landscape. The purpose of this paper was to examine the relationship between context diagnosis and organizational responsiveness of commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

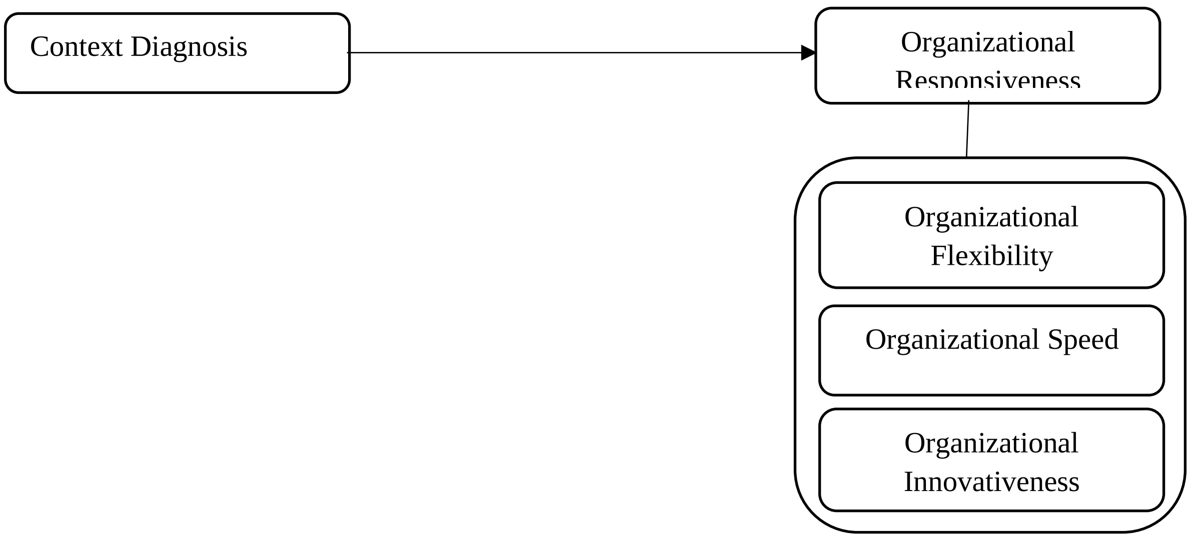

Figure 1: Relationship between Context Diagnosis and Organizational Responsiveness of Commercial in South-South, Nigeria.
Source: Desk Research (2023)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Organizational Learning Theory

The organizational learning theory was proposed by Argrys and Schon in 1978 (Albrecht, 2003). The core tenets of the theory are such that emphasize the imperatives of learning and knowledge development, in the development of competencies and capabilities imperative to the organization's effectiveness. An organization's capability to learn has been linked to a fundamental source of competitive advantage (Albrecht, 2003), which is why Alrefaai and Khalil (2019), insisted that organisational learning helps to improve an organisations disposition toward change as well as responsiveness to change (Maier, Prange & Von Rosenstiel, 2003; Argyris, 1999).

Generally, organizations learn when people learn; so, leaders search for methods, which help them achieve more, faster, and deeper in the form of valuable business learning, and what they learned should be converted into useful services and products, which can compete in the market. It makes an organization's learning to a fundamental qualitative shift because learning makes their activities a source of sustainable competitive advantage. In this paper, focus is placed on the extent to which knowledge driven actions contribute to the behaviour and actions of the organization (Argote, 2013).

Management research has widely advocated organizational learning as a source of competitive advantage in today's dynamic bsiness environment. Various scholars have summarized their findings on organizational learning and created concepts regarding their applications in organizations. Yeo (2005) summarized research on organizational learning for the period 1990-2004 and concluded that all definitions of organizational learning have a common theme in the sense that organizational learning is seen as a driver of competitive advantage which can be translated to performance. Yeo (2005) defines a learning organization as a characteristic type of organization (what) while organizational learning refers to the process of learning (how).

