

FAIRNESS AND RESILIENCE OF PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between fairness and the resilience of private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The objectives of the study was to determine the relationship between the fairness and measures of organizational resilience (adaptive capacity, situation awareness, dynamic capability) in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The study was anchored on Equity Theory and Social Exchange Theory. The researcher adopted a cross-sectional survey. The target population of the study consisted of one hundred and seven (107) functional and registered private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State as obtained from the Yellow Pages Director, Rivers State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, out of which fifteen (15) private hospitals were selected as sample. The research data for the study was collected mainly from the primary source. Bivariate data were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The result showed a strong and positive relationship between fairness and measures of organizational resilience (adaptive capacity, situation awareness, dynamic capability) in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. It was concluded that fairness contribute positively to the resilience of private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that management of private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should prioritize fairness in policies and practices to enhance employee trust and engagement.

Keywords: Fairness, Organizational Resilience, Adaptive Capacity, Dynamic Capacity, Situation Awareness

INTRODUCTION

Due to the advancement of globalization and the internationalization of business activities, firms operate in an increasingly complex and turbulent world in which unexpected events are pervasive (Grote 2019; McCann *et al.* 2019). Changes in customer and market demand as well as global financial crises have threatened a firm's survival. To be sustainably successful, firms need to develop resilient capability, which can be defined as the ability to anticipate potential threats, to cope effectively with unexpected events, and to learn from these events in order to produce a dynamic capability that is directed toward facilitating organizational change (Duchek 2014). According to Fahy, Howe, Murphy and Hauser (2015), organizational resilience involves the

ability of an organization to anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to disruptive events, such as market fluctuations, technological disruptions, or natural disasters. Resilience allows for effectively handling crises and can even be a source of competitive advantage (Hamel & Vaelikangas 2023; Sheffi 2015) and long-term success (Coutu 2022; Horne, 2017).

Employees are the life blood of every organization, therefore, to increase organizational resilience, it is mandatory that employees should be treated fairly. The unfair treatment in the organization leads to many negative behaviors from employees. The negative behavior involves “lack of commitment”, “lack of motivation” and lack of organizational loyalty”. And with this mindset that the organization is treating unfairly they cannot work competitively, they cannot think of innovative problem solving, which in the long run leads to poor organizational performance (Rego, 2020). Organizational fairness represents the perception of fairness in work relationships, that is, what is fair or unfair. In this sense, high levels of organizational fairness lead to positive attitudes and behaviors in the workplace, which impact, for example, the effectiveness, performance, and profits of organizations (Rego, 2020). Organ (2008) argued that fairness cognitions are important, as employees who believe they are being fairly treated will be more likely to hold positive attitudes about their work, outcomes and supervisors. It has been consistently shown that perceptions of fairness or justice, relate to important work attitudes and behaviors like OCB, turnover intentions, organizational commitment, employee theft, satisfaction and performance.

In organizational performance literature, no extensive research has been carried out to study the potential effects of “fairness” on organization’s overall resilience. Previous researches have only focused on the relation of organizational performance with perceived justice and equality (Andrade, 2016; Sievert *et al.*, 2022). Most of the studies were carried out in public sectors of developed countries with little concern placed on developing countries like Nigeria. However, the emphasis of these researches was on public context leaving private sectors such as private hospitals aside (Sallaberry *et al.*, 2021). The issue of fairness in working conditions in Nigerian organizations has attained a devastating thought in the field of Management. This research is therefore devoted to study the impact of fairness (in terms of proper office infrastructure, workloads, compensation or benefits in relation to the work done or tasks performed by each employee) on organizational resilience in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between fairness and organizational resilience in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- i To examine the relationship between fairness and adaptive capacity in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- ii To ascertain the relationship between fairness and situation awareness in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- iii To analyze the relationship between fairness and dynamic capability in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

