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## Employee Relations Practices, Organisational Citizenship Behavior and Performance of Selected Oil Firms in Delta State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This study examined the impact of employee relations and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) on the performance of oil firms in Delta State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study was to ascertain the effect of employee relations on performance of selected oil firms, determine the effect of organizational citizenship behaviour on the performance of selected oil firms and mediation effect of organizational citizenship behaviour on employee relations and performance of selected oil firms in Delta State. A cross-sectional research design was adopted, with a sample of 178 staff members selected using Taro Yamane's formula. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that employee relations have a significant positive correlation with firm performance ( $r = 0.469$ ), while OCB showed a stronger positive correlation ( $r = 0.672$ ). Additionally, OCB served as a mediator between employee relations and performance ( $r = 0.286$ ). The study concluded that fostering both employee relations and OCB can significantly enhance organizational performance. It recommended that oil firms invest in employee relations programs, promote OCB traits, and integrate OCB into their employee relations strategies for optimal performance outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Employee relations, Organisational citizenship behaviour, Performance, Oil firms, Delta State.

### Introduction

Any organization's ability and skill to succeed depends on its workforce. The degree of organizational success will be significantly influenced by how well businesses establish a supportive work environment that meets the emotional requirements of their workforce. Workers that get along well with the company are more likely to work hard and contribute fully to the organization's peak performance. Workers are thought to be an organization's most significant asset. They provide a huge contribution to any organization's expansion and improvement. Hagos and Zewdie (2018) suggest that the progress of any organization is hinged on the input made by the employees. In the same context, global and local organizations are pushed to create good relationships with their employees in order to increase their performance (financial and non-financial performance) in a changing business environment (Ajay & Anandan, 2023).

For both practitioners and theorists, employee relations management has grown in importance within the field of management sciences. Additionally, in the ever-evolving corporate environment of the twenty-first century, this facet of human resource management affects an organization's success because of growing competition, shifting consumer demands, globalization, and technology. One of the most important and fundamental components of an organization's effectiveness, prosperity, and sustainability is its employee interactions. Strong

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commitment, motivation, and loyalty among employees in an organization are the outcome of positive employee relations (Samwel, 2018). It is crucial for managers to establish and preserve positive relationships with their staff members because without them, organizations cannot function more effectively or accomplish their goals. A positive working relationship between management and employees is essential, whether it be during hiring, employment, or separation (Brhane & Zewdie, 2018)

The purpose of employee relations is to facilitate interactions and communication between management and staff in order to establish and maintain a positive work environment. It addresses issues including managing disputes, supervising work, making salary and benefit payments, and interacting with staff members. Good employee relations practises must include fair policies, respect for workers' rights, open channels of communication, and a commitment to creating a positive work environment. Effective employee relations techniques can reduce attrition, boost productivity, and prevent legal issues (Arimie & Oronsaye, 2020).

Positive connections amongst employees inside firms are generally reflected in employee relationships. Good interactions between workers and managers as well as a feeling of belonging within the company are indicators of positive employee relations (Asghar, Wasim, Jahanzaib & Hussain, 2016). The employee gets access to the vital information resources needed to formulate expectations because of the ER's exceptional quality.

Studies have demonstrated, according to Stallard (2009), that workers in companies with good, positive employee relations are more engaged, productive, and unlikely to switch job organizations. Furthermore, a company with positive employee relations forges a connection that fosters mutual respect, teamwork, and esprit de corps between employers and employees. As stated, this inclination has the ability to improve employees' skills and abilities in order to help the firm reach its goals and objectives. Above all, employee relations makes sure that the working relationship between employers and employees is handled properly within a set of rules. A healthy work environment that includes good employee relations can boost job satisfaction, which will then result in high performance.

Citizenship Behavior (OCB) is defined as behavior that results from a person's sense of belonging to the organization in which they are located and their sense of accomplishment when they surpass the expectations of the organization (Ramos & Ellitan, 2023). Podsakoff et al. (2009) proposed two methods to define OCB, including the following: first, OCB is defined as an additional role performance that is distinct from in-role performance or performance that is generated in accordance with job duties or job requirements. Second, OCB is the outcome or impact of an individual's conviction in their own success, which is how people within the organization perceive their ability to fulfill covenant relationships and deal with psychological pressures (Ingrams, 2020). According to Agustiniingsih et al. (2016), OCB includes certain behavioral components like lending a hand to others, offering to help out when needed, and following policies and guidelines at work. He claims that they are positive, productive, and constructive social behaviors that have a significant impact on an organization's success.

Ajay & Anandan (2023) claimed that in today's very competitive business environment, companies must prioritize their employees if they hope to stay ahead of the competition. How companies treat their employees has a direct impact on their productivity and efficiency, which affects the business's bottom line. As a result, employee relations are now a crucial aspect of human resource management. Proactive measures used to enhance employee relations include treating every employee equally, maintaining fair and consistent policies and procedures, and

maintaining open lines of communication. Managers and staff members need to respect and trust one another in order for an organization to succeed in the long run. They should also give employees the opportunity to share their thoughts, suggestions, and ideas for improving productivity, output, and morale.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Due to the human resource department's poor management of employee relations—which is in responsibility of the welfare of the employees inside the organization—some firms have seen a decline in performance in recent times. Only when appropriate employee relations are implemented and upheld can an organization's performance improve. Relatively little, nevertheless, has been written on the common management techniques used in modern relationship management. In an effort to determine the meaning of the word "employee relations" for human resource professionals and their organizations, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has conducted a number of interviews with these professionals throughout the years.

