

WORKERS SOLIDARITY AND INDUSTRIAL GOAL ATTAINMENT OF OIL SERVICING FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE.**Dr. N. A. Agabe¹ & Nwibani, Cyril Gohbari²***agabenlemaa@gmail.com, 08035079290***¹Department of Business Administration, ²Department of Employment Relations and Human Resource Management, ^{1&2}Faculty of Administration and Management, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, P.M.B. 5047, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria****ABSTRACT**

This study examined the relationship between workers' solidarity and industrial goal attainment within oil servicing firms operating in Rivers State, Nigeria. The research specifically investigated the connections between mutual support and workforce stability, as well as between shared values and profitability. The study was anchored on Social Exchange Theory. A correlational survey design was employed, with data collected via questionnaire from 102 managers and supervisors across 17 registered firms. The data were analysed using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. The results revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between mutual support and workforce stability, indicating that greater cooperation among employees is associated with higher retention and commitment. Furthermore, a strong and significant positive relationship was found between shared values and profitability, suggesting that alignment of employee and organizational values enhances financial performance. These findings underscore the critical role of social dynamics, such as solidarity, in achieving key industrial objectives within the high-risk and technically demanding context of the oil servicing sector. The study concludes that fostering mutual support and shared values among workers is instrumental for improving workforce stability and profitability, thereby contributing to the overall goal attainment of firms. It was recommended among others that oil servicing firms should implement team-building programs and peer-support initiatives to strengthen mutual support among employees, thereby enhancing workforce stability.

Keywords: Workers Solidarity, Industrial Goal Attainment, Mutual Support, Shared Values, Workforce Stability, Profitability, Oil Servicing Firms.

Background to the Study

Industrial goal attainment represents the extent to which organizations successfully achieve their operational, financial, and strategic objectives. In oil servicing firms, these goals typically include operational efficiency, safety compliance, service quality, workforce stability, and profitability. Achieving such goals is particularly critical in the oil and gas value chain, where service firms provide essential technical and logistical support to upstream operators under strict regulatory, safety, and time constraints (Richard et al., 2019). In Rivers State, Nigeria's hub for oil and gas activities, oil servicing firms operate in a highly competitive and risk-intensive environment, making effective goal attainment central to organizational survival and sustainability (Odusina, 2022). Despite significant investments in technology and process optimization, many oil servicing firms in Rivers State continue to experience challenges related to missed project deadlines, safety incidents, high labour turnover, and declining profitability. Recent studies suggest that these challenges cannot be fully explained by technical or financial factors alone, but are increasingly linked to human and social dynamics within organizations (Daft, 2021). Workforce-related issues such as poor cooperation, weak teamwork, and limited

employee commitment have been identified as barriers to achieving industrial goals in complex operational settings (Adebayo & Musa, 2022).

Workers' solidarity has emerged in organizational and industrial relations literature as a critical social construct capable of addressing these challenges. Workers' solidarity refers to the level of unity, mutual support, shared values, and collective responsibility among employees toward achieving common organizational objectives (Hyman, 2018). In high-risk industries such as oil servicing, where tasks are highly interdependent, strong solidarity enhances coordination, communication, and adherence to safety procedures (Mathieu et al., 2019). Empirical evidence indicates that cohesive workgroups are more effective in managing operational uncertainties and maintaining consistent performance outcomes (Edwards & Bélanger, 2020). In Rivers State, oil servicing firms rely heavily on skilled technicians, engineers, and support staff whose collaborative efforts directly influence operational success. However, industrial disputes, contract employment practices, and demanding work conditions have the potential to weaken solidarity among workers, thereby undermining industrial goal attainment (Nwaiwu & Onuoha, 2020). Understanding the role of workers' solidarity in enhancing industrial goal attainment is therefore essential for managers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders seeking to improve organizational performance and sustainability in the oil servicing sector.