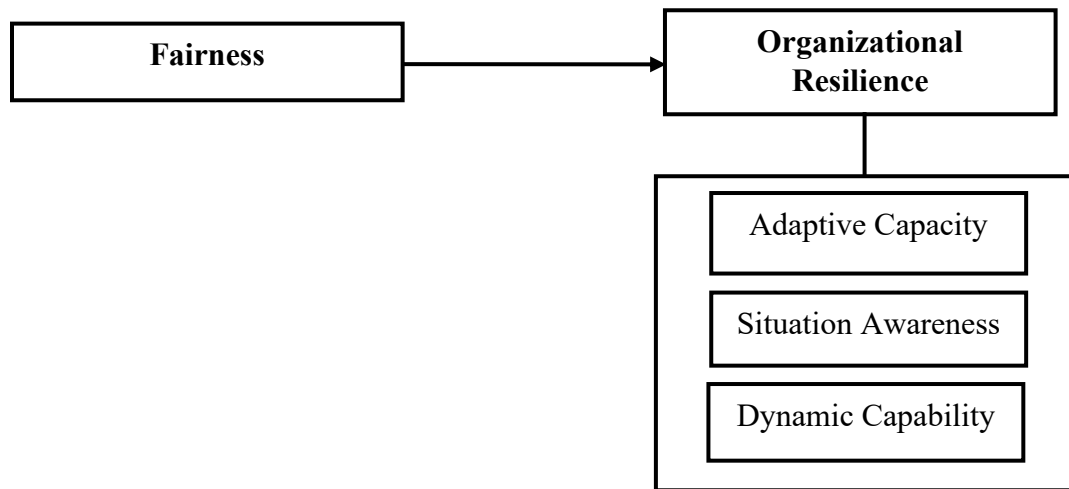


Fig. 1 Conceptual framework of Fairness and Organizational Resilience

Source: From the Researcher's Desk (2025), with measures of organizational resilience adapted from the work of Obiekwe, O. (2018).

Research Questions

In the effort to accomplish the objectives of this research work, the following research questions are put forward to help the researcher achieve its set goals.

- i. What is the relationship between fairness and adaptive capacity in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between fairness and situation awareness in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- iii. What is the relationship between fairness and dynamic capability in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are stated in null form to achieve the stated objectives.

Ho:1 There is no significant relationship between fairness and adaptive capacity in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Ho:2 There is no significant relationship between fairness and situation awareness in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Ho:3 There is no significant relationship between fairness and dynamic capability in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

This study was guided by the Equity Theory and Social Exchange Theory.

Equity Theory

The perception of fairness can be explained by Equity Theory suggested by Adams (1965) in which, an individual tend to compare their input-outcome ratio with the referent other. The unequal input-outcome ratios between the individual and the referent other will contribute to the unfairness

feeling of both parties. This discomfort will lead both parties to react behaviorally or psychologically to the unjust situation such as altering their job performance and altering perception on the outcome. Thus, by implying equity theory in the perceived fairness on organizational resilience, a completely perceived fair performance appraisal system that satisfying all of the justice dimensions (procedural, distributive and interactional) should be developed and implemented so that there will be no unjust situation that may contribute to the unfavorable work outcomes. The management of workers should ensure the fair resource allocation and outcome distributions among the employees as regard to their respective performance (distributive justice). Besides that, good treatment along the performance appraisal process (interpersonal justice) and clear explanation and justification to all individuals working at the organization (informational justice) should be provided by the management so that the unjust situation can be prevented.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory was advanced by Albert Bandura (1977) which posits that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. Bandura's Social Learning Theory posits that people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling. The theory has often been called a bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation. Social learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences.