Employee relationships, on the other hand, are crucial factors that determine workplace success but have received little to no attention. Management has not paid enough attention to the relationship between employee-employee relations and performance. This is predicated on the idea that workers in any organization ought to be seen as its most precious assets.

The actions of its constituents are one important factor that could contribute to an organization's existence. When a company encourages good citizenship, its workers are motivated to put in extra effort and go above and beyond. These extra initiatives enhance customers' perceptions of the business, increasing their loyalty. Increased customer loyalty benefits the company's top and bottom lines. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to understand the elements that significantly and favorably support this kind of good citizenship behavior inside the organization. Without the devoted employees they hire, many organizations would not be where they are today.

Businesses suffering from low output, inferior products, inefficiency, low customer satisfaction, poor teammate communication, exorbitant spending, high labor turnover, absenteeism, diminished innovation, and a low chance of survival will be the result of bad citizenship conduct.

As a result, an organization's performance can only increase when its members have a strong sense of purpose and will go above and beyond to support the company's growth through good corporate citizenship. As a result, the study looked at the performance, organizational citizenship, and employee relations policies of a few chosen oil companies in Delta State.

### **Research Questions**

- (a) What is the effect of employee relations on performance of selected oil firms in Delta State?
- (b) How does organizational citizenship affect the performance of selected oil firms in Delta State?
- (c) Does Organizational citizenship behaviour mediate between employee relations and performance of selected oil firms in Delta State?

## **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to examine employee relations, organizational citizenship and performance of selected oil firms in Delta State.

The specific objectives are to:

- (a) examine the effect of employee relations on performance of selected oil firms in Delta State
- (b) determine the effect of organizational citizenship on performance of selected oil firms in Delta State
- (c) ascertain the mediation effect of organizational citizenship behaviour on employee relations and performance of selected oil firms in Delta State.

## **Hypothesis**

H<sub>01</sub>: Employee relations have no significant effect on performance of selected oil firms in Delta State

H<sub>02</sub>: Organizational citizenship behaviour have no significant influence on performance of selected oil firms in Delta State

H<sub>03</sub>: Organizational citizenship behaviour mediates the relationship between employee relations and performance of selected oil firms in Delta State.

## **Significance of the Study**

- i. The study will aid businesses in understanding how to develop an environment that encourages loyalty, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. This may directly affect the output, profitability, and organizational performance.
- ii. It will help organizations create policies and practises that support the fair and equal treatment of employees by studying employee relations.
- iii. The study will help organizations lower their risk of facing legal problems arising from discrimination, harassment, or other employment-related concerns by enacting fair practises.
- iv. It is will be a resource material for researchers that will want to research in this field of study.

## **Literature Review**

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Employee Relations**

The concept of employee relations (ER) denotes favorable relationships between two or more individuals in an organizational setting who are engaged in social and authoritative relationships (Asghar, Wasim, Jahanzaib & Hussain, 2016).By engaging and speaking with one another, employees who perform similar tasks often come to have similar opinions on particular aspects of their jobs or working environments. The degree to which demands related to work are met or satisfied determines whether people have positive attitudes or are frustrated and dissatisfied with their jobs (Pang & Lu, 2018). The information gathered about the tasks completed is used to

Employee relations are focused on developing an atmosphere at work that supports positive interpersonal relationships and effectively promotes the organization's goals and objectives. Employee relations, according to Donohoe (2015), is the study of the interaction that exists between employers and employees. In the present study, employee relations are defined as the equitable, trustworthy, and harmonious interaction between employers and employees inside an organization, with the aim of improving organizational performance (Bingham, 2016). Simplified, it can also be understood as the relationship that occurs between an employer and an employee.

Employee relations relate to an organization's attempts to provide a happy workplace for its employees (Bakker and Leiter, 2017). This action guarantees a productive and encouraging work environment for the staff. The importance of employee relations is emphasized from several managerial angles. Loyalty and engagement among employees are maintained through good employee relations. Managing employee relations initiatives falls under the purview of an organization's HR department (Khoreva and Wechtler, 2018).

Good interactions between workers and managers as well as a feeling of belonging within the company are indicators of positive employee relations (De Massis, Audretsch, Uhlaner & Kammerlander, 2018). The employee gets access to the vital information resources needed to formulate expectations because of the ER's exceptional quality. One of the most important resources for creating a long-lasting competitive edge is employee interactions. A number of writers advance the notion that workers' capacity for self-expression is increasingly viewed as a benefit to company performance (Miliani, El Khazzar & Ait Lhassan, 2022; Ricard, 2017; Bakker and Leiter, 2017). Aspects of employee relations that can affect organizational performance include employee engagement, employee expression, and employee involvement.

Employee involvement according to Baggio et al. (2017) represents the relationship that a person has formed with his or her company and with his or her work, and it is primarily based on personal or individual traits such as beliefs, experiences, social representations, education level, culture, etc. As a result, participation can be operationalized by fusing three distinct elements (Miliani, El Khazzar & Ait Lhassan, 2022). These characteristics enable us to specify various forms of interaction between the subject (the worker) and the object (the company). The two components of employee involvement and willingness and ability both have a major impact on the business's performance. It is a worker's capacity to assist a business in reaching its objectives (Nandal & Nandal, 2023). However, if a company exhibits these traits, its employees are more likely to work for more challenging goals, be less likely to give up on their jobs, and be willing to work in a way that makes their jobs harder. Leadership, personal qualities, and the nature of the work are all strongly related to employee engagement (Nandal & Nandal, 2023).

