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Upscaling corporate financial success in the oil and gas sector through innovative salesforce motivation strategy: Evidence from Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explored the place of innovative motivational strategy in enhancing salesforce-driven corporate financial success in Nigeria's Oil and Gas Industry. It specifically investigated the relationship between salesforce motivation and business performance in the oil and gas sector in Rivers State, with industry competition as a moderating variable. Anchored on Expectancy Theory, the study examined how competitive remuneration and salesforce training influence business profit and employee turnover. A cross-sectional research design was employed, and data were collected from 114 managers, unit heads, and supervisors using a structured questionnaire. The Kendall Rank Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypothesized relationships, while partial correlation analysis assessed the moderating role of industry competition. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between competitive remuneration and business profit, as well as a significant negative relationship between competitive remuneration and employee turnover, confirming that fair compensation enhances profitability and workforce stability. Salesforce training was also found to have a significant positive impact on business profit while reducing employee turnover, highlighting its role in improving market adaptability and product knowledge. Furthermore, industry competition was found to significantly moderate the relationship between salesforce motivation and business performance, suggesting that firms in highly competitive environments must adopt more innovative motivation strategies beyond financial incentives. The study concludes that structured remuneration, continuous salesforce training, and adaptive motivation strategies are critical for sustaining workforce engagement and enhancing business success. It is recommended that oil and gas firms implement performance-based pay models, institutionalize ongoing salesforce training, and develop talent retention strategies that extend beyond financial incentives. Additionally, firms should align motivation strategies with market competition and foster a strong organizational culture to drive employee engagement and long-term profitability. By integrating financial and non-financial incentives, organizations can maintain a stable workforce, enhance operational efficiency, and achieve sustainable business performance in a highly competitive sector.

Keywords: Salesforce Motivation; Business Performance; Competitive Remuneration; Salesforce Training; Employee Turnover; Business Profit

1. Introduction

Salesforce motivation encompasses various strategies aimed at enhancing salespeople engagement, commitment, and productivity. It is broadly categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, both of which significantly impact salesforce effectiveness (Jenkins, 2021). Within the oil and gas sector, where competition for skilled personnel is intense, organizations must implement robust motivational strategies to attract and retain top talent. Two key components of salesforce motivation are competitive remuneration and salesforce training. Competitive remuneration ensures that employees perceive their compensation as fair and commensurate with their efforts, thereby fostering job satisfaction and reducing turnover (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008; PWC, 2014). Studies have shown that equitable pay structures and regular salary reviews enhance employee retention and boost performance, especially in highly

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competitive industries (Kiarie et al., 2017; Surbakti, 2025). On the other hand, salesforce training is instrumental in equipping employees with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of the oil and gas market. Training programs focusing on customer relationship management, market analysis, and negotiation skills have been found to enhance sales performance and overall business profitability (Oranusi et al., 2021). Effective training strategies, such as coaching and role-playing, have also been linked to increased salesforce efficiency and adaptability in dynamic market environments (Nguyen et al., 2019; Igwe and Tamunoiyowuna, 2016).

Despite the recognized importance of salesforce motivation in improving business outcomes, the effectiveness of motivational strategies is influenced by external factors such as industry competition. The oil and gas sector in Rivers State is characterized by intense rivalry among firms, shaping employee expectations, market penetration strategies, and overall business sustainability. Industry competition can either amplify or weaken the impact of motivational efforts, as firms operating in highly competitive environments often need to offer more attractive remuneration packages and invest significantly in training to retain a high-performing workforce (Amah and Ahiauzu, 2013). However, the extent to which competition moderates the relationship between salesforce motivation and business performance remains underexplored in existing literature, particularly in the context of Nigeria’s oil and gas sector.

While previous studies have examined various determinants of business performance, such as leadership, innovation, and market strategies (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000; Ukenna et al., 2010), limited research has focused on the role of salesforce motivation in driving profitability and employee retention within the oil and gas industry in Rivers State. Moreover, empirical studies assessing the moderating effect of industry competition on this relationship are scarce, creating a significant literature gap in understanding how motivational strategies interact with competitive market conditions. Given the persistent challenges of declining profitability and high employee turnover in the sector (Obiekwe and Eke, 2019), there is an urgent need to investigate whether strategic motivational interventions can enhance business outcomes in a highly competitive industry. Besides price war, other diverse strategic moves by major players such as NNPCL and Dangote Petroleum Refinery necessitate this research work.

Consequently, the study sought to address these gaps by examining the relationship between salesforce motivation—measured through competitive remuneration and salesforce training and business performance—assessed through business profit and employee turnover while considering the moderating role of industry competition.

1.1. Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated

- H01: There is no significant relationship between competitive remuneration and business profit.
- H02: There is no significant relationship between competitive remuneration and employee turnover.
- H03: There is no significant relationship between salesforce training and business profit.
- H04: There is no significant relationship between salesforce training and employee turnover.
- H05: Industry Competition does not significantly moderate the relationship between Salesforce motivation and business performance.

