

Employee Commitment and Organizational Performance of Selected Road Transport Companies in Owerri, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated employee commitment and its impacts on organizational performance of selected road transport operators in Owerri, Imo State. The survey covered 316 employees from eleven transport operators, with a sample size of 177 determined using the Taro Yamane method. Data were gathered using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and a review of past scholarly works. Analysis involved percentages, tables, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, with critical values of -0.811 for hypothesis one, 0.892 for hypothesis two, and -0.843 for hypothesis three. Findings showed that employee commitment significantly impacts the performance of road transport operators in Owerri. There is a significant relationship between employee engagement and organizational growth, dedication to work and organizational productivity, and employee loyalty and organizational success. The study concluded that employee commitment enhances business performance, engagement accelerates growth, dedication improves productivity, and loyalty ensures success. The study recommended that Organizations, particularly in the transport sector, should implement comprehensive training and development programs, create a conducive work environment, and ensure fair reward systems to enhance employee engagement, dedication, and overall organizational productivity.

Keywords: Employee Commitment, Dedication, Engagement, Loyalty, Organizational Performance

Introduction

In today's competitive and fast-changing business environment, organizational performance—measured by profitability, growth, and survival—relies heavily on the efforts of its employees. Performance is crucial for an organization's survival, as a lack of performance can lead to early decline. Sustained performance drives organizational growth, expansion, and profitability (Maria et al., 2009). Performance can be viewed in both financial and non-financial terms. Financial performance includes metrics like revenue, profit margins, and return on investment, while non-financial performance encompasses employee satisfaction, customer loyalty, and operational efficiency. Both aspects are essential for a holistic understanding of an organization's health and long-term viability. Without strong performance, organizations are at risk of stagnation or decline, unable to keep pace with the demands of a dynamic market.

Mills and Konya (2019) argue that achieving organizational objectives is impossible without employee commitment and dedication. They, quoting Mello (2006), emphasize that the human resource is the most critical and valuable factor contributing to performance. Employees who are committed and dedicated are more likely to go above and beyond their basic job requirements, fostering a culture of excellence and continuous improvement. Ivancevich (2010) highlights the necessity of preparing and retaining committed employees for organizational development. Committed employees work harder, showing devotion and dedication to their tasks, which translates into higher productivity, better customer service, and increased innovation. This alignment of employee goals with organizational objectives creates a synergistic effect that propels the organization forward.

Employee commitment is now recognized as a natural process essential for effective performance (Armstrong, 2005). Organizations are implementing various strategies to enhance employee commitment, recognizing its fundamental role in organizational success (Dorenbosch & Veldhoven, 2006). The objective of organizational

development is to improve efficiency and achieve strategic goals, which is possible when employees realize their responsibility and accountability for their performance outcomes. Employee commitment involves a psychological connection to the organization, characterized by a sense of belonging and ownership of organizational goals (Dolan, Tzafrir, & Baruch, 2005). This commitment fosters a stable and motivated workforce that is resilient in the face of challenges and adaptable to change. It ensures that employees are not only performing their duties but are also actively contributing to the strategic vision of the organization.

Ivancevich (2010) asserts that organizational performance is directly related to employee commitment levels. Committed employees exceed management expectations (Bragg, 2002) and drive increased output and sustainable competitive advantages (Whitener, 2001). Commitment to work is the level of enthusiasm an employee has towards their tasks and their sense of responsibility towards organizational goals. True commitment involves sacrifice and steadfastness, as breaking it can damage one's integrity and reputation (Dorenbosch & Veldhoven, 2006). Committed employees are essential for maintaining a competitive edge in the market, as their consistent performance and loyalty help build a strong organizational reputation. In view of the foregoing, this study investigates the relationship between employee commitment and organizational performance, focusing on selected road transport companies in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. The findings aim to provide insights into how enhancing employee commitment can lead to improved organizational outcomes, offering practical recommendations for businesses in similar contexts.

Statement of the Problem

The performance of organizations, especially in the competitive and dynamic business environment, is critically influenced by the commitment of their employees. Employee commitment encompasses various dimensions such as engagement, dedication, and loyalty, all of which play pivotal roles in driving organizational success. However, many organizations, particularly in the road transport sector in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria, struggle to cultivate and sustain high levels of employee commitment. This challenge has significant implications for their overall performance, growth, productivity, and long-term success.

