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MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between conscientiousness and employee commitment in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary source of data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population for the study was 400 employees of six (6) selected manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt. A sample size of 200 was determined using Taro Yamen's formula. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 23.0). The result showed that there is a significant relationship between conscientiousness and employee commitment in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study therefore recommends that management of manufacturing companies in the process of recruiting, employers should look out for and give preference to people with conscientious traits, because, they do not just carry out their tasks well, but they also perform them well, reduce turnover and are committed to the goals of the organisation.

Keywords: *Conscientiousness, Employee commitment, Affective commitment, Continuance commitment.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

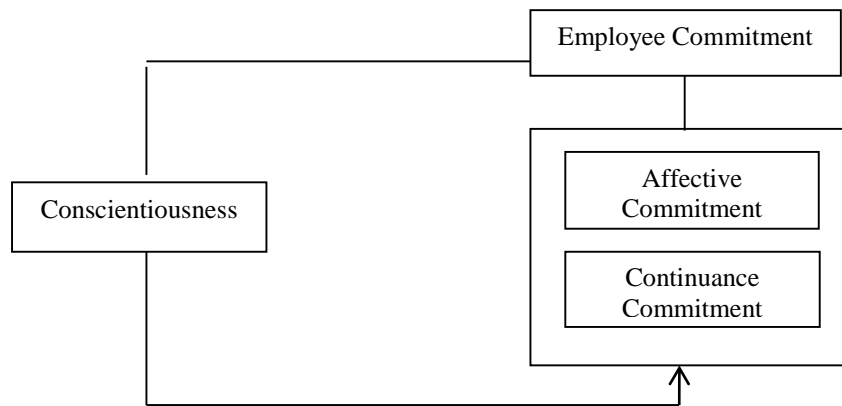
The twenty-first century managers are faced with several challenges as a result of the instability in the business environment and one of such is employee retention; this has a direct bearing on intention to stay. The major reasons why employees' quit their jobs are inadequate monetary or non-monetary motivation, inadequate support from their senior colleague, unconducive work environment, lack of training and development, absent of rewards for job well done, lack of leadership style, culture of the organisation, climate of the organisation, wrongful job design, inadequate compensation plans, non-availability of work life balance (Johanim, Tan, Zurina, Khulida & Mohamad, 2012). In the past, employers of labour have lamented that employees perform their work efficiently when they are newly employed but with time, their efficiency and productively decreases. The employees have attributed decrease in efficiency and productivity to the fact that employers do not provide adequate incentives and motivation to enable them put in their best. The wellbeing of workers who kept their employment can be negatively affected by job insecurity (Sander & Scherer, 2009). Many individuals feel under pressure to work longer hours to keep their job (Wayman, 2010), and to meet their family expenses (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). This calls for conscientiousness in employees.

Conscientiousness refers to a personality trait of being obedient, dutiful and self-disciplined. At the workplace, it may refer to an employee who is efficient and diligent. A person is said to be conscientious when he is efficient and organized. According to Redman & Snape (2005), conscientiousness is a discretionary behaviour that goes beyond the basic requirements of the job in terms of obeying work rules, attendance and job performance. This is contrary to a person who is disorderly and irrational or who pretends to be dutiful when he is under supervision. Conscientiousness may be an important predictor of workplace behaviours because it provides the organization and direction that are necessary to produce targeted behaviours (Gore, Kiefner & Combs, 2012). Conscientious persons are likely to be thorough and articulate. More conscientious employees will stay informed with up-to-date knowledge about products or services offered (DeYoung, Quilty & Peterson, 2007). They are mostly conformists, compulsive and goal-oriented in their behaviour. On the other hand, individuals who are low on conscientiousness find it difficult to motivate themselves to accomplish challenging tasks, even when there are benefits or rewards. Conscientiousness accounts for unique variance in citizenship behaviour targeted toward the organization (Hirsh, Deyoung, Xu & Peterson, 2010).