The social learning theory argues that leaders have authority of energy to remunerate and rebuff. This makes representatives to give careful consideration and copy pioneers' conduct, and they will do what is remunerated and abstain from doing what is rebuffed in the association. In this way, prizes and disciplines ought not be immediate but rather additionally can be adapted vicariously by watching how others in the association are remunerated and restrained (Yukl, 2002). This means that social learning theory support that leaders need ethical conduct of employees in organization. This incorporates that managerial urge to give an appropriate case of what is in store in moral activities so as to have others comprehend what this will resemble. A pioneer need to give a case of what they need to see will enhance the origination of moral practices for the other managers.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Fairness

Fairness, also known as procedural and distributive justice, is a key component of organizational behavior that influences a range of organizational outcomes (Greenberg, 1990; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2018). Fairness refers to the perception of individuals that they are being treated equitably and without bias (Pinder, 2010; Restubog, Igou, & Wisse, 2015). Research has demonstrated that fairness is important for maintaining positive employee attitudes and behaviors (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 2016; Larcker & Murphy, 2023), and that perceived unfairness can lead to negative outcomes such as decreased motivation, increased turnover, and lower performance (Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2020; Folger, 2017). Fairness is a set of perceptions about justice in the individual's relationships with the organization and its members, that is, it contemplates individuals' perception of the degree of justice with which they are treated by organizational authorities (Akram *et al.*, 2020).

On the other hand, organizations that prioritize fairness in their policies and practices tend to experience higher levels of employee engagement, commitment, and performance (Kazanci & Tekin, 2017; Organ & Ryan, 2015). Moreover, fairness has been shown to impact organizational outcomes beyond the individual level, with fairness perceptions also influencing group processes and performance (Brodbeck & Ryan, 2024; Kassing, Rutenbeck, & Libbrecht, 2015). In organizational settings, fairness manifests through policies, decisions, and interactions that uphold equality, transparency, and respect for all stakeholders (Greenberg, 1990). The perception of fairness among employees is critical because it influences job satisfaction, trust, motivation, and overall organizational performance (Folger & Cropanzano, 2018). Fairness is typically categorized into three main dimensions: distributive fairness, which pertains to the perceived equity of outcomes; procedural fairness, which relates to the fairness of the processes that lead to outcomes; and interactional fairness, which concerns the quality of interpersonal treatment individuals receive (Colquitt, 2021). When organizations prioritize fairness across these dimensions, they tend to experience lower turnover rates, improved morale, and enhanced performance (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2017).

Concept of Organizational Resilience

Recently, the concept of organizational resilience has gained increasing attention in organization and management research. Resilience is considered an essential success factor for organizations in unstable and uncertain times that allows them to cope with various kinds of disturbances from adverse developments to major crises (McCann *et al.* 2009). A resilient organizational system is able to respond successfully to any kind of disturbance and even thrive in spite of it (Lengnick-Hall *et al.* 2011; Linnenluecke 2017). Recent research agrees that organizational resilience is a complex, multifaceted, and multidimensional construct; however, the utilized notions and definitions of resilience vary greatly depending on the particular research context (Bhamra *et al.* 2011; Sawalha 2015; Linnenluecke 2017; Williams *et al.* 2017).

According to Wallace and Baum (2017), organizational resilience is defined as "the capacity of an organization to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and recover from external shocks and persistent stressors". This capacity is critical for organizations seeking to maintain their competitive position, innovate and thrive in uncertain environments, and respond effectively to challenges such as natural disasters, economic downturns, or competitive pressures. The importance of organizational resilience has been recognized in various sectors, including healthcare, finance, and disaster management, where organizations must be able to respond quickly and effectively to changing conditions and unanticipated events (Drury *et al.*, 2012; Turner *et al.*, 2019). Organizational resilience can be defined as the ability to anticipate potential threats, to cope effectively with unexpected events, and to learn from these events in order to produce a dynamic capability that is directed toward facilitating organizational change. Several scholars have pointed out different measures of organization resilience (Khanka, 2008). In this study, we adopted the following as measures of organizational resilience.