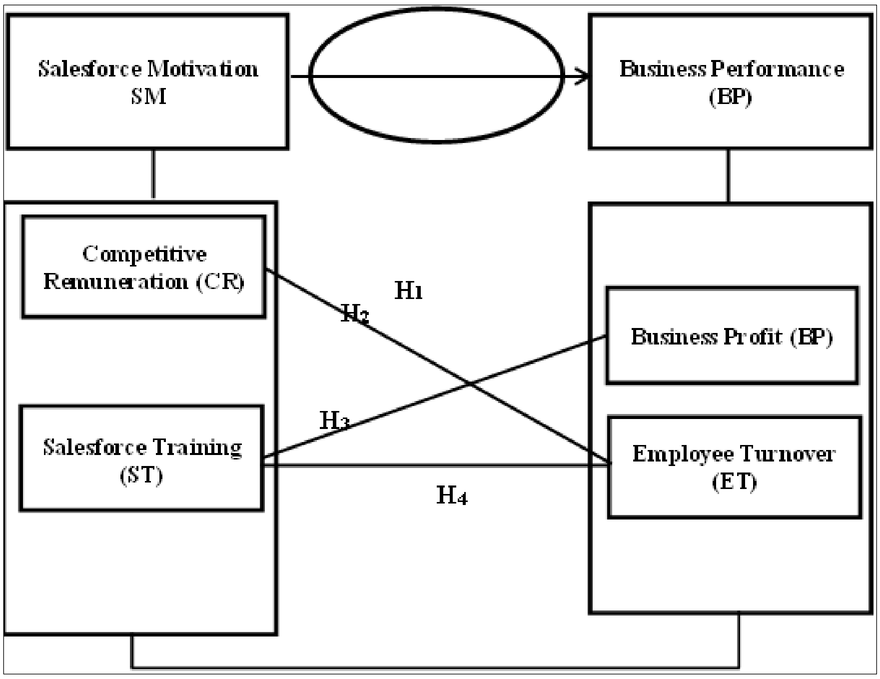
2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Review

Below is the conceptual model of the study, showing the variables studied, their operational dimensions and the hypothesized relationships indicated by connecting lines. Each of the lines labelled as H1, H2, H3, and H4 represents the corresponding Null hypothesis stated earlier in section 1.2.

2.2. Salesforce Motivation

Salesforce motivation is a multifaceted construct that significantly influences business performance across various sectors, including the oil and gas industry. Motivation can be understood as a complex phenomenon comprising different components such as direction, intensity, and persistence (Kleinginna, 2020). In the context of sales, motivation drives sales personnel to achieve organizational goals by influencing their behavior and performance. Motivational strategies encompass a range of techniques aimed at inspiring and encouraging salespeople to take action, stay committed, and achieve their goals (Jenkins, 2021). These strategies can be broadly categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation arises from internal factors such as enjoyment or a sense of fulfillment derived from the sales activity itself, while extrinsic motivation is driven by external factors like rewards, recognition, or promotions (Lamb et al., 2020). Both types of motivation can coexist and interact in various ways, with intrinsic motivation often leading to higher levels of commitment and persistence (Jenkins, 2021). Recent studies have highlighted the importance of motivational strategies in improving salesforce performance and business outcomes. For instance, Ehmke (2020) argued that a firm can gain a competitive advantage by creating a unique image in the minds of customers, which can be achieved through effective salesforce motivation. Furthermore, studies have shown that clarifying role expectations for salespeople by individualizing achievement plans and providing continuous support can significantly enhance salesforce productivity (Donnelly and Ivancevich, 2021).



Source: Adapted from Jabbour et'al., 2020, Hou et'al; 2019, and Anderson and Hair, 1983.

Figure 1 The Operational Framework of the Relationship between Salesforce Motivation and Business Performance of Firms in Oil and Gas Industry in Rivers State

2.3. Competitive Remuneration

Some studies have underscored the importance of competitive remuneration and pay packages in attracting and retaining top talent, which is crucial for driving productivity and success (PWC, 2014). When employees perceive that their efforts are fairly compensated, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged, contributing positively to the organization's performance (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008). In the context of the oil and gas sector in Rivers State, competitive remuneration can be particularly impactful due to the high demand for skilled professionals and the intense competition for talent (Surbakti, 2025). A study by Mutunga and Gachunga (2019) emphasized that equitable pay practices are critical in enhancing employee motivation and retention in the Kenyan banking sector. Additionally, research by Kiarie et al. (2017) indicated that regular salary reviews and fair compensation are crucial in retaining skilled employees and enhancing organizational performance. These findings suggest that competitive remuneration strategies, including regular salary reviews and robust recognition programs, can significantly boost employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness.