Conceptual Review

Context Diagnoses

A critical dimension of Context Diagnoses is the ongoing process of environmental scanning. This involves continuously monitoring the external environment for changes, anomalies, and emerging issues (Daft, 1982). It ensures that organizations remain responsive to external developments. Context Diagnoses enables leaders to make more informed and proactive strategic decisions by considering the external factors that may impact the organization (Zahra & George, 2002). The ability to diagnose contextual factors helps organizations anticipate and mitigate risks associated with changes in the external environment (Hamel & Prahalad, 1989). Context Diagnoses can provide organizations with a competitive edge by helping them adapt their strategies and operations to capitalize on emerging opportunities (Porter, 1980). Context diagnosis holds significant implications for organizations in various aspects: It informs strategic decision-making by providing leaders with a comprehensive view of the external environment. This allows organizations to develop strategies that are aligned with the prevailing context (Mintzberg, 1979). Context diagnosis helps organizations anticipate and mitigate risks associated with changes in the external environment. By identifying potential threats, organizations can develop risk mitigation strategies and contingency plans (Hamel & Prahalad, 1989). Organizations that excel in context diagnosis can gain a competitive advantage by proactively adapting to changing market conditions and exploiting emerging opportunities (Porter, 1980).

Organizational Responsiveness

At the heart of organizational responsiveness lies the ability to sense and monitor changes in the external environment. This includes the continuous gathering of data related to market trends, customer preferences, competitive actions, and regulatory shifts (Eisenhardt & Sull, 2001). Organizational responsiveness involves agile decision-making processes that enable swift and informed choices in response to changing conditions. Decision-makers must have access to relevant data, and decision processes should be streamlined to minimize delays (Eisenhardt*et al.*, 2001),A culture that embraces change and adaptation is crucial for organizational responsiveness. This cultural aspect encourages employees at all levels to be proactive in identifying opportunities and threats and in proposing and implementing innovative solutions (Cameron & Quinn, 2006).Responsiveness can provide a competitive advantage by allowing organizations to adapt more swiftly than competitors to changing market conditions, thereby capitalizing on emerging opportunities (Porter, 1980).Organizations that are responsive to customer needs and preferences can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, leading to increased market share and revenue (Day, 1994).Organizational responsiveness fosters a culture of innovation and growth by encouraging the exploration of new markets, products, and services (Tushman & O'Reilly, 1996).Hence, organizational responsiveness is a critical concept in today's business environment. It involves the ability to sense, interpret, and react swiftly to external changes and market dynamics. By embracing a culture of adaptability, streamlining decision-making processes, and continuously monitoring the external environment, organizations can position themselves for sustained success in an increasingly dynamic world.

Organizational responsiveness refers to the capacity to reconfigure or modify systems and processes to match and effectively addressing the gaps or needs of the particular context of the organization (Butler & Riveria, 2020). A lot of positive acknowledgements have been adduced to the fact that in times of unrestrained challenges and competition that developing the capacity to act in response to changes by any organization is a critical success factor for such organization. However, the reality of the intervening turbulent organizational environments is that most organizations have to muddle through all of them instantaneously and to avoid a repeat in the future (Butler & Riveria, 2020).

Measures of Organizational Responsiveness

Organizational Flexibility

In today's rapidly evolving and uncertain business landscape, the concept of organizational flexibility has emerged as a critical determinant of an organization's ability to thrive and adapt. Organizational flexibility refers to an organization's capacity to adjust its structure, processes, and strategies in response to changing circumstances, market conditions, and emerging opportunities. Organizational flexibility can be defined as the inherent capability of an organization to swiftly and effectively modify its structure, operations, and strategies to accommodate shifts in its external environment and internal dynamics. It encompasses the agility, adaptability, and responsiveness required for an organization to thrive amidst turbulence and change (Doz& Kosonen, 2007). Organizational flexibility is a multidimensional concept that refers to an organization's ability to adapt and respond effectively to changes in its external and internal environment. It involves the capacity to modify structures, processes, strategies, and cultures to remain agile and thrive in dynamic and uncertain circumstances. Organizational flexibility is not a one-size-fits-all concept; rather, it encompasses various dimensions that allow organizations to navigate evolving challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities (Doz& Kosonen, 2007; Teece, 2007).

Organizational flexibility often starts with structural adaptability. This dimension involves the organization's ability to adjust its formal hierarchy, reporting relationships, and division of labor. Flexible structures may include flatter hierarchies, cross-functional teams, and matrix organizations that facilitate rapid decision-making and collaboration (Galbraith, 2001).Process agility is another vital dimension of organizational flexibility. It pertains to an organization's capacity to modify and streamline its business processes to respond swiftly to changing market conditions. This may involve lean practices, automation, and continuous improvement initiatives to enhance operational efficiency and responsiveness (Dove, 1999).