Employee expression is the capacity of workers to communicate their complaints or suggestions for improvements within a company. Employee expression gives workers the ability to formally and/or informally influence organizational procedures and work-related matters, both as a group and as individuals (Morrison, 2023; Wilkinson et al., 2020). Organizations are beginning to see the need of treating employees fairly and allowing them to express themselves, including through grievance procedures, as fundamental values for their well-being (Brooks & Wilkinson, 2021), quality decision making and fostering diversity (Jiang et al., 2022). Certain employees may be unable to voice their concerns, thus they may decide to remain mute instead, failing to do their best to enhance the performance of the firm. Organizations must allow employees to

express themselves, as this will foster good corporate citizenship. Employers should adopt a fresh viewpoint that stresses the relational, informal, and individual aspects of employee voice as a means of fostering organizational development (Barry & Wilkinson, 2022).

### **Organizational Citizens Behaviour**

Organ (1988) presented the initial notion of OCBs, connecting it to personal choices that enhance the efficient operation of the company. According to the author, subjects' dispositional variables influence their actions of cooperation, which change based on how satisfied they are. Because OCBs are discretionary, they give staff members a way to support the company in ways other than just completing duties on time (Naseer, Raja, Syed, Donia, & Darr, 2016). As such, these behaviors are conceptualized as not within the control of being imposed as duties or functions, are not subject to sanctions, and are not the result of formal objectives (Estivalette et al., 2014). It is important to note that the social and psychological environment of task performance is also affected by OCBs (Organ, 1997).

Organizational citizenship behaviour is among the most important components enabling the efficient operation of a business. While not directly related to the primary objective, citizenship performance is nonetheless significant since it aids the organization in carrying out its duties. Nandal & Nandal (2023) assert that organizational citizenship is a well-known example of appropriate cooperative behavior and work outside of an organization. According to Yaghoubi, Yazdani, and Khornegah (2011), OCBs indicate a higher level of concern for other members of the organization and show that employees are more attuned to the demands of the company. They also exhibit proactive behavior in a variety of situations. According to this perspective, OCBs are essential to an organization's long-term success (Takeuchi, Bolino, & Lin, 2015), build efficient service delivery and increased organizational effectiveness overall, are essential (Ng, Choong, Kuar, Tan & Teoh, 2019)

Moreover, there are several expressions used similarly to OCB, namely: civility in organizations extra-role behaviors and prosocial behaviors (Dias & Oliveira, 2016), Bohle & Alonso (2017) compared some theoretical concepts of OCB and suggested that there are important differences between these constructs, although it is not uncommon to see these distinctions obscured if not completely ignored in theories.

For Vieira & Cappellozza, (2017) opined that given that the emphasis is on the exchange relationship between the employee and the company, OCBs can be described by the theory of social exchanges. It is therefore predicated on the idea that when an employee is happy with the company, they would typically react in kind. Moreover, OCBs driven by sentiments of reciprocity promote social connections among staff members and aid in the completion of duties (Rapp et al., 2013). Individuals may be inspired to take part in OCBs by a desire to forward the objectives of the group (Chughtai, 2019). However, it's crucial to emphasize that task performance may suffer when workers exhibit a decreased frequency of OCBs since this type of behavior often results in fewer social interactions (Rapp et al., 2013). According to Chernyak-Hai and Tziner (2021), poorer OCB is predicted by higher levels of negative emotions in the job. In this way, companies need to use integrated HR practices to promote OCBs because these behaviors are what make employees feel appreciated and acknowledged for them (Demo, Coura, Fogaça, Costa, Scussel, & Montezano, 2022).

Katz and Kahn (1978) as cited by (Andrade & Estivalette, 2017) created the phrase "organizational citizen" in light of the fact that, in addition to their employment rights and

responsibilities, employees also have free time and energy to dedicate to the organization's advantage. From a social, political, and legal perspective, an individual would have to be a member of a group and regularly and positively contribute to the community's well-being in addition to acting in accordance with proper behavior norms in order to be deemed a citizen (Andrade & Estivaleta, 2017). According to Gomes et al. (2014), the term "citizenship" was introduced into organizations to refer to the kind of interaction that a civil citizen has with the government. The authors contend that in this sense, the organization would stand in for the state, and that any individual within it might display OCBs by acknowledging the validity of its rules.

### **Organizational Performanccce**

Organizational performance is a measuring system that helps managers keep an eye on how corporate plans are being implemented by contrasting actual outcomes with strategic aims and objectives (Ramos & Ellitan, 2023). Naturally, the objective of a business is to serve customers as best it can and turn a profit; but, the objective of public organizations is to serve the community as much as possible.

According to Miliani, El Khazzar, and Ait Lhassan (2022), organizational performance is a multifaceted concept organized around several levels: financial, social, and societal performance. Based on the logic of socio-economic analysis, the company's overall performance is assessed by linking its short-, medium-, and long-term economic, social, and performance. Performance is measured by a collection of both financial and nonfinancial measures that show how well goals and outcomes have been attained. After some time had passed, the organization would want to know how it had done in terms of labor and material use. An employee with good adjustment is more profitable, productive, and adaptable (Orishede & Igbigbisie, 2022).

