

## Industrial Relation Practice and Organizational Performance of Selected Oil and Gas Companies Operating in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Industrial relation practice and organizational performance of selected oil and gas companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria were investigated. The study is a cross-sectional research survey. The population of the study was 45 management personnel of the oil and gas firms operating in Rivers State. The research instrument for the study was questionnaire. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest method was used on few of the same respondents after a period of two days. Cronbach's Alpha test was used to determine the reliability measurement items that were not less than 0.70. The researcher adopted the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in testing the hypotheses in order to affirm the answers that were provided by the data collected from the field. Results obtained indicated a strong positive linear correlation between industrial democracy and social justice with customers' satisfaction, effectiveness and efficiency. It was concluded that there is a linear relationship between industrial relation practice and organizational performance. A cordial working environment should be maintained for a sustainable delivery of goods and services.

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**Keywords:** Industrial relation, organizational performance, social justice, Port Harcourt.

### 1. Introduction

The relationship between the employers and employees and trade unions is called industrial relations. Harmonious relationship is needed for both the employers and employees to safeguard the interests of both parties of production. Strong industrial relation practice has become one of the most delicate and complex problems of modern industrial society. Industrial progress is impossible without cooperation of labourers. Katz, Kochan and Weber (1982) pinpoints that the slowdown in productivity growth and sluggish macro-economic performance in recent years has drawn increasing attention of the system of industrial relations and various strategies for improving organizational performance.

In support of the above, Armstrong (2009) posits that, the decline in industrial relations and collaborations between employees and employers threatens the survival of organizational performance. Cooper *et al.* (2012) studied empirically the factors affecting employer-union and employer-employee cooperation, noting that more cooperative relations were often considered to be conducive to higher organizational performance. Their statistical results included findings that lower union densities; fewer union members relative to total staff were associated with more cooperative relations between employers and employees.

None of the studies above has examined the relationship between industrial relation practice and

organizational performance in Nigeria. This has created a literature gap. The intent of this paper therefore is to investigate the relationship between industrial relation practice as predictor variable and organizational performance as a criterion variable in Port Harcourt.

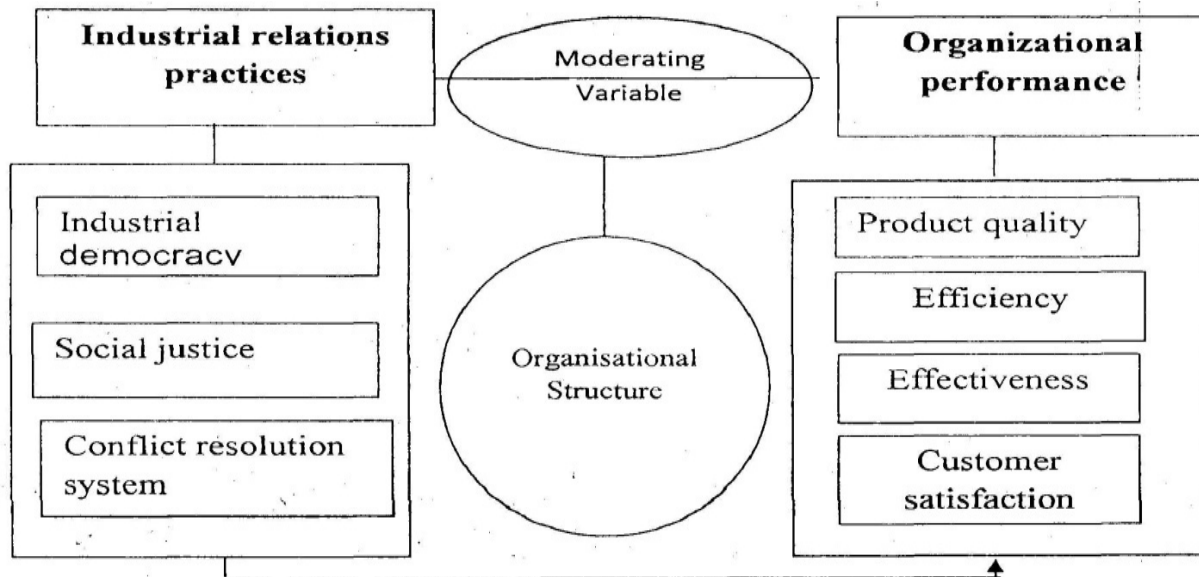
#### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Organizations where industrial relations practice are strained; the organizations have to face lot of problems. The atmosphere of such organizations is always surcharged with industrial unrest leading either to strikes or lockouts adversely affecting the organization performance. Organizations which ignore the importance of industrial relations face high cost of production. Adverse effect on efficiency, low-grade production, negligence in the execution of work, absenteeism among workers and high rate of labour turn-over are the evil that result from poor industrial relations practice. Lack of cordiality in industrial relations practice not only adversely affects the interests of the labourers and employers but also cause harm to different sections of society.