In Nigeria for instance, firms in the manufacturing sector is faced with increased production cost, upsurge in energy cost, deficient and inadequate public infrastructure, and increased cost of imports, especially with the fall of the value of naira (Ojo & Ololade, 2014). Another factor facing the manufacturing companies is increased turnover of skilled employees (Umoh, Amah & Wokocha, 2014). Hence the issue on how to foster employees committed to the organisation has become challenging to most organisations. This study examines the relationship between relationship between conscientiousness and employee commitment in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

Furthermore, this study will also be guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between conscientiousness and affective commitment of workers in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between conscientiousness and affective commitment of workers in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State?



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the relationship conscientiousness and employee commitment**

**Source: Author's Desk Research, 2019**

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Conscientiousness

Conscientiousness refers to a personality trait of being obedient, dutiful and self-disciplined. At the workplace, it may refer to an employee who is efficient and diligent. A person is said to be conscientious when he is efficient and organized. According to Redman and Snape (2005), Conscientiousness is a discretionary behaviour that goes beyond the basic requirements of the job in terms of obeying work rules, attendance and job performance. This is contrary to a person who is disorderly and irrational or who pretends to be dutiful when he is under supervision. Conscientiousness may be an important predictor of workplace behaviours because it provides the organization and direction that are necessary to produce targeted behaviours (Gore *et al*, 2012). Conscientious persons are likely to be thorough and articulate. More conscientious employees will stay informed with up-to-date knowledge about products or services offered (DeYoung, Quilty & Peterson, 2007).). They are mostly conformists, compulsive and goal-oriented in their behaviour. On the other hand, individuals who are low on conscientiousness find it difficult to motivate themselves to accomplish challenging tasks, even when there are benefits or rewards. Conscientiousness accounts for unique variance in citizenship behaviour targeted toward the organization (Hirsh, Deyoung, Xu & Peterson, 2010). They are strongly associated

with procrastination, counterproductive work behaviours like absenteeism, bullying and substance abuse. Beyond the workplace, conscientiousness has direct influence on anti- social behaviours affecting relationships. Conscientious persons make effort to avoid conditions that may result in divorce, spousal abuse intoxication and disagreements (Higgins, Peterson, Lee & Phil, 2007).

A large body of work has contributed to our understanding of this important aspect of personality, but there are multiple conceptual and methodological issues that complicate our understanding of conscientiousness. Conscientiousness is a spectrum of constructs that describe individual differences in the propensity to be self-controlled, responsible to others, hardworking, orderly, and rule abiding. The importance of conscientiousness to organization appears indisputable. Conscientiousness predicts most of the major preventative and risky behaviours for both physical health and mortality. Conscientiousness predicts facts in organizational citizenship behaviour (Morrison & Phelps, 1999).

## **2.2 Employee Commitment**

In recent time, several scholarly research works have been conducted in the area of employee and organization commitment. Commitment is a difficult concept to define (Meyer & Allen 1991; Meyer & Hercovitch, 2001). They defined commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target. Meyer & Maltin (2010) are of the opinion that the binding force can be experienced in different ways (i.e. can be accompanied by different mindsets), including an affective attachment and involvement with the target and an awareness of the cost associated with discontinuing involvement with the target and that in its pure form, these mindset are referred to as affective commitment (AC), normative commitment (NC) and continuance commitment (CC) respectively.

According to Akintayo (2010) employee commitment can be defined as the degree to which the employee feels devoted to their organization. In the view of Ongori (2007), employee commitment is described as an effective response to the whole organization and the degree of attachment or loyalty employee feels towards the organization. In the same vein, Zheng ,Sharan and Wei (2010) saw employee commitment as simply employee attitude to organization. Therefore, employee loyalty to management is shown in how committed they are to their job in the organization. It shows identification with involvement in the day to day activities of the organization and management of organization should be concern with determining the level of commitment displayed by managers and would-be managers at all times. According to Meyer and Allen (1991) employee commitment is multi-dimensional in nature, encompassing workers loyalty, their willingness to exert more effort on behalf of the organization, adherence to organizational values, and desire to remain in the organization.