Performance is the entire system for the business production of the organization (Cheema & Asrar-ul-Haq, 2017). Orishede & Eboka (2024) identify seven aspects that contribute to organizational success: creativity, innovation, productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, competitiveness, and profitability. The organization's work system is made up of input and output parts that have different information and analysis methods (Devi, 2017). To provide a commensurate output that will increase performance, those inputs are necessary. The workers at the organizations use these inputs to generate quantifiable output. Their performance and corporate citizenship are questioned when these employees are not equally driven by positive interactions. Management must understand employee relations in order to improve employee performance, and the incentive program must be appropriate and match their demands (Kumari & Thapliyal, 2017).

## Conceptual Framework

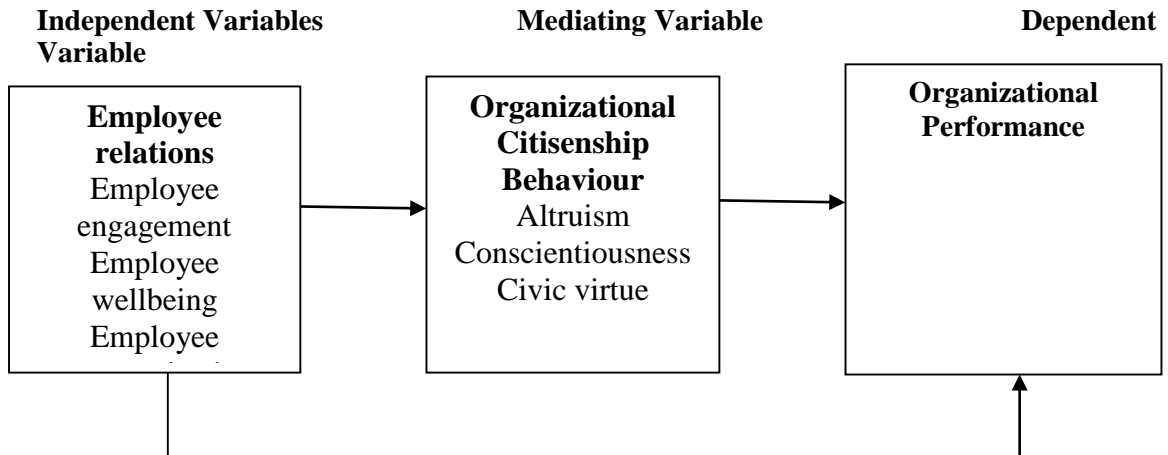


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher Conceptual Model (2024)

### Employee Relations and Organizational Performance

Research has indicated a correlation between favorable employee relations and the level of staff participation in augmenting organizational performance. Effective management-employee relations are positively correlated with organizational performance (Crim & Seijts, 2006). He therefore emphasized how important it is for managers to establish a good rapport with their staff. Osborne and Hammoud (2017) pointed out in a concise manner that a bad work environment may contribute to a lower level of employee engagement in a firm. They observed that reduced production results from such circumstances.

Every human being has an inbuilt desire to be treated with dignity, to have their abilities and competence acknowledged, to be respected, and to have some degree of autonomy or control over how their work is done. When an organization fails to acknowledge these aspects of human nature, it will lead to a situation where managers treat their staff with contempt. As a result, this activity leads to the employees losing motivation. The positive human relations between the employers and the employees have been regarded as pivotal in enhancing the organizational performance in an organization. According to Shaheen et al. (2017) human relations pays attention to how involved workers are in their jobs. This is attainable by use of the manager's comprehension and assistance towards the staff member. According to their argument, research has demonstrated that when workers feel comfortable carrying out their responsibilities, it develops a favorable psychological attitude toward the company, which is necessary to raise employee engagement levels. In keeping with this, organizations need to work to develop and support employee engagement. Employees are very engaged in their job through this two-way process, and management is attentive to their requirements and actively works to accommodate them.

Ajay & Anandan (2023) asserted that an organization's performance can be enhanced through its employee relations. A good work environment that fosters open communication, cooperation,



and mutual respect is more likely to make employees feel valued, motivated, and interested in their work. The outcome could be improved productivity, decreased attrition rates, better overall performance, and higher-quality work for the organization. Employers should prioritize the well-being and contentment of their staff, allocate resources towards their professional growth and education, and provide opportunities for employee participation and feedback. In the end, a company that places a strong focus on employee relations may be more successful and survive longer.

Kumari, Rao & Tentu (2024) also asserted that employee relationship plays a key role in organizational performance. He also opined that Positive employee relationships not only foster a favorable work environment but also significantly influence organizational performance, innovation, and sustainability. Furthermore, he maintained that organization effectiveness depends on constantly improving the performance of organization members and maintaining the human potential that serves as the backbone of the organization by having a relationship that makes the workplace conducive for work.

When managers are aware of their staff members' needs and make an effort to meet them out of concern, workers are more willing to contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives. Kumar & Manjula (2017) discussed employee relation management has the functions of healthy relations, building moral values and positive attitudes, equality lead to better performance of employees and organization. Das, Maharana & Misra (2020) in their study also claimed that an organization's ability to thrive positively depends on the management-employee connection. Furthermore, employee performance is heavily influenced by the culture of the organization. An heated work environment brought on by a toxic relationship compromises an employee's performance.