Despite the importance of industrial relation practice on organizational performance, studies have review that there is lack of understanding of this concept due to scarcity of studies. According to Englama (2010) there is little theoretical or empirical work that attempts to relate industrial relations outcomes to organizational performance and worker goals. Thus, industrial professionals are currently in a

poor position to forecast or explain how various change strategies might influence organizational performance and, perhaps more importantly, are poorly equipped to evaluate the effects of these change efforts. Most of the studies that examined these variables were carried out outside the content of

Nigeria; it is this gap, which my study in tends to fill by examining critically the relationship between industrial relation practice and organizational performance in Nigeria. Fig. 1 shows the conceptual framework.



**Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework**  
Source: Parasuraman (1985)

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study will be to empirically evaluate the relationship between industrial relation practice and organizational performance among Nigerian workers, with Port Harcourt as the setting. The study is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- i. Examine the relationship between industrial democracy and organization performance in oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
- ii. Examine relationship between social justice and company performance
- iii. in oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt.
- iv. Examine the relationship between industrial relation practice and organizational performance in oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt.
- v. Examine the relationship between conflict resolution system and organizational performance in oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt.

## 1.3 Research Questions

Based on the problem statement and specific objectives of the study, the following research questions will be developed.

1. What is the relationship between industrial democracy and organizational performance?
2. What is the relationship between social justice and organizational performance?
3. What is the relationship between industrial relation practice and organizational performance?
4. What is the relationship between conflict resolution system and organizational performance?

## 1.4 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be formulated for this study:

- **H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between industrial democracy and product quality.
- **H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between industrial democracy organizations efficiency.
- **H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between industrial democracy and organizations effectiveness.
- **H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between industrial democracy and customer satisfaction.
- **H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between social justice and product quality.

- **H<sub>06</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between social justice and organization's efficiency.
- **H<sub>07</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between social justice and organization's effectiveness.
- **H<sub>08</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between social justice and customer's satisfaction.
- **H<sub>09</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution system and product quality.
- **H<sub>10</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution system and organization's efficiency.
- **H<sub>11</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution system and organization's effectiveness.
- **H<sub>12</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution system and customer's satisfaction.
- **H<sub>13</sub>**: Organizational structure does not moderate the relationship between industrial relation practice and organizational performance.

### 1.5 Significance of the Study

This research seeks to justify the reasons of the significance of industrial relation practice on organizational performance among Nigerian workers at the National, States and local government area levels including the public and private sector. The parties that shall benefit from the study are as follows: To the researcher, the study gives the researcher a fair understanding of the impact of industrial relations on organizational performance and productivity.

To the Organization, the research unleashes and provides managers and employers with a clear understanding on the importance or benefits of industrial relations practices so that the organizations remains productive and firm over the emerging business environment which is encompassed with inherent disputes and to Nigerian University, Lecturers and students shall use this study as a reference point when carrying out similar research.