2.4. Salesforce Training

Training programs are designed to equip sales personnel with the necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence to effectively perform their roles and meet organizational goals (Oranusi et al., 2021). According to the resource-based view theory, human resources, including a well-trained salesforce, are key internal resources that contribute to a firm's competitive advantage and performance (Ahmed et al., 2018). Effective salesforce training can lead to improved sales performance by enhancing sales personnel's understanding of their customers, competitors, and the broader marketing environment (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009). Training methods such as coaching and role-playing have been identified as particularly effective in improving salesforce performance. Coaching, which is primarily an on-the-job training method, involves the transfer of knowledge, skills, and abilities from experienced managers to sales personnel, thereby improving their performance and adaptability (Nguyen et al., 2019). Role-playing, on the other hand, allows sales personnel to practice sales scenarios in a controlled environment, thereby improving their sales techniques and customer relationship skills (Igwe and Tamunoiyowuna, 2016). Studies have shown that both coaching and role-playing have significant positive influences on salesforce performance (Oranusi et al., 2021; Igwe and Tamunoiyowuna, 2016). Additionally, training programs that focus on developing interpersonal skills, product knowledge, and customer service capabilities can further enhance salesforce effectiveness (Singh et al., 2015).

2.5. Business Performance

Business performance is a multifaceted concept that encompasses both financial and non-financial dimensions, and it is crucial for the sustainable development and success of firms. Financial performance, which includes metrics such as revenue, profit margins, and return on investment, is often seen as a direct indicator of a company's short-term success and its ability to survive in the market (Nguyen et al., 2021). However, non-financial performance, which encompasses aspects like brand reputation, customer satisfaction, organizational performance, and innovation activities, is equally important for long-term sustainability and growth (Seo and Lee, 2019). Recent studies have highlighted the importance of integrating both types of performance to achieve a comprehensive understanding of a firm's overall effectiveness (Farida and Setiawan, 2022). For instance, research by Hadi and Baskaran (2021) demonstrated that organizational learning culture and digital organizational culture positively impact long-term business performance, with digital culture mediating the relationship between learning culture and performance. In the context of the oil and gas sector, where technological advancements and environmental sustainability are increasingly important, eco-innovation practices have been shown to significantly enhance business performance (Ch'ng et al., 2021). Additionally, the implementation of sustainable practices, such as circular economy methods and cleaner production, has been identified as a key driver of manufacturing sustainability performance (Gupta et al., 2021). Furthermore, the role of entrepreneurial orientation and leadership in driving business performance cannot be overlooked, as these factors have been consistently linked to higher levels of success in various industries (Rauch et al., 2009; Wales et al., 2013).

2.6. Business Profit

Business profit is a critical indicator of a company's financial health and performance, reflecting its ability to generate earnings from its operations. Profitability is often measured through various financial ratios such as Return on Assets (ROA), Return on Equity (ROE), and Return on Sales (ROS), which provide insights into how effectively a company utilizes its assets, equity, and sales to generate earnings (Brigham and Houston, 2022; Fama and French, 2015). High levels of profitability are typically associated with better operational efficiency, effective management, and strong market positioning, which in turn can lead to increased firm value and investor confidence (Damodaran, 2018; Ross et al., 2020).

Recent studies have emphasized the importance of profitability in the context of global economic uncertainty, particularly during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Companies with robust profitability were found to be more resilient, better able to weather economic downturns, and maintain operational stability (Baker et al., 2020; Zeng et al., 2021). For instance, research by Li et al. (2022) showed that high profitability improves firms' access to external capital, as financial institutions are more likely to provide credit to firms with strong profit performance. Additionally, consistent profitability can reduce a firm's cost of capital due to lower default risk, thereby increasing overall firm value (Johnson and Lee, 2023).

In the oil and gas sector, profitability is influenced by a variety of factors, including market conditions, operational efficiency, and strategic management decisions. Companies in this sector often face unique challenges such as volatile commodity prices, regulatory changes, and environmental concerns, which necessitate effective financial management to maintain profitability (Kasmir, 2019; Saputra, 2022). Recent studies have highlighted the role of innovation and technological advancements in enhancing profitability in the oil and gas industry. For example, companies that invest in advanced drilling technologies and sustainable practices tend to achieve higher profitability and better long-term performance (Chen et al., 2023; Garcia and Martinez, 2020).

2.7. Employee Turnover

Employee turnover represents the rate at which employees leave and are replaced within a firm. High turnover rates can significantly impact organizational performance, often leading to increased costs and reduced productivity. Recent studies have highlighted various factors influencing employee turnover, including job satisfaction, work-life balance, and organizational culture (Ozoh and Agari, 2024). For instance, research by Jude (2021) found that financial rewards play a significant role in employee turnover and job performance, suggesting that inadequate compensation can drive employees to seek better opportunities elsewhere. Similarly, Dejene and Bamlaku (2020) identified high labor demand, lack of career advancement, and unsatisfactory working conditions as key drivers of employee turnover in academic settings. These findings underscore the importance of addressing employee needs and expectations to reduce turnover rates.