### **Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and Organizational Performance**

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), or employees' behavior are behaviors that aren't specifically stated in their official job criteria, has grown in importance among Western academics, as reported by Jiing, Lih, Larry, Farh, Chen bo, and Zhong (2019). High employee civic behavior is the most important aspect and greatly influences the success of organizational performance, according to Ramos & Elitan (2023). Organizational citizenship practices, in Das' opinion (2021), improve organizational effectiveness. The research demonstrated that organizational success was favorably and statistically significantly impacted by the characteristics of organizational citizens' behavior, namely civic virtue, sportsmanship, politeness, conscientiousness, and altruism.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) increases job satisfaction which inturn improves employee performance and then organizational performance. This means that the higher job satisfaction felt by employees improvee their performance. Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) not only increases job satisfaction, but with increasing one's job satisfaction,employee performance is also getting better. Thus to achieve high performance, organization need to improve behavior formation OCB to its employees, such as behavior that goes beyond the duties stipulated in the job description and the establishment of a collective work. OCB has significant impact on organization performance as its shows in several researches (Nandal & Nandal, 2023).

Moreover, according to Orshede & Eboka (2024) citizenship behaviour refers to an individual's voluntary decision to act outside of the prescribed parameters of their role and contribute to the success and well-being of the organisation. It involves actions that are optional (like lending a

hand to others), which are not expressly mandated by the official incentive structure but do increase overall managerial effectiveness (Becker & Kernan, 2016). No doubt citizenship behaviour increases the performance of organizations because of the extra work done by the employees who are satisfied with their jobs, motivated by the organization and comfortable with the relationship established with the management of the organisation where they work.

### **Organizational Citizenship behaviour as a mediation of Employee relations and Organizational Performance**

Regarding the importance of OCBs for organizations, there is evidence of the relationship between OCBs and several positive individuals and organizational outcomes (Donia, Johns, Raja, & Ayed, 2017). Furthermore, researchers have emphasized the influence that OCBs have on the overall viability of organizations (Podsakoff et al., 2000). In light of these findings, Singh, Selvarajan, and Chapa (2019) argue that leaders should focus on building high-quality relationships to enable employees to feel safe and pave the way for OCBs, as there is a trend towards greater employee engagement when they identify with their leaders (Nemr & Liu, 2021). Yaghoubi et al. (2011) reinforce the relevance of OCBs by highlighting the role they play in making individuals assume a conscious attitude and develop proactive behavior in the face of various organizational situations, in addition to improving the functioning of the organization, promoting social capital (Bolino, Turnley, & Bloodgood, 2002) and organizational effectiveness (Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1997).

Furthermore, OCB is a mediator in the relationship between organizational performance and employee relations, or, to put it another way, employee relations and organizational performance are linked. Employees must emotionally, syllogistically, and physically relate well in order to perform dynamically in the workplace. Most importantly, employee relations ensure that the relationship between the employers and the employees are managed appropriately within a stipulated policy framework.

According to Arimie & Orosanye (2020) studies have shown that employees in an organization with a strong positive employee relations are more engaged, efficient in the performance of their duties, and less likely to leave the organization for another. In addition, an organization with healthy employee relations creates a bond that promotes trust, cooperation and esprit de corps between the employers and the employees. This tendency as asserted has the potential in enhancing the skills and the abilities of the employees in the achievement of the organizational goals and objectives and also make them to go extra mile in their input in the organisation which is citizenship behaviour.. The employee seeing the level of trust and value accorded to him or her goes beyond the spelt out contract to make sure that the organization gives out the best. This is where organizational citizenship behaviour comes in. if there is a good communication between employer-employee as regards the relations is concerned with the provision of information to employees with regards to the objectives of the organization so that they have a clear understanding of the direction of management. This clear direction can help an employee which is citizenship based to act in a manner that will improve organizational performance (Arimie & Orosanye, 2020). Effective employee relations focuses also on creating an open door system in the organization where employees can freely express their grievances, initiate ideas, suggestions without fear of intimidation and suppression. Employees who are given such opportunity will not think twice in carrying out their organizational citizenship behaviour. Therefore organizational citizenship behaviour mediate the relationship between employee relations and organizational performance (Orishede & Eboka, 2024).

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Stakeholders Theory**

Stakeholder theory (ST) is a theory of business ethics and organizational management (Schaltegger et al., 2019). According to ST, organizations aim to generate multiple benefits for different stakeholders (i.e., groups and individuals who can affect or be affected by the organization—e.g., civil societies, communities, customers, employees, governments, shareholders, suppliers) (Freeman, 1984). The origin of ST can be traced to the 1960s when Stanford Research Institute first proposed the concept of stakeholder, emphasizing that organizations need the support of not only their shareholders but also their stakeholders in order to exist and thrive.

ST can be defined as a theory that (i) encourages organizations to acknowledge and consider their stakeholders, which exist internally or externally to the organization, (ii) promotes understanding and managing stakeholder needs, wants, and demands, and thus (iii) represents a holistic and responsible framework that goes beyond the focus of shareholders in decision-making processes, which, in turn, (iv) enables organizations to be strategic, maximize their value creation, and safeguard their long-term success and sustainability (Mahajan, Lim, Sareen, Kumar & Panwar, 2023).