To Academics, the research shall add knowledge on the already existing body of knowledge in relation to the impact of industrial relations practices on organizational performance and lastly, to the organizations, the research shall help in the implementation of sound industrial relations practices in some organizations.

### 1.6 Scope of the Study

Content Scope - the theoretical area that was covered in this study was restricted to literature on industrial relation practice and organizational performance. Study Unit Scope - elements that will constitute the study population as well as subjects that will be drawn from the sampling frame will be senior

officers and junior staffs of government institutions and unions. Geographical Scope- The geographical scope is Port Harcourt.

### 1.7 Definition of Terms

**Industrial relations:** These are complex interrelations among the state, employer and the employees' representatives, working towards achieving the same goals, mission and values with the state being the regulator of the relationship.

**Organization Performance:** The term depicts the output or results as measured against the effort, input, capital, leadership and all other organizational processes.

**Product quality:** The ability to produce a perfect product on the first try.

**Efficiency:** Achievement of set objectives with set or stipulated resource.

**Effectiveness:** Achievement of set goals or objectives as stipulated.

**Customer satisfaction:** Customer satisfaction is how customer can get more benefits than their cost.

**Social justice:** implies looking at fairness beyond individual justice.

**Industrial democracy:** means the application of democratic principles in managing industrial units.

### 1.8 Theoretical Framework

Industrial relations practice theoretical framework is such that could be perceived as multidisciplinary by most functional practitioners because as asserted by Oluson (1997) there is an aspect of other disciplines that have made contributions towards the concept of IR.

### 1.9 Union Framework

In his work, trade union approach to industrial relations practice conceives is as the association amongst unions, institutions and processes that have build-up to structure them. He identified such unions as employee union and employers' association; they are further divided into other smaller sects within itself, like senior and junior staff association.

Therefore, it is in industrial relations that issues concerns relating to the interactions amongst members of this union are explained. The aim of this study, therefore, is to examine industrial relation practice and organizational performance of oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

## 2. Conceptual Review

### 2.1 Concept of Industrial Relations Practices

Industrial relations occur within a dynamic conflict situation which is permanent and unalterable so long as the structure of the society remains unattained (Stroh *et al.*, 2002). Industrial relations deal with either the relationship between the state and the employers and the workers organization or the relations between the occupational organizations

themselves. Both parties need to work in a spirit of cooperation, adjustment and accommodation. Michael (2009) sees industrial relation as “the relationship between employees and management which stems directly or indirectly from union- employer relationship”.

### 2.1.1 Industrial Democracy

Industrial democracy is the extent to which employees or their representatives influence the outcome of organizational decisions (Nel *et al.*, 2005). From the above definition, one can rightly state that industrial democracy is a situation in which management and employees or their representatives jointly participate in the decision making process in order to jointly regulate the workplace and its management for organizational enhancement. According to Pritchard (1995), an organization can improve its performance either by changing its technology or by the use of its people.

### 2.1.2 Social Justice

Social justice refers to the extent to which people perceive organizational events as being fair’ (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). Greenberg (1990) argues that perceptions of social justice are a basic requirement for the effective functioning of organizations and the personal satisfaction of the individuals they employ’ which, in turn, shapes employee behaviours in term of performance. Research has shown that the concept is a powerful predictor of people’s affective, cognitive and behavioural reactions in various work contexts (Kaufman, 1997). Studies have examined the relationship between social justice and organizational performance (McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992).

### 2.1.3 Conflict Resolution Systems

One critical function of an industrial relations system is to establish procedures and processes for addressing and resolving conflicts or problems that arise between employees and management. In the U.S., unions and employers rely heavily on formal contract negotiations and grievance procedures for this purpose.

Conflict resolution is conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and retribution. Committed group members attempt to resolve group conflicts by actively communicating information about their conflicting motives or ideologies to the rest of the group (e.g., intentions; reasons for holding certain beliefs) and by engaging in collective negotiation (Forsyth, 2009).