The impact of employee turnover extends beyond financial costs, affecting organizational stability and performance. Studies have shown that high turnover can lead to a loss of critical skills and knowledge, disrupting organizational operations and service delivery (Kauki, 2020). Moreover, frequent turnover can damage an organization's reputation, making it difficult to attract and retain top talent (Ginette and Anianou, 2019). In the context of the oil and gas sector, where specialized skills are often required, the cost of replacing experienced employees can be substantial. This sector is particularly susceptible to turnover due to its dynamic and often hazardous working conditions, which necessitate a strong focus on employee health and safety (Ozoh and Agari, 2024).

Effective strategies to mitigate employee turnover include offering competitive compensation packages, providing opportunities for career growth, and fostering a positive work environment. Research by Feseha (2020) emphasized the importance of employee satisfaction and customer service quality in reducing turnover rates. Additionally, Kauki (2020) suggested that effective selection and training programs can help mitigate the negative impacts of turnover. These strategies are crucial in industries like oil and gas, where maintaining a skilled and motivated workforce is essential for operational success.

2.8. Industry Competition

Recent studies have highlighted that the level of competition within an industry can be influenced by various factors such as market concentration, firm markups, and the dynamism of market leaders (Abele et al., 2024; Calligaris et al., 2024). For instance, industries with higher levels of concentration and markups often exhibit weaker competition, which can lead to reduced innovation and efficiency (Autor et al., 2020; De Loecker et al., 2020). Additionally, the stability of market leaders and their ability to maintain their positions over time, known as entrenchment, can also impact competition (Bajgar et al., 2021). In the context of the oil and gas sector, these factors are particularly relevant as the industry is characterized by high entry barriers and significant capital investments (Melitz, 2003). Furthermore, the geographical scope of competition, whether domestic, regional, or global, also plays a crucial role in determining the competitive landscape of an industry (Calligaris et al., 2024). For example, industries that compete at the European level tend to have stronger competition compared to those competing domestically or globally (Abele et al., 2024). This suggests that the integration of markets and the reduction of trade barriers within regions like Europe can enhance competition. However, it is important to note that the relationship between competition and business performance is not straightforward. While stronger competition can drive firms to improve efficiency and innovation, it can also lead to increased market instability and challenges for smaller firms (Syverson, 2019).

2.9. Theoretical Review

Expectancy Theory, developed by Vroom (1964), explains motivation as a function of individuals' expectations regarding effort, performance, and outcomes. The theory is built on three core components: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy refers to the belief that putting in more effort will lead to better performance; instrumentality is the perception that strong performance will result in specific rewards; and valence denotes the value an individual places on those rewards (Lunenburg, 2011). Employees are motivated when they believe that their hard work will lead to successful outcomes and that those outcomes will be rewarded in a way that aligns with their personal goals (Steers et al., 2004). In organizations, particularly in sales-driven sectors, employees' motivation is influenced by whether they see a clear and attainable link between their sales efforts, target achievements, and the incentives they receive (Pinder, 2014).

Expectancy Theory provides a framework for understanding how sales employees' perceptions of effort, performance, and rewards affect their motivation and, ultimately, their contribution to business success. Sales personnel in the oil and gas sector face high-pressure environments that demand persistence, strategic networking, and market-driven decision-making. If these employees believe that their hard work will directly lead to meeting sales targets (expectancy), that meeting these targets will yield desirable incentives (instrumentality), and that those incentives are meaningful to them (valence), they will be more motivated to perform at optimal levels (Robbins and Judge, 2017). Conversely, if these linkages are weak or unclear, motivation may decline, leading to suboptimal sales outcomes.