Despite the crucial role of employee commitment, there is limited empirical evidence on its specific impact on the performance of road transport operators in Owerri. This gap in knowledge raises several pertinent questions: What is the relationship between employees' engagement and the organizational growth of road transport operators in Owerri? How does employees' dedication to work influence productivity in this sector? To what extent does employees' loyalty affect the success of road transport operations in Owerri? These questions underscore the need for a comprehensive investigation into the level of employee commitment and its impact on organizational performance within the context of road transport companies in Owerri.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the level of employee commitment and its impact on the organizational performance of selected transport companies in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Determine the relationship between employees' engagement and organizational growth of road transport operators in Owerri.
2. Find out the impact of employees' dedication to work on productivity among road transport operators in Owerri.
3. Examine the effects of employees' loyalty on the success of road transport operations in Owerri.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between employees' engagement and the organizational growth of road transport operators in Owerri, Imo State.

- H₀₂:** Employees' dedication to work has no significant impact on the productivity of road transport operators in Owerri, Imo State.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant effect of employees' loyalty on the success of road transport operations in Owerri, Imo State.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Framework

In recent years, employee commitment has garnered significant attention in Human Resources literature as a crucial predictor of employee loyalty and organizational performance (Iles, 1990). As globalization intensifies competition, the pressure on organizations to perform has increased, leading to a diminished emphasis on employer commitment towards employees. The concept of lifetime employment has become outdated, with underperforming organizational units facing reorganization and job cuts, while underperforming employees are more likely to be dismissed (Meyer, Vandenberghe, & Becker, 2004). This shift, combined with heightened individualism, has made employee commitment less of a given. Consequently, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging positive behavior among employees has become essential for organizational success (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

Employee commitment is defined as the level of enthusiasm an employee has towards their tasks and their sense of responsibility towards the goals, mission, and vision of the organization (Adi, 2019). According to Coetzee (2005), quoting O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), employee commitment reflects the psychological attachment felt by individuals towards their organization, indicating the degree to which they internalize or adopt the organization's characteristics or perspectives. Committed employees typically feel a connection with their organization, understand its goals, and fit in well, resulting in higher productivity, determination, and proactive support (Wainwright, 2019). Such employees are less likely to call in sick or leave the organization, thereby contributing significantly to organizational success.

Employee engagement, closely related to commitment, refers to the sense of energetic and effective connection employees have with their work activities (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Engaged employees exhibit vigor, dedication, and absorption in their roles, which positively influences their performance (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). Studies have shown that engaged employees perform better than those who are not engaged (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). For instance, in the UK National Health Service (NHS), better employee engagement has been associated with improved patient outcomes, reduced staff turnover, and decreased sickness absence (West & Dawson, 2011). Furthermore, engaged employees have lower intentions to leave their jobs and higher job satisfaction, making engagement a strong predictor of positive employee and organizational outcomes (Halbesleben, 2010; Saks, 2006).

Dedication is another crucial aspect of employee commitment, involving a strong involvement in one's work and experiencing a sense of importance, passion, and challenge (Gubman, 2004). Dedicated employees understand and support organizational values, protect the corporate image, and facilitate value alignment and organizational commitment (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Dedication encompasses feelings of pride, hope, inspiration, and challenge, making it broader than job involvement, which focuses more on the psychological relevance of the job in the worker's life (Mauno & Ruokolainen, 2007). Employers can foster dedication by showing genuine interest and care for their employees, creating an environment that encourages commitment and proactive behavior (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014).

Employee loyalty is also integral to organizational performance. Loyalty, defined as a person's devotion or sentiment of attachment to an organization, plays a vital role in enhancing organizational performance (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998; Sachin, Aayush, & Seema, 2017). Loyal employees, who resist opportunistic behavior and exhibit a strong sense of belonging, contribute significantly to organizational longevity and

performance (Dutot, 2004; Peretti & Igalens, 2015). Studies have shown that loyal employees are more capable and have a direct impact on delivering higher levels of service quality, indirectly boosting company performance (Yee, Yeung, & Cheng, 2008; Chi & Gursoy, 2009). Thus, fostering employee loyalty through a supportive and engaging work environment can lead to sustained organizational success and competitive advantage (Ali et al., 2010).

Empirical Review

Mills (2019) carried out a research to investigate the relationship between employee dedication and performance of marine transport operators in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Data for the study was generated from a 205 sample size out of a 420 population size derived from 60 marine transport outfits operating within the 7 marine terminals in Port Harcourt. However, in relation to data analysis, the Pearson's Product-moment Correlation Coefficient as supported by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21) was used. Analysis of all the data gathered from the respondents proved that employee dedication positively and significantly relates with all measures of performance. In view of these findings the study concluded that employee dedication is an indispensable aspect of engagement behavior necessary for improved and sustained performance of marine transport operators. The study recommended that employees should be allowed to contribute to issues that concern their job, effective reward scheme should be put in place in order to continuously attract and retain employees with such behavioural traits.