Dimensions of resolution typically parallel the dimensions of conflict in the way the conflict is processed. Cognitive resolution is the way disputants understand and view the conflict, with beliefs,

perspectives, understandings and attitudes. Emotional resolution is in the way disputants feel about a conflict, the emotional energy. Behavioral resolution is reflective of how the disputants act their behavior (Mayer, 2012).

## 2.2 Concepts of Organizational Performance

Organizations have an important role in our daily lives and therefore, successful organizations represent a key ingredient for developing nations. Thus, many economists consider organizations and institutions similar to an engine in determining the economic, social and political progress. Continuous performance is the focus of any organization because only through performance organizations are able to grow and progress. Thus, organizational performance is one of the most important variables in the management research and arguably the most important indicator of organizational productivity.

## 2.3 Measures of Organizational Performance

### 2.3.1 Product Quality

Quality is defined as a zero error rate, i.e., the ability to produce a perfect product on the first try (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). Quality has also been defined as the producer’s ability to meet expectation (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). This definition of quality is the core of the definition contained in the ISO 9001 standard. As far as the customer’s point of view is concern, quality can be defined as the quality perceived upon the basis of the consumer’s decision on the overall excellence or superiority of the product (Zeithami, 1988). All definitions mentioned above apply to the quality of a product, which is consistent with the focus of the study.

### 2.3.2 Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is how customer can get more benefits than their cost. Customers derive satisfaction from a product or a service based on whether their needs are met effortlessly, in a convenient of way that makes them loyal to the firm. Hence customer satisfaction is an important step to gain customer loyalty. It is a term used to describe a scenario when an exchange meets the need and expectation of its user. It captures the provision of goods or services that fulfill the customer’s expectations in terms of quality and service in relation to the price paid.

### 2.3.3 Effectiveness

Oriented companies are concerned with output, sales, quality, creation of value added, innovation, and cost reduction. It measures the degree to which a business achieves its goals or the way outputs interact with the economic and social environment. Usually effectiveness determines the policy objectives of the firm or degree to which an organization realizes its own goals.

Cooper *et al.* (2012) analyzed organizational effectiveness through organizational commitment. He further stated that commitment in the workplace may take various forms, such as relationship between leader and staff employee's identification with the organization, involvement in the decision making process, psychological attachment felt by an individual.

### 2.3.4 Efficiency

Efficiency measures relationship between inputs and outputs or how successfully the inputs have been transformed into outputs. To maximize the output Porter's Total Productive Maintenance system suggests the elimination of six losses, which are:

1. Reduced yield from start up to stable production.
2. Process defects.
3. Reduced speed.
4. Idling and minor stoppages.
5. Setup and adjustment; and
6. Equipment failure.

The fewer the inputs used to generate outputs, the greater the efficiency. According to Solomon and Mark (2017) there is a difference between business efficiency and organizational efficiency. Business efficiency reveals the performance of input and output ratio, while organizational efficiency reflects the improvement of internal processes of the organization, such as organizational structure, culture and community.

### 2.4 Organizational Structure

Solomon and Mark (2017) recognized structure as the starting point for organization which include role and position, hierarchical levels and span of accountability and mechanical for problem solving and integration. Nel *et al.* (2005) said that "structure is the integral differentiation and patterning of relationship. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) describe the structure as the technique in which the organization is differentiated and integrated". Organizational structure is seen as the established pattern relationships among the component part of a company.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional survey of the quasi-experimental design was chosen. The choice of this survey approach is because it scientifically looked at the situation on ground and has empirically analyzed it to totally get result that can be attributable to the accessible population.

### 3.2 Population of Study

The population of this study will be the management staffs of oil and gas firms in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State.