2.10. Empirical Review

Table 1 Tabulation of Gap in Literature

S/N	Author(s)/ Year	Country	Topic/ Objectives	Methodology	Findings	Conclusion	Gaps	Comparison with Current Study
1	Wahyuningsih (2018)	Indonesia	Examines sales force automation and sales training as predictors of medical representatives' performance and sales effectiveness in the pharmaceutical sector.	Causality model	Sales automation and training improve salesforce performance.	Automation plays a key role in enhancing sales effectiveness.	Does not use Kendall Rank Correlation Coefficient; lacks a moderating variable (industry competition); focuses on automation, which is absent in the current study.	Both explore sales training, but the present study links competitive remuneration and training to business profit and employee turnover, incorporates financial performance indicators, and applies Expectancy Theory.
2	Ali et al. (2020)	Pakistan	Investigates intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as determinants of salesforce performance in pharmaceutical companies.	Multiple regression analysis	Motivation significantly impacts salesforce performance.	Motivation theories are useful in explaining salesforce performance.	Does not examine competitive remuneration and salesforce training; lacks Expectancy Theory; focuses on pharmaceuticals, unlike the oil and gas sector in the current study.	The present study includes moderating effects of industry competition and uses a different statistical approach (Kendall Rank Correlation Coefficient vs. multiple regression).
3	Morosan-Danila et al. (2020)	Romania	Conducts an organizational-level analysis of employee motivation and business performance across 444 organizations.	Factorial analysis (KMO, Bartlett tests), ANOVA	Motivation is a critical determinant of business success.	Large-scale studies provide insights into workforce motivation trends.	Does not focus on salesforce motivation specifically; lacks competitive remuneration and training as proxies; does not include Expectancy Theory.	The present study takes a firm-level approach, focuses on salesforce motivation in oil and gas, and includes Expectancy Theory and industry competition as a moderator.
4	Nwachukwu (2023)	Nigeria	Examines salesforce compensation techniques and their impact on sales	Spearman rank correlation	Compensation influences salesforce performance.	Compensation is a key motivator for salesforce effectiveness.	Lacks salesforce training as a proxy; does not consider employee turnover; does not apply	Both studies use a cross-sectional design in Nigeria, but the present study extends beyond compensation by including training,

			performance of bakery firms.				any theoretical framework.	industry competition, and Expectancy Theory.
5	Supriatna et al. (2024)	Indonesia	Investigates general employee motivation and performance at PT Karunia Gemilang.	Simple linear regression, correlation coefficient analysis	Motivation improves employee performance.	Motivated employees contribute to better business performance.	Small sample size (65 employees); lacks a focus on salesforce motivation; does not include moderating variables.	The present study is industry-specific (oil and gas) and broader in assessing organizational outcomes, using Expectancy Theory as a structured framework.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design, which is appropriate for examining relationships between variables at a single point in time (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). This design aligns with the *positivist philosophical paradigm*, which emphasizes objective measurement and quantifiable data to test hypotheses and establish empirical relationships (Saunders et al., 2019). The target population consisted of managers, heads of units, and supervisors within oil and gas companies operating in Rivers State, Nigeria. Using purposive sampling, a total of 114 respondents were selected as sample elements based on their knowledge and experience regarding salesforce motivation and business performance. Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire, designed to capture responses on key study constructs while ensuring clarity and reliability (Bryman, 2021). The instrument's validity was assessed through face and content validity, ensuring that the questionnaire adequately represented all relevant dimensions of the study variables (Boateng et al., 2018). Given the quantitative nature of the study, data were analyzed using the Kendall Rank Correlation Coefficient, a non-parametric statistical method suitable for examining relationships between ordinal variables (Gibbons and Chakraborti, 2020). Additionally, partial correlation analysis was employed to assess the moderating role of industry competition in the relationship between salesforce motivation and business performance. Partial correlation is an appropriate technique for examining the extent to which the relationship between two variables changes when the effect of a third variable (the moderator) is controlled for (Hair et al., 2020). This method was chosen due to its ability to measure the strength and direction of associations without assuming normal distribution (Field, 2018). The analysis provided insights into the relationship between salesforce motivation and business performance, allowing for hypothesis testing based on empirical data.

4. Results

4.1. Results and Analyses

The demographic analysis in table 4.1 provides insights into the characteristics of the respondents in the study. The age group distribution shows that the majority of respondents (42.1%) fall within the 30-39 years category, followed by those aged 40-49 years (34.2%), while 17.5% are 50 years and above, and only 6.1% are within the 20-29 years range. This indicates that most of the respondents are in their mid-career stages, with fewer younger employees in managerial or supervisory roles. Gender distribution reveals a male-dominated workforce (75.4%), with females making up only 24.6%, suggesting that the oil and gas sector in Rivers State has significantly fewer women in leadership positions.

Regarding educational qualifications, 40.4% of respondents hold a Master’s degree, followed by 30.7% with a Bachelor’s degree or Higher National Diploma (HND), while 15.8% possess a Diploma/National Diploma, and 13.2% have a Doctorate degree. This suggests that the workforce is highly educated, with a substantial proportion possessing postgraduate qualifications. Industry experiences distribution shows that 58.8% have worked for 5-10 years, 21.1% have less than five years of experience, and 20.2% have over 11 years, implying that most respondents have moderate industry experience. In terms of job position, 51.8% are Unit Heads, 36.0% are Supervisors, and only 12.3% are Managers, indicating that the sample primarily consists of mid-level leadership personnel rather than top management.