Organizational Speed

In today's dynamic and fast-paced business environment, the concept of organizational speed has gained prominence as a key determinant of competitive advantage and organizational success. Organizational speed refers to an organization's ability to swiftly and efficiently execute its strategies, processes, and operations. This encompasses the capacity to make rapid decisions, respond promptly to market changes, and streamline internal processes for maximum efficiency. Organizational speed can be defined as the capability of an organization to accelerate its activities, decision-making processes, and responsiveness to changing conditions. It involves reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks, shortening cycle times, and fostering a culture of agility to enhance overall organizational velocity (Goldman *et al.*, 2006). Organizational speed begins with agile decision-making processes. This entails empowering decision-makers at various levels of the organization to make rapid, informed decisions. Speedy decisions are essential for seizing opportunities, responding to crises, and staying ahead of competitors (Eisenhardt, 1999). Speed also involves optimizing internal processes for efficiency and effectiveness. Lean methodologies, process re-engineering, and automation can all contribute to faster execution of tasks and reduced lead times (Davenport, 1993).

In addition to the core components, organizational speed encompasses various dimensions, including: The adoption of cutting-edge technology and digital tools can significantly enhance an organization's speed in data processing, communication, and decision-making.

Organizational Innovativeness

In today's highly competitive and rapidly evolving business landscape, the concept of organizational innovativeness has become a critical determinant of success and long-term sustainability. Organizational innovativeness refers to an organization's capacity to pro-actively generate, adopt, and implement novel ideas, processes, products, or services that lead to significant improvements, differentiation, and value creation. Organizational innovativeness can be defined as the organization's inherent ability to continuously and systematically engage in innovative activities, foster a culture that encourages creativity and experimentation, and effectively translate innovative ideas into tangible outcomes, such as new products, services, or processes (Damanpour, 1991).A culture that promotes and values innovation is fundamental to organizational innovativeness. It encourages employees to think creatively, take calculated risks, and collaborate to generate and implement innovative solutions (Amabile, 1988).

El-Kot and Gamal (2011) and Wang and Ahmed (2004) consider innovativeness to be an organization's overall capability of introducing new products to the market – or opening new markets – by combining strategic orientation with innovative behavior and process. Innovativeness has also been described as an organization's capacity to introduce new processes, products, and ideas (Hult, Hurley, and Knight, 2004) and the firm's capacity to innovate, which can lead to the development of new products, services, and processes (Raj and Srivastava, 2014).

Empirical Review

Context Diagnosis and Organizational Responsiveness

The capacity to understand the pervading challenges and gaps in the environment of the organization, contributes toward its ability for relating and adapting its features or competencies to match the gaps in its environment. Huo (2014) argued that information or facts about the environment or the dominant characteristics of the market affords the organization knowledge or insight as to what areas to reinforce and what skills or competencies are required for the survival and success of the organization. Related studies

(Murphy, 2012; Ismail, 2011) suggest that context diagnosis is critical to identifying a functional and growth path for the organization. These points to the imperatives of organizational learning and training in the development of competencies that enhance the organizations responsiveness to its environment, thus, based on the following review, this study hypothesized as follows:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between context diagnosis and organizational flexibility in South-south, Nigeria

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between context diagnosis and organizational speed in South-south, Nigeria

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between context diagnosis and organizational innovativeness in South-south, Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the correlational research design. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The population of this study was the 22 Commercial banks in the South-south, Nigeria. A census sampling was adopted hence; the entire 22Commercial banks in the South-south, Nigeria were studied. However, for the purposes of data collection, the research instrument was distributed to forty fourmanagers of22 Commercial banks in the South-south, Nigeria. Furthermore, the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. 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

The result of correlation matrix obtained for context diagnosis and measures of organizational responsiveness along with the statistical test of significance (p - value) are presented to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses.

The Relationship between Context Diagnosis and Organizational flexibility

Table 1: The Relationship between Context Diagnosis and Organizational flexibility

			Context Diagnosis	Organizational Flexibility
Spearman's rho	Context Diagnosis	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.436**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004
		N	42	42
	Organizational Flexibility	Correlation Coefficient	.436**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.
		N	42	42

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

Source: Survey Data, 2023

H_{O1}: There is no significant relationship between context diagnosis and organizational flexibility of Commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria

The analysis on the test for the relationship between context diagnosis and the measures of organizational responsiveness -organizational flexibility are all shown to be significant. The outcome of the analysis indicate that context diagnosis significantly contributes towards organizational flexibility (Rho = 0.436 and P = 0.005). In term of strength of the relationship, the result show that context diagnosis with (r = 0. 436) is moderately related to organizational flexibility.