Zafar (2015) carried out a study on the impact of employee commitment on organizational development. The population of study comprised of middle level managers of all telecommunication companies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. Primary data was collected from 370 managers. Simple random sampling method was used for the selection of respondents. Questionnaire was administered to collect Primary data. Organizational development and employee commitment were taken as dependent and independent variables respectively. Analysis of data was carried out by applying SPSS 20. Correlation and regression analysis tests were carried out to establish link between employee commitment and organizational development, and also to find out the predictor of organizational development. The study revealed a high degree of correlation between employee commitment and organizational development. Regression analysis confirmed that employee commitment is predictor of organizational development. The study concluded that enhancing of employee commitment is vital for effective functioning of an organization, and to make the organization grow and expand at a faster pace. The study recommended that Organizations should prepare a comprehensive and integrated system of performance management for building the employee commitment. Training and development programmes should be designed in such way that they enable employees to gain knowledge and skill for present job and for the next higher job as well. The study also recommended that a fair and transparent reward system should be developed and implemented to build trust and loyalty among employees and management

Theoretical Framework

Equity Theory (Adams, John Stacey 1963)

Equity theory focuses on determining whether the distribution of resources is fair to both relational partners. Equity is measured by comparing the ratio of contributions (or costs) and benefits (or rewards) for each person. Considered one of the justice theories, equity theory was first developed in the 1960s by J. Stacy Adams, a workplace and behavioural psychologist, who asserted that employees seek to maintain equity between the inputs that they bring to a job and the outcomes that they receive from it against the perceived inputs and outcomes of others (Adams, 1963). According to Equity Theory, in order to maximize individuals' rewards, organizations tend to create systems where resources can be fairly divided amongst members of a group. Inequalities in relationships will cause those within it to be unhappy to a degree proportional to the amount of inequality. The belief is that people value fair treatment which causes them to be motivated to keep the fairness maintained within the relationships of their co-workers and the organization. The structure of equity in the workplace is based on the ratio of inputs to outcomes. Inputs are the contributions made by the employee for the organization.

This theory is also relevant to the study because the employees of the selected transport firms in Owerri tend to work very hard, get highly committed to the course of their organizations and are highly dedicated when they are fairly treated by their organizations, better remunerated in proportion to the efforts expended by them in the achievement of corporate set goals.

Methodology

The research work adopted a survey research design. The population of the study is three hundred and sixteen road transport operators (316), drawn from eleven transport firms in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamene formula. A total of one hundred and seventy seven (177) respondents were determined as the sample size. Five-point Likert Scaled questionnaire was drafted which contained all the relevant questions. Copies of the structured questionnaire was distributed to the respondents by the researcher using the non probability sampling techniques (quota and convenience methods) to get the required information from the respondents. Information got from the respondents was analyzed using the tabular and percentage methods (See Appendix). The hypotheses stated were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, (SPSS version 20).

Results and Discussion of Findings

H01: Employees’ engagements have no significant impact on the organizational growth of road transport operators in Owerri, Imo State.

		Employees_ Engagement	Organizational_ Growth
Employees_ Engagement	Pearson Correlation		.892*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.042
Organizational_ Growth	Pearson Correlation	.892*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042	

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

Source: Field Survey, 2020

NB: See appendix one for proof of data used in testing hypothesis one

Table 1 presents the correlation analysis between Employees’ engagements and organizational growth of some selected road transport operators in Owerri, Imo State. The result shows that the correlation value from the SPSS output is -0.892 which is greater than the 0.042 level of significance; we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that employees’ engagements have significant relationship with the organizational growth of some selected transport companies in Owerri, Imo State.

Ho2: Employees’ dedication to work has no significant relationship with organizational productivity of road transport operators in Owerri, Imo State

Correlations

		Employees_ Dedication	Organizational_ Productivity
Employees_ Dedication	Pearson Correlation		-.965**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008
Organizational_ Productivity	Pearson Correlation	-.965**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	

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

Source: Field Survey, 2020

NB: See appendix two for proof of data used in testing hypothesis two

Table 2 presents the correlation analysis between Employees’ dedications to work and the organizational productivity of some selected road transport operators in Owerri, Imo State. The result shows that the correlation value from the SPSS output is -0.965 which is greater than the 0.08 level of significance; we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that employees’ dedications to work has significant relationship with organizational productivity of some selected transport companies in Owerri, Imo State.

Ho3: Employees’ loyalty has no significant relationship with the organizational success of road transport operators in Owerri, Imo State.

Correlations

		Employees_ Loyalty	Organizational_ Success
Employees_ Loyalty	Pearson Correlation		-.843
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.073
Organizational_ Success	Pearson Correlation	-.843	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.073	

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

Source: Field Survey, 2020

NB: See appendix three for proof of data used in testing hypothesis three

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis between Employees’ loyalty and organizational success of some selected road transport operators in Owerri, Imo State. The result shows that the correlation value from the SPSS output is -0.843 which is greater than the 0.073 level of significance; we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that employees’ loyalty has significant relationship with the organizational success of some selected transport companies in Owerri, Imo State.