### 3.3 Sample Size

Since the population is not large, the researcher adopted a census study. The target population will become the sample size. The sample size for the study will be 59 management staffs of these selected oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

### 3.4 Data Collection Instrument

The research instrument for the study will be questionnaire. The questionnaire is the main instrument used in collecting primary data for the study. The questionnaire will be organized into parts A and B, whereas part A deals with the personal profile of the respondents under study, part B dealt with the variables under review. A forty five item questions were designed in a simple format to ease administration of the questionnaire among the units. The method adopts in framing the questions was multiple choice; this is because it provides the best way of information gathering. All the questions were organized using the five point Likert scale, which elicits information from the personnel and managers that constitute our accessible population.

### 3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Study

The face and content validity of the scale measurement of this study will be confirmed using pilot survey. To accomplish this, some copies of the instrument will be given to four experts, two in the department of management, including my supervisor from management department, and two to a management consulting firm respectively in order that they might make their inputs. The contents of the items and their clarity constraints, coverage and relevance were reviewed. The appropriateness of the language structure and expression was also viewed and corrections have made.

### 3.6 Reliability Analysis

To establish the reliability of this instrument, a test-retest method will be used on few of the same respondents after a period of two days. Cronbach's Alpha test will be used to determine the reliability measurement items that were not less than 0.70. This is an indication of reliability of research instrument; consequently, the data drawn can be used in analyses, findings and to draw valid conclusions and useful decisions that will give practical and theoretical generalization on the study variables. Reliability however refers to the property of a measurement instrument that causes it to give similar results for similar inputs. There is hardly an absolute standard for academic excellence or human responses to a survey.

### 3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The researcher adopted the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient in testing the hypotheses in order to affirm the answers that will be provided by the data collected from the field. The part A contains the bio-data variables while part B

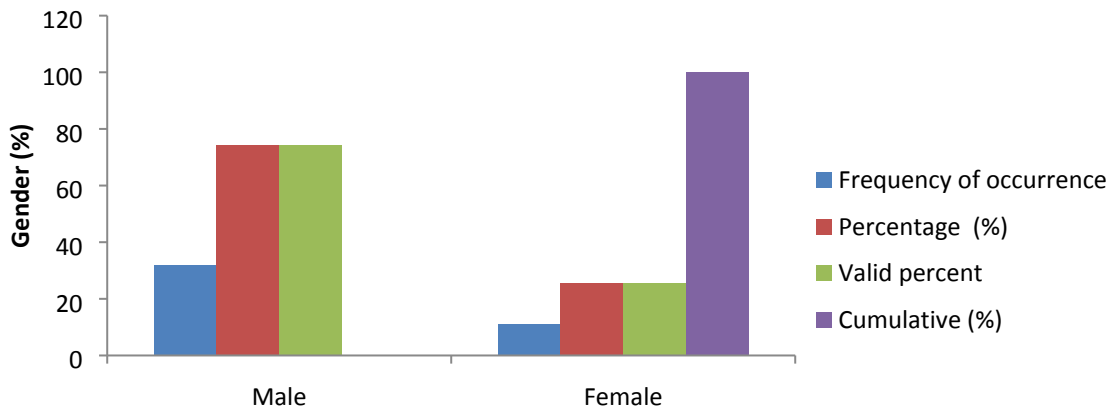
contains data on the dependent and independent variables of the study.