Shahid and Azhar (2013) argued that employee commitment has been an important factor to determine the success of an organization and that employee commitment to an organization has acquired increasing demand as it aids the organization to retain more staff thereby increase in achievement, productivity and effectiveness. In addition, that the three top drivers to employee commitment are fulfillment, fairness and care and concern for employees. According to Beheshtifar and Herat (2013) employee commitment is also seen as the degree to which an

employee identifies with the organization and wants to continue actively participating in it. Bratton & Gold (2007) and Lee and Chen (2013) said employee commitment is relative to the worker's attachment to participation in the activities of the organizations in which they are employed. Lee & Chen (2013) emphasized that employee commitment is significant since it determines whether employees are likely to leave their jobs or improve their performance.

### **2.3 Measures of Employee Commitment**

The following are the measures of workers commitment adopted in this study, they are: normative, affective and continuance commitment respectively (Mayer & Allen, 1991). Although the three forms tend to bind workers to the organization, and therefore relate to turnover, their relations with other types of work behaviour can be different (Meyer, Stanley Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). These forms of commitments as identified by Meyer & Allen (1991) constitute the measures of employee commitment in this study.

#### **2.3.1 Affective Commitment (AC)**

According to Meyer and Allen (1991) affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to identification with, and involvement in the organization based on positive feelings, or emotions, toward the organization. The antecedent for affective commitment include perceived job characteristic where there is task autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety and supervisory feedback, organizational dependability that mean extent to which employees feel the organization can be counted on to look after their interest, and perceived participatory management that they can influence decisions on the work environment and other uses of concern to them (Madi, Hamilton, Squirrell, Mioulet, Evans, Lee & King, 2012). They further asserted that the use of these antecedents is consistent with the findings by Rowden (2002) that these factors all create rewarding situations, intrinsically conducive to development of affective commitment.

Also, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) argued that the primary basis for the development of affective commitment are personal involvement, identification with the relevant target, and value congruence (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). As a result of the above view of Meyer & Herscovitch (2001), which states that when there is a high level of affective commitment, employees will be willing to remain in that organization, otherwise the reverse will be displayed. It has also been seen in the view of Bal, Sullivan & Harper (2014) that affective commitment reflects an emotional attachment and involvement in the organization. But earlier, Allen and Meyer (1991) defined affective component as an emotional attachment to the organization via identification, involvement and enjoyed membership. It has also been said that affective commitment shows commitment that depends on emotional ties the employee develops with the organization through work experiences that are positioned. The 'work experience relates to the boss-driven development as a dimension in management development.

#### **2.3.2 Continuance Commitment (CC)**

Bal, Sullivan and Harper (2014) opined that continuance commitment is based on the perceived costs associated with discontinuing employment work with the organization. Kanter (1968) referred to continuance commitment as a cognitive orientation where costs are considered when

leaving or remaining with the organization. Continuance commitment is seen as the commitment that is based on the cost that the employee is associated with when leaving the organization (due to high cost of leaving). And the potential antecedents of continuance include age, tenure, career satisfaction and intent to leave. Age and tenure can be seen as adopted predictors of continuance commitment, as a result of their roles as substitute measures of investment in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). In the view of Madi, Hamilton, Squirrell, Mioulet, Evans, Lee & King (2012), tenure indicates non-transferable investments that means close working relationship with co-workers, retirement investments, career investments and skills peculiar to the particular organization while age can be negatively related to the number of available job opportunities. Career satisfaction was said to provide a more direct measure of career related investments which could be at risk if the individual leaves the organization. They went further to assert that whatever employees perceive to as sunk costs, resulting from leaving the organization, are antecedents of continuance commitment.