Table 2 Demographic Analysis

Age Group Distribution					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	20 - 29 years	7	6.1	6.1	6.1
	30 - 39 years	48	42.1	42.1	48.2
	40 - 49 years	39	34.2	34.2	82.5
	50 years and above	20	17.5	17.5	100.0
	Total	114	100.0	100.0	
Gender Distribution					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Male	86	75.4	75.4	75.4
	Female	28	24.6	24.6	100.0
	Total	114	100.0	100.0	
Highest Level of Education Distribution					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Diploma/National Diploma	18	15.8	15.8	15.8
	Bachelor’s Degree/HND	35	30.7	30.7	46.5
	Master’s Degree	46	40.4	40.4	86.8
	Doctorate Degree	15	13.2	13.2	100.0
	Total	114	100.0	100.0	
Length of Time in Industry Distribution					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Less than 5 years	24	21.1	21.1	21.1
	5 – 10 year	67	58.8	58.8	79.8
	11 years and above	23	20.2	20.2	100.0
	Total	114	100.0	100.0	
Current Job Position Distribution					
		Frequency	**Percent**	**Valid Percent**	**Cumulative Percent**
Valid	Supervisor	41	36.0	36.0	36.0
	Unit Head	59	51.8	51.8	87.7
	Manager	14	12.3	12.3	100.0
	Total	114	100.0	100.0	

4.2. Univariate Analysis

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics on Competitive Remuneration and Salesforce Training

Competitive Remuneration Statement Items	**N**	**Min**	**Max**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Our company offers a competitive salary package compared to other firms in the oil and gas sector.	114	1	5	3.45	1.057
Performance-based incentives and bonuses are regularly provided to motivate the salesforce.	114	1	5	3.61	1.078
The company's remuneration structure adequately rewards high-performing sales personnel.	114	1	5	3.91	0.917
Non-monetary benefits such as allowances and perks contribute to salesforce motivation in my organization.	114	1	5	3.88	0.961
The salary structure in my organization is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains competitive.	114	1	5	3.32	0.971
Valid N (listwise)	114				
Salesforce Training Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
My organization provides regular training programs to enhance the skills of the salesforce.	114	1	5	3.29	1.054
The sales training provided equips employees with effective selling techniques for business growth.	114	1	5	3.56	0.912
Training sessions in my company are tailored to address industry-specific challenges in the oil and gas sector.	114	1	5	3.03	1.085
Newly recruited sales personnel undergo structured onboarding training to enhance their performance.	114	1	5	2.95	1.021
Continuous learning and professional development are encouraged in my company to improve salesforce competence.	114	1	5	3.54	0.874
Valid N (listwise)	114				

The univariate analysis in table 4.2 presents the descriptive statistics for competitive remuneration and salesforce training, highlighting the respondents' perceptions of these motivational factors within the oil and gas sector. For competitive remuneration, the highest mean score (3.91, SD = 0.917) was recorded for the statement that the remuneration structure adequately rewards high-performing sales personnel, indicating a strong agreement among respondents. Similarly, non-monetary benefits were perceived as a significant motivator (M = 3.88, SD = 0.961). However, salary structure periodic reviews had the lowest mean (3.32, SD = 0.971), suggesting a relatively lower level of agreement on its competitiveness. Overall, the results suggest that while the remuneration system is generally viewed as motivating, periodic salary reviews may need further improvement.

Regarding salesforce training, the highest-rated item (M = 3.56, SD = 0.912) suggests that respondents agree that training equips employees with effective selling techniques. However, the lowest-rated item (M = 2.95, SD = 1.021) indicates that respondents perceive onboarding training for newly recruited sales personnel as inadequate, suggesting a potential area for improvement. The overall means for training-related items are lower compared to remuneration items, indicating that while training is provided, it may not be as structured or industry-specific as needed. The standard deviations across both variables suggest moderate variability in responses, reflecting diverse perceptions among respondents.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics on Business Profit and Employee Turnover

Business Profit Statement Items	**N**	**Min**	**Max**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Our company has experienced consistent growth in revenue over the past few years.	114	1	5	3.52	0.875
The salesforce's performance has positively contributed to overall business profitability.	114	1	5	3.32	0.876
Effective sales strategies have resulted in increased client acquisition and retention in our company.	114	1	5	3.70	1.113
The company regularly evaluates financial performance to measure sales effectiveness.	114	1	5	3.13	1.035
Management actively reinvests profits into business expansion and workforce development.	114	1	5	3.47	1.074
Valid N (listwise)	114				
Employee Turnover Statement Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
My company experiences frequent turnover of sales personnel due to job dissatisfaction.	114	1	5	3.85	0.833
The organization has effective retention strategies to minimize employee turnover.	114	1	5	4.01	0.857
High-performing sales employees tend to stay longer in the company due to attractive compensation and benefits.	114	1	5	3.73	0.953
Lack of growth opportunities contributes to the exit of sales employees in my organization.	114	1	5	3.64	0.951
Employee turnover in the sales department has negatively impacted business operations and client relationships.	114	1	5	3.66	0.994
Valid N (listwise)	114				

From table 4.3, the descriptive statistics on business profit suggest that respondents generally agree that effective sales strategies have contributed to increased client acquisition and retention (M = 3.70, SD = 1.113), indicating that strategic sales efforts play a crucial role in profitability. However, the statement regarding the company's regular evaluation of financial performance received the lowest mean score (M = 3.13, SD = 1.035), suggesting that financial performance assessments may not be as rigorous or frequent as expected. The overall mean scores indicate a moderate level of agreement on business profit-related factors, with some variation in responses, as reflected in the standard deviations.