**4. Data Analysis And Results**

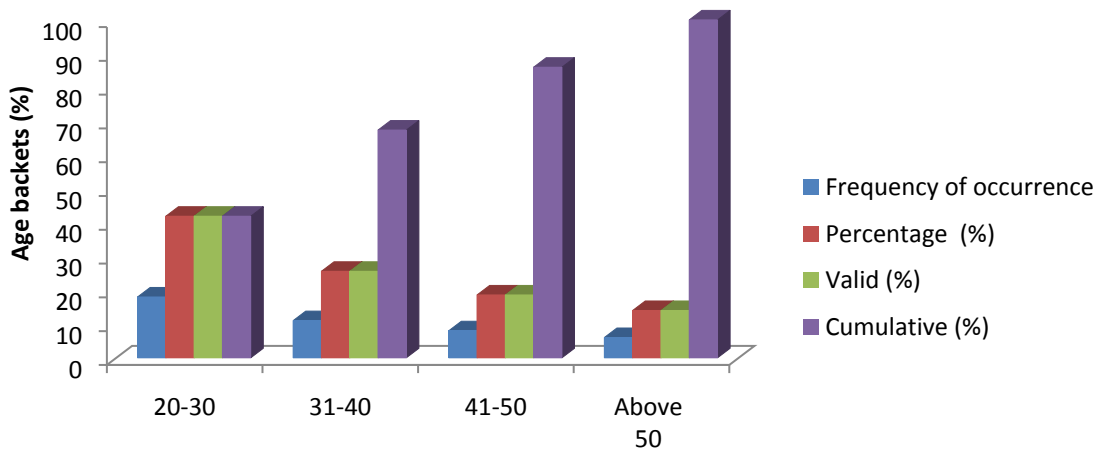
A total of 45 questionnaire representing 100 % was administered in this study and the questionnaire response rate show that only 43 (96 %) of the questionnaire was returned for analysis. Figs. 2 and 3 show the gender of the respondents and age brackets of the respondents respectively. Fig. 2 indicated the gender of the respondents and revealed 74.4 % males and 25.6 % females out of the 43 respondents returned. Fig. 3 gave the age brackets of the respondents in which, 41.9 % was within the age bracket of 20 to 30 years, 25.6 % fell within the age

bracket of 31 to 40 years while 18.6 % was within 41 to 50 years and lastly, 14 % of the respondents fell within the above 50 years age bracket. The educational qualifications of the respondents are given in Fig. 4. As evident in the figure, 4.7 % of the respondents had secondary school certificates while 46.5 % possessed a bachelor’s degree and 23.3 % had master’s degree.

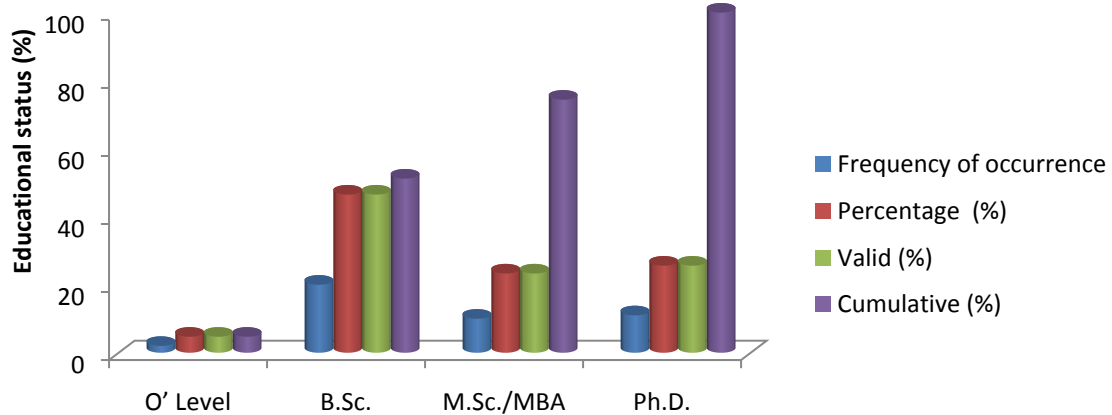
The figure further indicated that 25.6 % of the respondents had the degree of doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.). There was a significant relationship between conflict resolution system and organization’s efficiency, positive correlation between conflict resolution system and organization’s effectiveness and positive relationship between conflict resolution system and customer’s satisfaction.