Discussion of Findings

From the data collected and analyzed on the research questions and tested hypotheses, the following findings were made.

1. It was found that a significant relationship exists between employees’ engagements and the organizational

growth of the selected transport companies in Owerri, Imo State.

2. There is a high significant relationship between employees' dedications to work and the organizational productivity of the selected transport companies in Owerri, Imo State.
3. The findings furthermore revealed that a significant relationship exists between employees' loyalty and the organizational success of the selected transport companies in Owerri, Imo State.

Conclusion

This study concludes that a significant relationship exists between employees' engagements and the organizational growth of some selected transport companies in Owerri, Imo State. This implies that if employees are properly engaged, they will be highly committed to the course of the organization and organizations performance will be enhanced. This study also concludes that a significant relationship exists between employees' dedications to work and the organizational productivity of the selected transport companies in Owerri, Imo State. It concludes that a significant relationship exists between employees' loyalty and the organizational success of the selected transport companies in Owerri, Imo State.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the research findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Organizations especially those in the transport sector should embrace the various training and development programmes that will enable employees get fully engaged and improve their skills to provide better goods and services for organizational growth. To tackle the problems of organizations under-performance as a result of employees not being committed to the course of the organization especially those organizations in the transport sector, concerted efforts should be made to ensure that employees are fully involved and actively participate in those things that affect the work that they do for the organization.
- ii. Organizations should ensure that conducive working atmosphere or environment that encourages total employee dedication is provided to the employees which will ensure that organizational productivity level is optimized.
- iii. Organizations should ensure that their reward systems are commensurate to efforts expended by the employees in the organization. This guarantees employees total loyalty for organizational success.

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Appendix

Appendix One Table

Employees' engagement and Organizational Growth Dimension	5 SA	4 A	3 NI	2 D	1 SD	MEAN	STA DEV
Employees' engagement has impact the business growth of road transport firms	345	288	15	38	10	3.997	0.834
Employees' training has significantly increased the market shares of road transport firms.	340	288	0	40	15	3.903	0.975
Employees operational efficiency has significantly enhanced the revenue generation of transport firms	300	280	0	40	25	3.686	0.807
Employees operational efficiency has significantly enhanced the level or patronage enjoyed by transport firms in Nigeria.	340	248	0	40	25	3.731	0.467
Employees' development has enhanced customers' satisfaction.	340	288	0	40	15	3.903	1.159
Thorough employees' orientation improves organizations' service delivery	350	300	0	40	15	4.029	0.520

Appendix Two Table

Employees' dedication and Organizational Productivity Dimension	5 SA	4 A	3 NI	2 D	1 SD	MEAN	STA DEV
Employees' dedication has significantly reduced the rate of road accidents on the high way.	340	314	0	40	9	4.017	0.500
Employees punctuality has significantly reduced the operational costs of road transport firms	350	320	50	20	5	4.143	0.085
Employees' carefulness has significantly reduced the rate of vehicle breakdown of road transport firms	345	304	15	20	15	3.994	0.301
Employees' dedication has significantly assisted road transport firms in meeting their customers' requirements.	360	316	42	22	5	4.257	0.645
Employees not being truant in discharging their assigned tasks has resulted to optimal satisfaction of customers	340	288	60	20	5	4.074	0.502
Employees being regular at their duty posts enhances organizations' public image.	350	272	21	28	16	3.926	0.493
Employees being committed to the course of the organization guarantees organizational longevity.	350	272	21	28	16	3.926	0.493

Appendix Three Table

Employees' Loyalty and Organizational Success Dimension	5 SA	4 A	3 NI	2 D	1 SD	MEAN	STA DEV
Employees' loyalty has impact on the corporate success of road transport firms in Nigeria.	325	300	21	28	14	3.931	1.361
Obedience to transport rules ensures organizational success.	350	288	18	40	7	4.017	0.834
Employees' total adhering to organizational policies enhances the public image of road transport firms.	350	288	60	12	7	4.097	0.975
Employees' loyalty has enhanced the public goodwill of road transport firms.	340	280	33	40	6	3.994	0.807
Employees' loyalty has significantly improved the return of investments of road transport firms.	300	320	0	42	14	3.863	0.467
Employees' loyalty has significantly improved customers' retention of road transport firms.	325	314	6	32	14	3.949	1.159
Employees' being honest with their customers improves customers' level of patronage.	335	304	0	36	14	3.937	0.520
Employees' loyalty has assisted road transport firms to acquire additional market shares	330	308	30	16	14	3.989	0.500