Adaptive Capacity

There are many different definitions of adaptive capacity. While the term adaptive capacity is used to refer to a multitude of attributes and processes, there is still no general agreement within the literature regarding what these attributes and processes should be (Adger *et al.*, 2004). Most definitions of adaptive capacity refer to attributes that enable a system to adapt in the face of change, to maintain a desirable state or transform to a new state. For instance, Adger *et al.* (2004: 28) define adaptive capacity as "the ability or capacity of a system to modify or change its

characteristics or behaviour so as to cope better with existing or anticipated external stresses.” Adaptive capacity therefore has direct implications for how and at what level adaptation occurs within a given system (Nelson *et al.*, 2007). Within the resilience literature, definitions of adaptive capacity typically focus on the outcomes of the ability of the system to respond to disturbance (Carpenter *et al.* 2001), namely to increase or maintain quality of life (Gallopín, 2006) or to avoid entering an undesirable state or manage to cross back into a desirable state (Walker *et al.*, 2004). The other major theme within the many definitions relates to the resources associated with adaptive capacity. For example, Adger and Vincent (2005: 400) define adaptive capacity as “a vector of resources and assets that represent the asset base from which adaptation actions and investments can be made.”

Dynamic Capability

The concept of dynamic capabilities has emanated from the resource-based view (RBV) for its ability to meet rapid environmental changes (Teece, 2007). Eisenhardt & Martin, (2020) describe dynamic capabilities are a set of specific and identifiable processes such as product development, strategic decision making, and alliancing. Dynamic capabilities are distinctive in their details and path dependent on their emergence; they have significant commonalities across firms. Zollo and Winter (2022) define dynamic capabilities as a learned and stable collective process that enable organization systematically creates and modifies its operational activities in order to improve effectiveness. Zahra and George, (2002) state that dynamic capabilities are basically changing-oriented capabilities that enable firms to renew and reconfigure their resource base to meet evolving customer demands and competitor strategies. More recent, Rao (2016) describes dynamic capabilities as firm’s capability to manage alliances, learn, integrate and reconfigure resource base to address the changing business conditions.

Situation Awareness

Situational awareness or situation awareness (SA) is the understanding of an environment, its elements, and how it changes with respect to time or other factors. Situational awareness is important for effective decision making in many environments. Situation awareness (SA) is defined as “the perception of the elements in the environment within a volume of time and space, the comprehension of their meaning, and the projection of their status in the near future” (Endsley, 2015). In the context of complex operational environment, SA is concerned with a person’s knowledge of particular task-related events and phenomena. SA is critical for the reliable operation of almost all systems and domains (Moradi-Pari, 2016). It is formally defined as: “the perception of the elements in the environment within a volume of time and space, the comprehension of their meaning, and the projection of their status in the near future”. An alternative definition is that situation awareness is adaptive, externally-directed consciousness that has as its products knowledge about a dynamic task environment and directed action within that environment.

Situation awareness has been recognized as a critical foundation for successful decision-making across a broad range of situations. Inadequate situation awareness has been identified as one of the primary causal factors in accidents attributed to human error (Moradi-Pari, 2016). According to Endsley’s situation awareness theory, when someone meets a dangerous situation, he needs an appropriate and a precise decision-making process, which include pattern recognition and matching, formation of sophisticated schemata and archetypal knowledge that aids correct decision making.

Empirical Review

Krishnan, Ahmad and Haron (2018) examined the employees' perceived fairness on the performance appraisal system practiced in the organizations. Drawing upon the Equity Theory and Social Exchange Theory, the study specifically investigated the relationship between employees' perceived fairness of performance appraisal (procedural justice, distributive justice, and interactional justice) and their commitment towards organization. The instruments used to measure the variables have been adapted from the previous researchers. A pilot study has been carried out in determining the suitability of the instrument and the research. This research used the probability sampling technique that is simple random sampling. Out of 155 questionnaires that have been distributed to the non-executive employees in Malaysia's oil and gas industry, only 108 have been completed and valid for this study. The data were codified and analyzed by using SPSS. The results were basically in the form of reliability, frequency, correlations and multiple regressions. From the finding, interactional justice of performance appraisal was the significant predictor towards employees' organizational commitment behaviors.