Stakeholder theory argues that a firm should create value for all stakeholders, not just shareholders. It stresses the interconnected relationships between a business and its suppliers, employees, investors, communities and others who have a stake in the organization. Stakeholder theory suggests that if we adopt as a unit of analysis the relationships between a business and the groups and individuals who can affect or are affected by it then we have a better chance to deal effectively with these three problems. First, from a stakeholder perspective, business can be understood as a set of relationships among groups that have a stake in the activities that make up the business (Harrison, Freeman & Abreu, 2015). It is about how customers, suppliers, employees, financiers (stockholders, bondholders, banks, etc.), communities and managers interact to jointly create and trade value. To understand a business is to know how these relationships work and change over time. It is the executive's job to manage and shape these relationships to create as much value as possible for stakeholders and to manage the distribution of that value (Freeman, 1984). Where stakeholder interests conflict, the executive must find a way to re-think problems so that the needs of a broad group of stakeholders are addressed, and to the extent this is done even more value may be created for each (Harrison, Bosse, & Phillips, 2010).

According to Jones, Harrison & Felps (2018), understanding the interests of all stakeholders in manufacturing firms is key. This in the end leads to productivity, sustainability and long term achievements. He also asserts that information must continue to be a source of knowledge and should be a going concern in manufacturing firms to enhance performance.

The theory is very relevant for this study. This is because one of the most important ways for the organization to promote effective employee relations is to adopt a human resource strategy that places high value on employees as stakeholders in the organization. When the employees are treated as more than just paid labourers, but as actual stakeholders with the power to affect the outcomes, they feel more valued for the job duties they perform. The stakeholders have the primary objective of ensuring the formulation of measures and approaches that would be profitable to the organization (Rea, 2019).

## **Empirical Review**

Ajay & Anandan (2023) examined employee relations and its effect on organizational performance: An empirical study. The objective of the study is to examine the perception of employees about employee relations. The researcher used descriptive research design. Data was collected from 75 respondents by using simple random sampling method. The main findings are employees feel that the measurement taken by the management to maintain employee relations in the organization was inadequate. The suggestion of the study is creating a supportive work environment with job features, incentives, and recognition, along with a focus on employees' well-being, can enhance employee engagement and boost organizational performance. Providing rewards to employees can also improve performance.

Bulińska-Stangrecka & Bagieńska (2021) examined the role of employee relations in shaping job satisfaction as an element promoting positive mental health at work in the era of COVID-19. The study analysed whether employee relations and interpersonal trust are related to the level of perceived job satisfaction. Based on an empirical study, carried out on a sample of 220 IT employees during the pandemic, an analysis of the mediating role of trust in links between employee relations and perceived job satisfaction was conducted. The study found that positive employee relations contribute to the level of job satisfaction. Additionally, trust is an important factor that mediates these relationships. Based on the results of the research, it was possible to describe the mechanism of shaping a supportive work environment during a pandemic.

Das (2021) studied the influence of organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) on organizational effectiveness (OE): Experience of banks in India. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 350 bank employees from 117 bank branches at the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh Province. Chi-square statistics and multiple linear regression were used to analyse the collected data. The study discovered that civic virtue, sportsmanship, civility, conscientiousness, and altruism all positively and statistically significantly impacted organisational success. According to the study, since bank officials' OCB shows a positive and significant influence on organisational performance, management should give the identified indicators that create the OCB and organisational effectiveness extra thought and consideration

Samwel (2018) examined the effect of employee relations on employee performance and organizational performance: A study of small organizations in Tanzania. The aim of the paper was to examine the effect of employee relations on employee performance and organizational performance and at the same time identify various employee relations practices used by small organizations in Tanzania. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and used a stratified random sampling technique to select a sample size of 387 respondents from selected small organizations in Tanzania. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and interviews and analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis and the results presented using tables. The findings of the study showed that small organizations in Tanzania are aware of the benefits of maintaining good employee relations and correct remedial actions taken to minimize poor employee relations in the organization. The findings further indicated a positive significant relationship between employee relations and employee performance as well as between employee relations and organization performance. Moreover, the findings reveal the use of unfair labour practices in small organizations in Tanzania. The study recommends that small organizations in Tanzania should focus more on implementing fair labour practices and building effective and sustainable employee relations that will ensure their growth and survival.

## **Methodology**

This study adopted a cross sectional research design. A cross sectional research design involves collecting data from a large pool of subjects and comparing differences between groups. The population of the study comprised of selected five (5) oil firms located in Warri in Delta State. Warri is selected in Delta State because that is where most of the oil firms in the Delta are located due to their proximity to the sites where they drill oil. The selected oil firms are Texaco Overseas Nigeria, Niko Consult Nigeria Ltd, WEAfri Well Services Company Ltd, Pakej Oil and Gas Nigeria and Synergy Oil and Gas Int'l Resources Limited. The target population refers to the population from which information was gathered. The study's population included 322 personnel from the staff of the selected oil firms in Delta State, the majority of whom were full-time employees of the firms under investigation.

### **Sample size and Sampling techniques**

The sample size for this study is a percentage of the population taken from the oil firms in Delta State (Texaco Overseas Nigeria, Niko Consult Nigeria Ltd, WEAfri Well Services Company Ltd, Pakej Oil and Gas Nigeria and Synergy Oil and Gas Int'l Resources Limited) to assess the employee relations, organizational citizenship behaviour and performance of oil firms in Delta State.

The sample size for this study was determined mathematically using Taro Yamane's formula as follows:  $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Where:

n = the sample size

N = the population of the study

e = Level of Significance = 0.05 or 5%

1 = constant

$$n = \frac{322}{1+322(0.05)^2} = n = \frac{322}{1.805} = 178$$

The sample size for the study therefore was 178 respondents. The sampling technique that was applied in selecting a sample of 178 respondents from a population of 322 in this study was the simple random technique in which every member has an equal chance of being selected.