**Fig. 2: Gender of the Respondents**



**Fig. 3: Age Brackets of the Respondents**



**Fig. 4: Educational Qualifications of the Respondents**

The marital status of respondents is as presented in Table 1. Results obtained indicated that a total of 46.5 % of respondents were married while 53.5 % of them were single. The working experiences of respondents ranging from 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16-20 and above 20 years of work are showed in Table 2. The working experiences of respondents showed that 23.3 % were within the 1 to 5 years category while 27.9 % fell within the 6 to 10 years working experience. Between 11 to 15 years working experience, 16.3 % respondents were obtained while

within the 16 to 20 years category, 18.6 % was recorded and within the above 20 years category, 14.0 % working experience was obtained (Table 2). The official status of the respondents is given in Table 3. The table revealed that 46.5 % of the respondents were within the top management status while 34.9 % were within the middle management status. Furthermore, 18.6 % of the respondents were within the lower management status during the study period (Table 3).

**Table 1: Marital Status of the Respondents**

	Marital status	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Valid	Married	20	46.5	46.5	46.5
	Single	23	53.5	53.5	100.0
	Divorced	-	-	-	-
	Widowed	-	-	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Table 2: Working Experiences of the Respondents**

	Working year	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Valid	1-5	10	23.3	23.3	23.3
	6-10	12	27.9	27.9	51.2
	11-15	7	16.3	16.3	67.4
	16-20	8	18.6	18.6	86.0
	Above 20	6	14.0	14.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Table 3: Official Status of the Respondents**

	Official status	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Valid	Top management	20	46.5	46.5	46.5
	Middle management	15	34.9	34.9	81.4
	Lower management	8	18.6	18.6	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

#### 4.1 Discussion of findings

The study on industrial relation practice and organizational performance of oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria has added credence to the findings of Solomon and Mark (2017) who in similar study had earlier reported a positive correlation between industrial democracy and organizational performance of oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt. That is to say, industrial relation practices had strong positive influence on organizational performance and productivity of the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) and Agip oil company in Rivers State.

This finding corroborated that of Ismeal (2012) on the impact of industrial relations on organizational performance which revealed that cordial industrial relations has a great positive impact when it comes to enhancing productivity and profitability. It is empirically clear that social justice is the engine which control organizational and/or societal conflict. This is because, social justice is a line of action which mediates the difference in cultural traditions, some of which emphasize the individual responsibility toward society and corporate organization. There is significant relationship between social justice and organization's effectiveness. There is significant relationship between social justice and customer's satisfaction. There is significant relationship between conflict resolution system and product quality. The study also supports the findings of Onwu (2012), whose study revealed that the leadership style operated in democratic manner of leadership is the best for effective relationship between labour and management.

One possible reason for this assertion is that social justice create a sense of belongingness of workers to the organization, increase sense of commitment to the organizational objectives, plans and activities among employees and satisfy psychological needs of the employees. There is significant relationship between industrial democracy organizations efficiency, there is significant relationship between industrial democracy and organizations effectiveness. There is a significant relationship between industrial democracy and customer satisfaction. There is a significant relationship between social justice and product quality. There is a significant relationship between social justice and organization's efficiency.

#### 4.2 Conclusion and recommendations

The research concluded that there is a positive correlation between industrial relation practice and organizational performance of oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Organizational structure does moderate the relationship between

industrial relation practice and organizational performance. It is, therefore, recommended that both the management of oil and gas firms and employees should understand that they both play an important role in the business organization. They should see each other as indispensable ally in the actualization of the organizational goals. This could be achieved by seeing and treating the organization as a system.

In other words, labour should not be exploited and left to remain dormant in the organization. Motivation and communication are vital factors that affect performance and efforts should be made to meet up with the yearnings of the employees by introducing a motivational package that will suit and satisfy their needs. Workers should be given the opportunity to participate in decision making, so as to give them a sense of belonging and inclusiveness. Management should pay workers as at when due, since this has been a major cause of industrial action in organizations.

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