For employee turnover, the highest mean score (M = 4.01, SD = 0.857) was recorded for the statement that the organization has effective retention strategies, indicating strong agreement among respondents that measures are in place to reduce turnover. However, the relatively high agreement on frequent turnover due to job dissatisfaction (M = 3.85, SD = 0.833) suggests that despite retention strategies, dissatisfaction remains a notable issue. Additionally, the perception that lack of growth opportunities contributes to sales employees leaving (M = 3.64, SD = 0.951) highlights a possible area of concern. The standard deviations show moderate variability in responses, indicating differing perspectives on turnover and retention dynamics.

4.3. Bivariate Analysis

Table 5 Test of Relationships between Competitive Remuneration and Measures of Business Performance (Business Profit and Employee Turnover)

			Competitive Remuneration	Business Profit	Employee Turnover
Kendall's tau_b	Competitive Remuneration	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.330**	0-.204**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000	0.003
		N	114	114	114
	Business Profit	Correlation Coefficient	.330**	1.000	0.438**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	0.000
		N	114	114	114
	Employee Turnover	Correlation Coefficient	-.204**	0.438**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	0.000	0.000
		N	114	114	114

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

The bivariate analysis results in table 4.4, show a significant positive relationship between competitive remuneration and business profit ($\tau b = .330$, $p < .01$), indicating that firms with better compensation structures tend to experience higher business profitability. This result suggests that competitive remuneration enhances salesforce motivation, leading to improved sales performance and financial growth. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) stating that there is no significant relationship between competitive remuneration and business profit is rejected.

Conversely, competitive remuneration has a significant negative relationship with employee turnover ($\tau b = -.204$, $p < .01$), implying that higher pay and rewards reduce the likelihood of sales employees leaving the organization. This finding aligns with retention theories, suggesting that well-compensated employees are more likely to remain with the company. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) stating that there is no significant relationship between competitive remuneration and employee turnover is also rejected. These findings highlight the critical role of financial incentives in enhancing business performance and reducing workforce attrition in the oil and gas sector.

Table 6 Test of Relationships between Salesforce Training and Measures of Business Performance (Business Profit and Employee Turnover)

			Salesforce Training	Business Profit	Employee Turnover
Kendall's tau_b	Salesforce Training	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.818**	0-.299**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.000	0.000
		N	114	114	114
	Business Profit	Correlation Coefficient	0.818**	1.000	.838**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	.	.000
		N	114	114	114
	Employee Turnover	Correlation Coefficient	0-.299**	0.838**	1.000

		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	.
		N	114	114	114

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

The results of the bivariate analysis provide strong evidence to reject both null hypotheses (H_{03} and H_{04}) at the 1% significance level ($p < .01$). The correlation between salesforce training and business profit is positive and strong (τb = .818, p = .000), indicating that increased investment in training leads to higher profitability. This suggests that well-trained sales teams contribute significantly to revenue growth and business success.

Similarly, salesforce training and employee turnover show a negative and significant relationship (τb = – .299, p = .000), meaning that organizations that invest in continuous sales training experience lower turnover rates. This implies that training enhances job satisfaction and retention by equipping employees with necessary skills and career growth opportunities. Overall, these findings confirm that salesforce training is a critical driver of business performance, both by improving profitability and reducing employee turnover in the oil and gas sector.

4.4. Multivariate Analysis

Table 7 The Moderating role of Industry Competition on the relationship between Salesforce Motivation and Business Performance

Control Variables			**Salesforce Motivation**	**Business Performance**	**Industry Competition**
-none-[a]	Salesforce Motivation	Correlation	1.000	0.535	.563
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	0.000	0.000
		df	0	112	112
	Business Performance	Correlation	.535	1.000	0.536
		Significance (2-tailed)	0.000	.	0.000
		df	112	0	112
	Industry Competition	Correlation	0.563	0.536	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	.
		df	112	112	0
Industry Competition	Salesforce Motivation	Correlation	1.000	0.334	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	0.000	
		df	0	111	
	Business Performance	Correlation	0.334	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	0.000	.	
		df	111	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

The results of the multivariate analysis suggest that industry competition significantly moderates the relationship between salesforce motivation and business performance. The correlation between salesforce motivation and business performance is moderate and positive (r = .535, p = .000), indicating that motivated sales teams contribute to better business performance. Similarly, industry competition is positively correlated with both salesforce motivation (r = .563, p = .000) and business performance (r = .536, p = .000), suggesting that competition influences both motivation and performance. When industry competition is included as a moderator, the correlation between salesforce motivation and business performance decreases to r = .334 while remaining significant (p = .000). This reduction suggests a partial moderating effect, meaning that while salesforce motivation directly influences business performance, industry competition also plays a role in shaping this relationship.