### **Instrument of Data collection**

The major instrument for data collection was by means of a questionnaire which had close ended items. Pilot testing of the instrument was done by administering the questionnaires to 10% of the total sample size. The questionnaire that was utilized in the study was divided into two major sections, each with a connected object. The first section covered respondents' demographic information, such as their age, gender, marital status, degree of education, and years of employment. The second section discussed the elements of employee relations, organizational citizenship behaviour and performance. A five-point Likert scale (1-5) was used where 1 represents strongly disagree; 2 – disagree; 3 – neutral; 4 – agree; 5 – strongly agree.

## Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the field survey of respondents from the several firms whose employees were sampled were analyzed using descriptive as well as inferential statistical techniques to arrive at a generalization and conclusion. The descriptive statistics made use of simple percentages to analyze the questionnaire response rate and respondents background profile. The inferential statistical technique that was employed is Spearman Rank Correlation and Partial Correlation analysis. This technique was adopted to ascertain the relationship that exists among the variables and to test the statistical significance that exists among the variables. This was done by using SPSS version 25 for the Windows package.

## Model Specification

$$POF = \beta_0 + \beta_1(ER) + \beta_2(OCB) + \beta_3(ER \times OCB) + \varepsilon$$

Variables:

POF: Performance of Oil Firm (dependent variable)

ER: Employee Relations (independent variable)

OCB: Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (mediating variable)

$\varepsilon$ : Error term

## Results and Discussion

### Characteristics of the Sample

**Table 1 Response rate**

S/N	Response Rate	Frequency/%
1	Copies of questionnaire administered	178
2	Questionnaire returned	169
3	Questionnaire not properly filled	2
4	Questionnaire useable	167
5	Response rate	94%

Source: Field Survey 2024

A total of 178 copies of the questionnaire were administered, 169 copies of the questionnaire were returned, 2 copies of the questionnaire was not properly filled while 167 copies of the questionnaire were useable.

**Table 2: Analysis of Respondents Profile**

S/N	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender:		
	Male	95	57
	Female	72	43
	Total	167	100
2	Age Range:		
	Below 30 years	52	31
	31-40 years	75	45

	41years and above Total	40 167	24 100
3	Marital Status: Single Married Total	65 102 167	39 61 100
4	Educational Qualification OND/NCE HND/B.Sc Postgraduate Degree Total	35 90 42 167	21 54 25 100
5	Years of Job Experience Below 5years 5-10years 11 years and above Total	42 73 52 167	25 44 31 100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 exhibits the background characteristics of the various respondents. It revealed on the gender composition of the respondents representing 57% of the sample were males while 43% were females. The age bracket of the respondents indicated that 31% of the respondents were below 30 years of age; 45% of the respondents' falls within the age bracket of 31-40 years of age, while 24% of the respondents were above 41 years of age and above. The marital composition of the respondents indicated that; 39% of the sample respondents were single, while 61% other respondents were married. On the educational background of the sample, it was revealed that 21% of the respondents were OND/NCE holders, result showed that 54% of the respondents were HND/B.Sc holders, while 25% of the other respondent were postgraduate degree holders. On the years of job experience by staff, it was shown that 25% of the respondents have below 5years working experience. 44% of the respondents have 5-10 years working experience and lastly 31% of the other respondents have above 11years working experience.

### Hypotheses Testing

The analysis of the other research data as well as the testing of the earlier postulated hypotheses in previous chapter was done here for the aim of arriving at a conclusion.

**Table 3 Spearman Correlation between employee relations and performance of oil firms**

Correlations			Employee Relations	Performance of oil firms
Spearman's rho	Employee Relations	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.469**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	167	167
	Performance of oil firms	Correlation Coefficient	.469**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	167	167

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

Table 3 shows that employee relations have a significant positive correlation with the performance of oil firms ( $r = 0.469$ ). This result suggests that better employee relations are positively associated with improved performance in oil firms. Strong relationships between employees and management contribute to higher organizational effectiveness.

**Table 4 Spearman Correlation between organizational citizenship behaviour and performance of oil firms**

Correlations			Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	Performance of oil firms
Spearman's rho	Organizational Citizenship Behaviour	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.672**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	167	167
	Performance of oil firms	Correlation Coefficient	.672**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	167	167

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

Table 4 shows that organizational citizenship behaviour has a strong, significant positive correlation with the performance of oil firms ( $r = 0.672$ ). This result indicates that higher levels of organizational citizenship behaviour are strongly associated with improved performance in oil firms. Encouraging behaviours like altruism, civility, and conscientiousness positively influences organizational success.

**Table 5 Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) mediates the relationship between ER and POF**

Correlations			Employee Relations	Performance of oil firms
Organizational Citizenship	Employee Relations	Correlation	1.000	.286
		Significance (2- tailed)	.	.000
		Df	0	164
	Performance of oil firms	Correlation	.286	1.000
		Significance (2- tailed)	.000	.
		Df	164	0

Table 5 shows that organizational citizenship behaviour has a significant positive correlation as a mediating variable between employee relations and the performance of oil firms ( $r = 0.286$ ). This result indicates that organizational citizenship behaviour partially mediates the relationship between employee relations and performance. While employee relations directly impact performance, the presence of organizational citizenship behaviour strengthens this effect.



## **Hypotheses Testing**

The Spearman's rank correlation and Partial correlation analysis was adopted as an analytical technique for testing the hypotheses. The p-values reported in the correlation tables were used for testing the study hypotheses.