Arshad, Asif and Baloch (2012) studied the impact of fairness in working conditions on organizational performance in PTCL Islamabad. The study is conducted by taking into consideration two variables that are "fairness" and "organizational performance. A very thorough survey has been conducted in all the offices and customer support centers in Islamabad to verify the relationship among fairness and organizational performance. The sample size of 200 is taken from Islamabad city. The responses of the employees have revealed that there exists a very strong relationship among the two. The results of the research have supported this statement that by improving the working environment and providing proper office infrastructure to the employees the productivity can be increased which will ultimately lead to high organizational performance.

Arora and Kochhar (2017) conducted a quantitative study to explore the relationship between fairness and firm performance in Indian pharmaceutical firms. The study employed a cross-sectional design, collecting data at a single point in time from employees and managers in selected pharmaceutical firms in India. The population of the study consisted of employees and managers in Indian pharmaceutical firms, including firms that manufacture generic drugs, branded drugs, and specialty drugs. The sample size was 250 employees and 25 managers from 10 Indian pharmaceutical firms, selected using a convenience sampling technique. Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire that was distributed to the sample of employees and managers. The questionnaire included items on fairness perceptions (e.g., fairness in promotion, fairness in decision making) and firm performance (e.g., revenue growth, new product development, employee retention). The findings of the study revealed a positive and significant relationship between fairness perceptions and firm performance in Indian pharmaceutical firms.

Ogundele and Omojola (2016) conducted a quantitative study to investigate the relationship between fairness and organizational performance in Nigerian oil and gas firms. The study employed a cross-sectional design, collecting data at a single point in time from employees and managers in selected oil and gas firms in Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of employees and managers in Nigerian oil and gas firms, including exploration and production companies, refining companies, and pipeline operators. The sample size was 200 employees and 20 managers from 10 Nigerian oil and gas firms, selected using a convenience sampling technique. Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire that was distributed to the sample of employees and managers. The questionnaire included items on fairness perceptions (e.g., fairness

in promotion, fairness in decision making) and organizational performance (e.g., operational efficiency, financial performance, safety performance). The findings of the study revealed a positive and significant relationship between fairness perceptions and organizational performance in Nigerian oil and gas firms. The study concluded that fairness is an important factor in promoting organizational performance in Nigerian oil and gas firms. The study emphasized the importance of fairness in fostering employee commitment, operational efficiency, and financial performance in these organizations.

Idachaba, Atayero, and Adesokan (2013) conducted a quantitative study to explore the relationship between fairness and organizational performance in Nigerian manufacturing firms. The study employed a cross-sectional design, collecting data at a single point in time from employees and managers in selected manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of employees and managers in Nigerian manufacturing firms, including firms operating in the food processing, textile, and chemical industries. The sample size was 300 employees and 30 managers from 10 Nigerian manufacturing firms, selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire that was distributed to the sample of employees and managers. The questionnaire included items on fairness perceptions (e.g., fairness in pay, fairness in promotion) and organizational performance (e.g., process innovation, profitability, employee engagement). The findings of the study revealed a positive and significant relationship between fairness perceptions and organizational performance in Nigerian manufacturing firms.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted a cross-sectional survey. The target population of the study consisted of one hundred and seven (107) functional and registered private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State as obtained from the Yellow Pages Director, Rivers State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, out of which fifteen (15) private hospitals were selected as sample. The research data for the study was collected mainly from the primary source. The researcher achieved validity of the data instrument by submitting a copy of the questionnaire to experts in the field of Management. The researcher adopted the Cronbach alpha co-efficient method in measuring the reliability of the research instrument for the study. Bivariate data were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. All analyses were done through the application of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 27.0).