Since all correlations are statistically significant at the 1% level ($p < .01$), the findings provide strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_{05}). This implies that industry competition does not act as a neutral factor but actively influences the strength of the relationship between salesforce motivation and business performance.

5. Discussion of Findings

The results reveal that competitive remuneration significantly enhances business profit while reducing employee turnover, aligning with previous studies that highlight the importance of fair compensation in motivating employees and improving organizational performance (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008). Employees who perceive their pay as equitable are more likely to be engaged and committed to their organizations, leading to lower turnover rates (Mutunga and Gachunga, 2019). Furthermore, competitive remuneration is especially vital in industries with high demand for skilled labor, such as the oil and gas sector, where talent competition is fierce (Surbakti, 2025). These findings reinforce the notion that structured pay packages, regular salary reviews, and performance-based incentives contribute significantly to salesforce retention and overall business success (Kiarie et al., 2017).

Salesforce training also emerged as a crucial determinant of business profit and employee retention. The strong positive relationship between training and business profitability supports the extant studies, which posits that well-trained employees constitute a firm's internal resource and contribute to its competitive advantage (Ahmed et al., 2018). Effective training enhances salesforce performance by improving their product knowledge, customer interaction skills, and overall market adaptability (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009). Specifically, training methods such as coaching and role-playing have been identified as effective strategies in improving sales techniques and interpersonal skills, leading to better sales outcomes (Nguyen et al., 2019; Igwe and Tamunoiyowuna, 2016). The negative correlation between salesforce training and employee turnover further highlights the role of continuous learning in fostering job satisfaction and retention (Oranusi et al., 2021). Employees who receive ongoing training and professional development opportunities are more likely to remain with their organizations, reducing the costs associated with high turnover rates (Singh et al., 2015).

The moderating effect of industry competition on the relationship between salesforce motivation and business performance provides further insight into the external factors influencing organizational success. The results indicate that industry competition weakens the direct relationship between motivation and performance, suggesting that external market forces can mitigate the effectiveness of motivational strategies (Donnelly and Ivancevich, 2021). This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the need for organizations to adapt their motivation strategies based on competitive market conditions (Ehmke, 2020). In highly competitive environments, firms must go beyond traditional incentive structures and incorporate innovative motivational techniques, such as recognition programs, flexible work arrangements, and career growth opportunities, to sustain high salesforce performance and retention rates (Lamb et al., 2020).

Regarding employee turnover, the study affirms that competitive remuneration and continuous training significantly reduce turnover rates among sales personnel. High turnover negatively impacts organizational stability, leading to increased recruitment and training costs, as well as decreased productivity (Ozoh and Agari, 2021). The findings support existing literature that emphasizes the role of job satisfaction, career development opportunities, and organizational support in enhancing employee retention (Gupta et al., 2021). In the oil and gas sector, where workforce stability is crucial for operational efficiency, companies that prioritize employee well-being through fair compensation and continuous professional development are more likely to retain top talent and maintain competitive advantage (Ch'ng et al., 2021).

6. Conclusion

The study concludes that competitive remuneration and continuous training are essential in enhancing business performance and reducing employee turnover in the oil and gas sector. Employees who perceive their compensation as fair are more engaged and committed, leading to lower turnover rates. Continuous training improves salesforce performance by enhancing product knowledge, market adaptability, and interpersonal skills, making it a crucial internal resource for firms. Additionally, industry competition moderates the effectiveness of motivation strategies, requiring firms to adopt more innovative approaches beyond financial incentives. Given the high demand for skilled labour in the sector, firms must integrate structured pay, ongoing training, and adaptive motivation strategies to enhance retention and business success. Ultimately, companies that prioritize both financial and non-financial incentives will maintain workforce stability, improve operational efficiency, and achieve long-term profitability.

Recommendation

Consequently, it is recommended that

- Implement structured remuneration systems: Oil and gas firms should introduce performance-based pay models such as commissions, bonuses, and profit-sharing to enhance motivation and retention. Regular salary benchmarking should be conducted to ensure competitiveness.
- Institutionalize continuous salesforce training: Firms should provide ongoing training programs that incorporate mentorship, hands-on coaching, and real-world simulations to enhance employees' technical and interpersonal skills. Digital learning platforms should also be utilized for accessibility.
- Develop talent retention strategies beyond financial incentives: Organizations should introduce career progression pathways, internal promotions, and employee recognition programs to strengthen commitment. Flexible work arrangements and wellness initiatives should also be adopted.
- Adapt motivation strategies to industry competition: Companies should conduct regular employee satisfaction surveys and adjust incentive structures, training methods, and work policies based on market trends and workforce expectations.
- Enhance employee engagement through strong organizational culture: Firms should encourage open communication, team-building activities, and employee participation in corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs to increase job satisfaction and loyalty.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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