Statement of the Problem

Industrial goal attainment remains a major concern for oil servicing firms operating in Rivers State due to the highly competitive, technically demanding, and risk-prone nature of the oil and gas industry. These firms are expected to achieve critical objectives such as operational efficiency, safety compliance, service quality, workforce stability, and profitability; however, many continue to experience persistent challenges including frequent operational disruptions, high employee turnover, safety lapses, and inconsistent service delivery. Despite substantial investments in technology, equipment, and process improvements, these challenges remain, indicating that factors beyond technical capacity may be influencing industrial goal attainment. One organizational factor that has received limited empirical attention in this context is workers' solidarity. In practice, weak cooperation, limited mutual support, and the absence of shared values among employees have been observed in some oil servicing firms, often arising from contract employment arrangements, demanding work schedules, and industrial relations tensions, which may undermine teamwork and collective responsibility required for complex operational activities. Although previous studies have examined organizational performance, employee commitment, and safety practices within the Nigerian oil and gas sector, there is a noticeable gap in empirical research directly linking workers' solidarity to industrial goal attainment, particularly at the firm level in Rivers State. This gap constrains understanding of how social relationships among workers influence the achievement of industrial goals. Consequently, the current study seeks to fill this gap by systematically examining the relationship between workers' solidarity and industrial goal attainment in oil servicing firms in Rivers State, with the aim of providing evidence to inform managerial practices and policy decisions.

Conceptual Framework

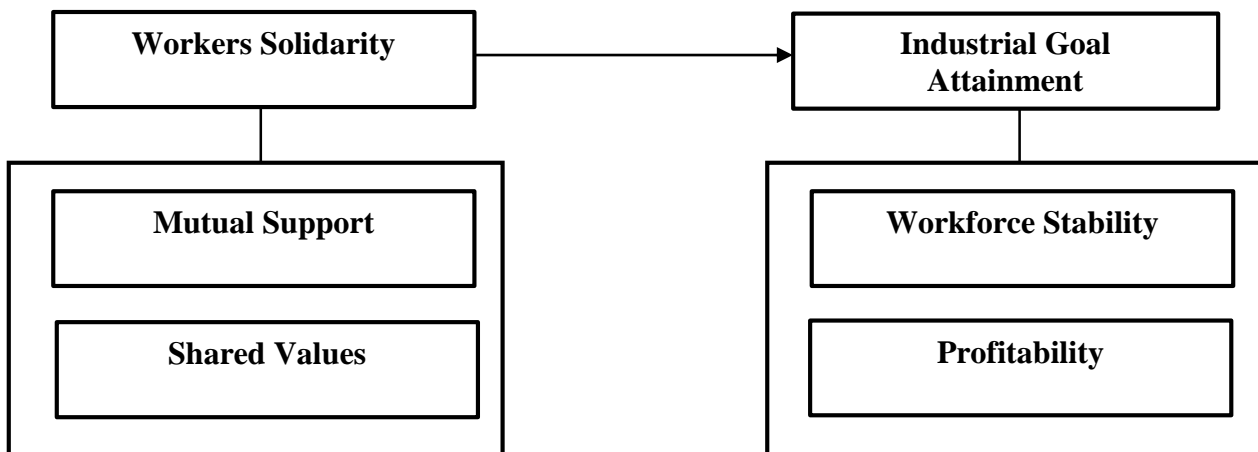


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework showing Workers Solidarity and Industrial Goal Attainment. **Source:** Dimensions of workers solidarity was adopted from Odu & Akhigbe, (2018) while measures of Industrial Goal Attainment were adopted from Isaksson, (2012).

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between worker solidarity and industrial goal attainment of oil servicing firms in Rivers State. The specific objectives are to:

1. investigate the relationship between mutual support and workforce stability of oil servicing firms in Rivers State.
2. examine the relationship between shared values and profitability of oil servicing firms in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between mutual support and workforce stability of oil servicing firms in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between shared values and profitability of oil servicing firms in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between mutual support and workforce stability of oil servicing firms in Rivers State.
- H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between shared values and profitability of oil servicing firms in Rivers State.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Workers' Solidarity

Workers' solidarity has been widely discussed in organizational and industrial relations literature as a key social mechanism that enhances cooperation, collective action, and employee commitment. It reflects the extent to which workers perceive a shared identity and act in support of one another to achieve common goals (Hyman, 2018). Studies indicate that solidarity strengthens trust, reduces workplace conflict, and improves coordination, particularly in labor-intensive and high-risk industries (Edwards & Bélanger, 2020). In operational environments

such as oil servicing firms, solidarity contributes to effective teamwork and compliance with safety procedures, thereby supporting organizational effectiveness (Adebayo & Musa, 2022).