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section is concerned with the presentation of result of analyzed data and discussion of the findings.

Relationship between fairness and adaptive capacity

Table 1: Summary of PPMC analysis on the relationship between fairness and adaptive capacity

		Fairness	Adaptive Capacity
Fairness	Pearson Correlation	1	.612**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	40	40
Adaptive Capacity	Pearson Correlation	.612**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	40	40

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

The result on Table 1 shows the summary of PPMC analysis on the relationship between fairness and adaptive capacity. The result shows that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) is .612**. This means that a strong and positive relationship exists between fairness and adaptive capacity in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State at 0.05 level of significance and P.value of 0.000. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between fairness and adaptive capacity in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. It is therefore concluded that, there is a significant relationship between fairness and adaptive capacity in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Relationship between fairness and situation awareness

Table 2: Summary of PPMC analysis on the relationship between fairness and situation awareness

		Fairness	Situation Awareness
Fairness	Pearson Correlation	1	.448*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.028
	N	40	40
Situation Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.448*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	
	N	40	40

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

The result on Table 2 shows the summary of PPMC analysis on the relationship between fairness and situation awareness. The result shows that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) is .448^{**}. This means that a moderate and significant relationship exists between fairness and situation awareness in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State at 0.05 level of significance and P.value of 0.000. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between fairness and situation awareness in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. It is therefore concluded that, there is a significant relationship between fairness and situation awareness in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

Relationship between fairness and dynamic capability

Table 3: Summary of PPMC analysis on the relationship between fairness and dynamic capability

		Fairness	Dynamic Capability
Fairness	Pearson Correlation	1	.608
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.199
	N	40	40
Dynamic Capability	Pearson Correlation	.608	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.199	
	N	40	40

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

The result on Table 3 shows the summary of PPMC analysis on the relationship between fairness and dynamic capability. The result shows that the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) is .608^{**}. This means that a strong and positive relationship exists between fairness and dynamic capability in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State at 0.05 level of significance and P.value of 0.000. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between fairness and dynamic capability in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted. It is therefore concluded that, there is a significant relationship between fairness and dynamic capability in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results obtained partially corroborate the hypotheses proposed in the direction of the research. In the first hypothesis, the result showed that fairness significantly and positively relates with adaptive capacity in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State (H1a: $r=0.612$). This findings reveal a positive relationship, similar to Klein and Colauto (2020), that is, better rewards (remuneration, benefits, and aids) reflect higher performance. This denotes a sense of equality, satisfaction, and justice, which in the opposite direction is also valid, with a lower sense of justice, there is less satisfaction and belonging and, therefore, lower performance (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001; Langevin & Mendoza, 2013).

The second hypothesis was confirmed, revealing that fairness is moderately and positively related to situation awareness in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State (H1a: $r=0.448$). In

addition to supporting findings from previous studies (Masterson *et al.*, 2000), it highlights the utilitarian aspect, as the distribution of benefits is the main element of organizational fairness to motivate the individual. Finally, the last hypothesis revealed a strong and positive relationship exists between fairness and dynamic capability in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. These relationships indicate greater fair practice in the allocation of remuneration benefits, and this appetite for positions with a greater number of benefits makes the group with the highest rate of turnover (Sallaberry *et al.*, 2021).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings have provided empirical evidence on the linkage between fairness and organizational resilience, thus providing support for a key theoretical proposition of equity theory and social exchange theory. Based on the findings, it is concluded that fairness contribute positively to organizational resilience in private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Fairness, particularly organizational justice, is a strong predictor of organizational resilience. When employees perceive fairness in areas like resource allocation, treatment from superiors, and procedures, they are more likely to be engaged, committed, and adaptable, thus contributing to the organization's ability to withstand and recover from disruptions. Consequently, to foster organizational resilience, management of private hospitals in Port Harcourt, Rivers State should prioritize fairness in policies and practices to enhance employee trust and engagement.

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