Table 2: The Relationship between Context Diagnosis and Organizational Speed

			Context Diagnosis	Organizational Speed
Spearman's rho	Context Diagnosis	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.434**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.004
		N	42	42
	Organizational Speed	Correlation Coefficient	.434**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.
		N	42	42

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

Source: Survey Data, 2023

H_{O2}: There is no significant relationship between context diagnosis and organizational speed of Commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria

The analysis on the test for the relationship between context diagnosis and the measures of organizational responsiveness -organizational speed are all shown to be significant. The outcome of the analysis indicate that context diagnosis significantly contributes towards organizational speed (Rho = 0.434 and P = 0.005). In term of strength of the relationship, the result show that context diagnosis with (r = 0. 433) is moderately related to organizational speed.

Table 3: The Relationship between Context Diagnosis and Organizational innovativeness

			Context Diagnosis	Organizational Innovativeness
Spearman's rho	Context Diagnosis	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.496**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	42	42
	Organizational Innovativeness	Correlation Coefficient	.496**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	42	42

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

Source: Survey Data, 2023

H_{O3}: There is no significant relationship between context diagnosis and organizational innovativeness of Commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria.

The analysis on the test for the relationship between context diagnosis and the measures of organizational responsiveness -organizational innovativeness are all shown to be significant. The outcome of the analysis indicate that context diagnosis significantly contributes towards organizational innovativeness (Rho = 0.494 and P = 0.005). In term of strength of the relationship, the result show that context diagnosis with (r = 0. 494) is moderately related to organizational innovativeness.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The test for the relationship between context diagnosis and the dimensions of organizational responsiveness, demonstrates the significance of context diagnosis and the organizational responsiveness of the gaps in the environment in effectively addressing the needs and goals of the organization. Palmer and Bob (cited in Otley, 2016) posit that external environment comprises all forces and events outside the organization that impinge on its activities. External environment consists of two interrelated sets of variables that play a principal role in determining the opportunities, threats and constraints that firms face and obviously that affect their performance. First, variables originating beyond a firm's operating situation such as economic, political, social and technological forces, form the external environment. These factors impose on the behaviour and wellbeing of the organization (Otley, 2016).

Furthermore, the organizations capacity for diagnosing the variables influencing its environment immediate competitive situation; enables it re-strategize and restructure its features to effectively engage its context. Contexts in this sense constitute the external operating environment of the organization, which could be micro-or macro in nature. The micro-environment includes labour markets, customers, suppliers, creditors, and trade unions. Industry environment includes the five forces model which highlights threat of new entrants, bargaining power of suppliers and buyers, substitute products or services and rivalry among firms as the key variables. These factors are said to either promote or restrict the achievement of set goals and also affect the main internal functions of the organization and possibly its objectives and strategies (Gill, 2011).

Tolbert and Hall (2012) conceptualize external environment from five main dimensions of environment capacity, heterogeneity, environmental concentration, domain consensus and, environmental uncertainty. Environment capacity emerges from the manager's ability to advance skills or operational forms that are suited to addressing the observed problems of the environment. The environment capacity focuses on the level of resources available to an organization. Heterogeneity refers to the degree to which the organization faces different demands from different stakeholders (Dyer & Erickson, 2006).

Environmental concentration is the distribution of resources used by the organizations (Argote, 2013), while domain consensus represents the degree to which there is agreement among related organizations and other groups in the society which organizations have the right to provide particular goods or services that emerge as forms of responses to the needs of the market. Environmental uncertainty relates to environmental instability/change that is associated with broad environmental aspects such as the technology, political-legal and demographics (Armstrong, 2012). Other scholars including Scott and Meyer (cited in Dyer & Erickson, 2006) classify external environment into task and general environments. Task environment consists of the specific individuals and organizations that interact directly with the organization and can affect goal achievement, such as suppliers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Evidence from the analysis revealed that Context diagnosis, contributes substantially to organizational responsiveness. This position is based on the empirical evidence generated from the data and findings for this study. Context diagnosis is important in discerning the prevailing gaps and challenges in the environment of the organization, through its development, Commercial banks in the South-south can impact positively on their flexibility, speed and innovativeness and that way enhance their responsiveness to the changes or emerging realities of their environment.

Based on the foregoing, the study thus recommends that the management of the Commercial banks in South-south, Nigeria should develop measures and mediums which enable learning and the effective diagnosis of the context, such that drive organizational understanding of the gaps and prevailing challenges within the context of the organization.

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