Mutual Support: Mutual support refers to employees' willingness to assist colleagues by sharing knowledge, skills, and resources to accomplish work tasks. The literature suggests that mutual support enhances team effectiveness by improving communication and reducing task-related stress (Salas et al., 2017). In industrial settings, mutual support is particularly important for managing complex and interdependent tasks, as it enables workers to respond quickly to operational challenges (Mathieu et al., 2019). Empirical evidence shows that organizations with high levels of mutual support experience improved job performance and stronger safety cultures (Cooper & Phillips, 2020).

Shared Values: Shared values represent commonly held beliefs and norms that guide employee behaviour within an organization. According to organizational culture theory, shared values promote cohesion, consistency, and alignment between individual actions and organizational objectives (Schein, 2017). Research indicates that when employees internalize organizational values, they demonstrate higher commitment and cooperation (Meyer et al., 2020). In industrial firms, shared values related to safety, quality, and professionalism are critical for ensuring standardized work practices and achieving operational goals (Ogbonna & Harris, 2019).

Industrial Goal Attainment

Industrial goal attainment refers to the degree to which organizations successfully achieve their operational, strategic, and performance objectives. Scholars argue that goal attainment in industrial firms is influenced by both technical systems and human factors such as employee coordination and commitment (Daft, 2021). In the oil servicing sector, goal attainment is commonly assessed through indicators such as operational efficiency, safety performance, service quality, and financial outcomes (Okoro & Ahmed, 2023). Research consistently shows that organizations with strong internal alignment and effective workforce management are more likely to achieve their industrial goals (Richard et al., 2019).

Workforce Stability: Workforce stability describes the ability of an organization to retain skilled and experienced employees over time. The literature identifies workforce stability as a key determinant of organizational performance, as high turnover disrupts operations and increases training and recruitment costs (Hom et al., 2017). Stable workforces enhance knowledge retention, teamwork, and operational continuity, especially in technically specialized industries (Park & Shaw, 2019). In oil servicing firms, workforce stability supports safety compliance and consistent service delivery, making it essential for sustained industrial performance (Nwaiwu & Onuoha, 2020).

Profitability: Profitability is a central measure of organizational success and reflects a firm's ability to generate financial returns from its operations. Management literature emphasizes that profitability is influenced not only by market conditions but also by internal efficiency and workforce performance (Grant, 2021). Studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between effective human resource practices, employee cooperation, and firm profitability (Jiang et al., 2018). In oil servicing firms, profitability depends on cost control, efficient project execution, and reliable service quality, all of which are supported by cohesive and well-managed workforces (Odusina, 2022).

Theoretical Review: Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) was propounded by George C. Homans in 1958 and later expanded by scholars such as Peter Blau in 1964. Social Exchange Theory posits that relationships are formed and sustained when the perceived benefits of an interaction outweigh its costs. Individuals engage in social interactions with the expectation of reciprocity, meaning that favourable actions are returned with positive responses over time. In organizational settings, this implies that when employees receive support, fairness, recognition, and trust from their organization or colleagues, they feel obligated to reciprocate through positive attitudes and behaviours such as cooperation, loyalty, and increased performance. The theory emphasizes mutual dependence, trust, and long-term exchange relationships rather than immediate or purely economic transactions.

The major assumptions of Social Exchange Theory include the belief that individuals are rational and seek to maximize rewards while minimizing costs; social interactions are based on reciprocity; relationships develop gradually through repeated exchanges; and trust and commitment emerge when exchanges are perceived as fair and beneficial. The theory also assumes that unequal or unfavourable exchanges can lead to dissatisfaction, withdrawal, or conflict, thereby weakening social relationships within organizations.

Social Exchange Theory is relevant to this study on workers’ solidarity and industrial goal attainment in oil servicing firms in Rivers State. Workers’ solidarity is rooted in mutual support, shared values, and collective responsibility, all of which are outcomes of positive social exchanges among employees. When workers perceive fair treatment, support, and cooperation within their teams, they are more likely to reciprocate through solidarity-enhancing behaviours such as teamwork, knowledge sharing, and adherence to safety practices.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correctional survey research design. The population of the study was 17 registered oil servicing firms in Rivers State. Data obtained from Finelib (2025). They were chosen because they were accessible and functional as at the time of carrying out this study. A census sampling technique was used because the population was small. Respondents were 113 made up of managers and supervisors drawn across various managerial occupational categories to ensure broad representation. Data were collected using a self-designed questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts, and its reliability was confirmed through a test–retest procedure, yielding a coefficient of 0.71, which indicated acceptable consistency. Questionnaires were administered to respondents across the firms, and completed copies were retrieved. A total of 113 copies were administered across 17 oil and gas servicing companies in Rivers State. Out of these, 102 copies representing 90% were successfully retrieved. Data were analysed using Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Coefficient at a 0.05 significance level via Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

RESULTS

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between mutual support and workforce stability of oil servicing firms in Rivers State.