### **The Decision Rule**

If the critical value calculated is greater than the probability level of significance, then the null hypotheses will be accepted while the alternate hypotheses will be rejected and vice versa. If the probability value of 0.000 is lesser than the critical value (i.e.  $0.000 < 0.01$ ), there is need to conclude that the given parameter is significant. In this case, it is fit to reject the null hypotheses and to accept the alternate. Therefore, the p-value is at 0.01.

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** Employee relations have no significant relationship with performance of selected oil firms in Delta State.

Since the p-value critical is at 0.01 greater than the calculated level of significance ( $0.000 < 0.01$ ) in table .3, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate was accepted. This implied that employee relations have a significant positive relationship with performance of selected oil firms in Delta State.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** Organizational citizenship behaviour has no significant influence on performance of selected oil firms in Delta State.

Table 3 indicated that the calculated level of significance is lesser than the p-value i.e. ( $0.000 < 0.01$ ). Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate was accepted implying that organizational citizenship behaviour has a significant positive influence on performance of selected oil firms in Delta State.

**H0<sub>3</sub>:** Organizational citizenship behaviour mediates the relationship between employee relations and performance of selected oil firms in Delta State.

The level of significance that was calculated in table 4 is lesser than the established p-value ( $0.000 < 0.01$ ), therefore the null hypothesis was rejected why the alternate was accepted which states that organizational citizenship behaviour mediates the relationship between employee relations and performance of selected oil firms in Delta State.

## **Discussion of Findings**

In accordance with the data analysis done in chapter four and the review of the related literature in chapter two, the discussion of findings of the study is presented below.

### **Employee Relations and Performance of Oil Firms**

Table 3 shows that employee relations have a significant positive correlation with the performance of oil firms ( $r = 0.469$ ). The test of hypothesis one revealed that employee relations have a significant positive relationship with the performance of oil firms in Delta State ( $0.000 < 0.01$ ). The result aligns with Bulińska-Stangrecka and Bagińska (2021), who found that positive employee relations contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction. This result implies that fostering positive employee relations can significantly improve organizational performance.

### **Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and Performance of Oil Firms**

Table 4 shows that organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) has a strong, significant positive

correlation with the performance of oil firms ( $r = 0.672$ ). The test of hypothesis two revealed that OCB significantly influences the performance of oil firms in Delta State ( $0.000 < 0.01$ ). The result is consistent with Das (2021), who found that civic virtue, sportsmanship, civility, conscientiousness, and altruism positively and significantly impact organizational success. This result implies that encouraging OCB enhances organizational performance.

### **Organizational Citizenship Behaviour as a Mediator between Employee Relations and Performance of Oil Firms**

Table 5 shows that organizational citizenship behaviour has a significant positive correlation as a mediator variable between employee relations and the performance of oil firms ( $r = 0.286$ ). The test of hypothesis three revealed that OCB mediates the relationship between employee relations and the performance of oil firms in Delta State ( $0.000 < 0.01$ ). Samwel (2018) also found a significant positive relationship between employee relations, employee performance, and organizational performance. This result implies that OCB amplifies the positive effects of employee relations on organizational performance.

### **Findings**

This study examined the impact of employee relations and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) on the performance of oil firms in Delta State, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The population consisted of 322 staff members from selected oil firms in Delta State. A sample size of 178 was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. To establish the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was employed. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to reach a general conclusion. The findings of the study indicated that:

- i. Employee relations have a significant positive correlation with the performance of oil firms ( $r = 0.469$ ).
- ii. Organizational citizenship behaviour has a strong, significant positive correlation with the performance of oil firms ( $r = 0.672$ ).
- iii. Organizational citizenship behaviour has a significant positive correlation as a mediator between employee relations and the performance of oil firms ( $r = 0.286$ ).

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that both employee relations and organizational citizenship behaviour have a significant positive impact on the performance of oil firms in Delta State. Employee relations are foundational to creating a productive work environment, while OCB further strengthens this foundation by encouraging employees to go beyond their formal job roles, resulting in improved organizational performance. Additionally, the mediating role of organizational citizenship behaviour suggests that firms should not only focus on building strong employee relations but also promote OCB to fully maximize performance outcomes. Thus, oil firms that successfully integrate both elements into their organizational practices are more likely to experience sustained performance improvements.

The results imply that positive employee relations are critical for improving the performance of oil firms. Companies that invest in strong, positive relationships with employees are likely to see increased productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational success. Additionally, the

significant role of organizational citizenship behaviour indicates that promoting behaviours like altruism, civility, and conscientiousness among employees can further enhance the performance of oil firms. Moreover, the findings highlight the importance of organizational citizenship behaviour as a mediator between employee relations and performance. While positive employee relations are essential, their full potential is realized when employees exhibit high levels of OCB. This suggests that oil firms can benefit from integrating OCB-focused initiatives into their employee relations strategies.

### **Recommendations**

- i. Oil firms should invest in employee relations initiatives such as regular communication, team-building activities, and conflict resolution mechanisms to foster a more positive and productive work environment.
- ii. Firms should implement training and reward systems that encourage OCB traits like altruism, conscientiousness, and sportsmanship, which significantly contribute to enhanced performance.
- iii. Oil firms should align their employee relations strategies with programs that promote OCB, ensuring that employee relations initiatives are supported by behaviours that drive overall organizational success.

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