Table 1: Correlations between mutual support and workforce stability

			Mutual Support	Workforce Stability
Spearman's rho	Mutual Support	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.348**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	102	102

Workforce	Correlation Coefficient	.348**	1.000
Stability	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	102	102

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

Table 1 presents the Spearman's correlation between mutual support and workforce stability in oil servicing firms in Rivers State. The correlation coefficient is **0.348**, which indicates a positive but moderate relationship between mutual support and workforce stability. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is **0.000**, which is less than the 0.05 significance level, indicating that the correlation is statistically significant. This suggests that higher levels of mutual support among employees are associated with greater workforce stability, implying that when employees assist and cooperate with one another, they are more likely to remain committed to the organization. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) that there is no significant relationship between mutual support and workforce stability is **rejected**.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between shared values and profitability of oil servicing firms in Rivers State.

Table 2: Correlations between shared values and profitability

		Shared Values	Profitability	
Spearman's rho	Shared Values	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.549**	
		N	.	
	Profitability		102	102
			Correlation Coefficient	.549**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000
		N	.000	
		102	102	

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

Table 2 shows the Spearman's correlation between shared values and profitability in oil servicing firms in Rivers State. The correlation coefficient is **0.549**, indicating a strong positive relationship between shared values and profitability. The p-value (Sig. 2-tailed) is **0.000**, which is below the 0.01 significance level, meaning the relationship is highly statistically significant. This implies that firms in which employees share common values, beliefs, and organizational goals tend to achieve higher profitability. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) that there is no significant relationship between shared values and profitability is **rejected**, suggesting that fostering shared values among employees can positively influence the financial performance of oil servicing firms.

Discussion of Findings

Mutual Support and Workforce Stability

The analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between mutual support and workforce stability ($r = 0.348$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that employees who assist and cooperate with colleagues are more likely to remain committed to their organizations. This finding aligns with previous studies that highlight the role of mutual support in enhancing employee retention and reducing turnover intentions (Salas et al., 2017; Mathieu et al., 2019).

In oil servicing firms, where tasks are highly interdependent and safety-sensitive, mutual support fosters teamwork, reduces work-related stress, and reinforces a sense of belonging, all of which contribute to workforce stability. The result confirms the proposition of Social Exchange Theory that positive reciprocal interactions among employees encourage loyalty and sustained engagement within organizations (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). Therefore, promoting mutual support can be considered a strategic approach to maintaining a stable and committed workforce in Rivers State oil servicing firms.

Shared Values and Profitability

The findings indicate a strong and statistically significant relationship between shared values and profitability ($r = 0.549$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that firms in which employees embrace common values, goals, and norms tend to perform better financially. This supports prior research showing that alignment of employee values with organizational culture improves performance outcomes, including profitability, efficiency, and client satisfaction (Ogbonna & Harris, 2019; Meyer et al., 2020). Shared values foster cooperation, ethical behaviour, and consistent decision-making, which enhance operational effectiveness and reduce organizational risks, particularly in complex and high-stakes industries such as oil servicing. The finding also reinforces the theoretical expectations of Social Exchange Theory, as employees reciprocate the benefits of a shared value system with behaviours that support organizational success (Blau, 1964). Consequently, cultivating shared values among employees is an important driver of profitability in oil servicing firms in Rivers State.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that mutual support positively influences workforce stability, highlighting the importance of cooperation, teamwork, and reciprocal assistance in maintaining a committed and reliable workforce. Similarly, shared values among employees were found to significantly impact profitability, suggesting that alignment in beliefs, norms, and organizational goals fosters behaviors that contribute to improved financial and operational performance. These results underscore the broader importance of social and relational factors in complex and high-risk industrial settings, where technical capabilities alone are insufficient to guarantee success. The study further highlights the practical relevance of fostering positive interpersonal relationships and organizational culture as strategic tools for achieving organizational objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made among others that:

1. Oil servicing firms should implement team-building programs and peer-support initiatives to strengthen mutual support among employees, thereby enhancing workforce stability.
2. Management of oil servicing firms should actively foster and reinforce shared organizational values among employees to improve alignment with corporate goals and boost profitability.

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