Also, Bal *et al*, (2014) further opined that continuance commitment is based on the perceived costs associated with discontinuing employment with the organization. It is imperative to assert that while employees with strong affective commitment will continue employment with the organization because they want to, those with strong continuance commitment remain because they need to; and those with strong normative commitment because they feel they ought to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1991). In the same vein continuance commitment is said to relates to such terms of employment as job contract, which may make leaving the current job very costly and troublesome (Mullins, 2001). Continuance commitment is further developed as the result of accumulated investments, or side-bets that would be lost if the individual discontinued a course of action, and as a result of lack of alternative to the present course (Powell & Meyer, 2004).

#### **2.4.1 Conscientiousness and Affective Commitment**

According to Hackney (2012), conscientiousness could be associated affective commitment through a success-driven initiative which is usually rewarded. Kumar and Bakhshi (2010) used a sample size of 187 medical school physicians to examine the connection between the five-factor model and organisational commitment. The stepwise regression analysis was employed for the three employee commitment dimensions in other to test the hypothesis. The outcome of the analysis showed that affective commitment was positively predicted by conscientiousness. Erdhim, Wang and Zickar (2006) and Darbanyan, Samavatyan, Oreyzi & Mousavirad (2014) conclude that conscientiousness and affective commitment are positively linked. Conscientious individuals have an interpersonal bond with the organisation, not just for financial benefits, but for growth and loyalty, which was positively linked to affective commitment (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Organ and Lingl (1995) maintained that there should be no connection between affective commitment and conscientiousness because it is connected with a “generalised work-involvement tendency” but not an “organisational involvement tendency”. Research has shown that people can become committed to various areas in the workplace, which does not have to correspond with one another (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005).

From the foregoing point of view, the study hereby hypothesized thus:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and affective commitment in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt.

#### **2.4.2 Conscientiousness and Continuance Commitment**

Erdhim, Wang, & Zickar (2006) noted that conscientiousness is positively connected with affective and continuance commitment. Organ and Lingi (1995) also maintained that conscientiousness was in accordance with job satisfaction owing to its representation of a “general work involvement tendency” providing increased opportunity for employees to gain formal and informal work rewards. Therefore, the employee has enhanced level of continuance commitment owing to the increased cost of leaving the organisation.

Discoveries on the association between conscientiousness and continuance commitment are not consistent among researchers (Celik & Oral, 2016). Organ and Lingl (1995) and Erdheim *et al.*, (2006) observed through their works that conscientiousness positively correlated continuance commitment. They observed that conscientious employees with “greater job involvement tendency” receive good rewards and would resort to be continually committed to the organisation after taking into cognizance the costs of leaving will probably acquire fulfilling work prizes and in view of the plausible expenses of leaving the present association it was sensible to trust that they ought to have more noteworthy continuance commitment levels. However Leung and Leung (2010) suggested that such “greater job involvement tendency” of conscientious workers in construction industry kept them far from continuance commitment.

From the foregoing point of view, the study hereby hypothesized thus:

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and continuance commitment in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary source of data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population for the study was 400 employees of six (6) selected manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt. A sample size of 200 was determined using Taro Yamen’s formula. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 23.0).

### **4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Bivariate Analysis**

Secondary data analysis was carried out using the Spearman’s rank correlation at a 95% confidence interval. The level of significance 0.05 is adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ( $p > 0.05$ ) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ( $p < 0.05$ ).



**Table 1 Correlation for Conscientiousness and measures of employee commitment**

			Conscientiousness	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment
Spearman's rho	Conscientiousness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.744**	.830**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	175	175	175
	Affective Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.744**	1.000	.896**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	175	333	175
	Continuance Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.830**	.896**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	175	175	175

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

*Source: SPSS output, version 23.0*

**H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and affective commitment in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt.**

From the result in the table 1, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a significant relationship between conscientiousness and affective commitment. The *correlation* coefficient of 0.744 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is significant at  $p < 0.000 < 0.01$ . The correlation coefficient represents a moderate correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between conscientiousness and affective commitment in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt.

**H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and continuance commitment in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt.**

From the result in the table 1, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a significant relationship between conscientiousness and affective commitment. The *correlation* coefficient of 0.830 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is significant at  $p < 0.000 < 0.01$ . The correlation coefficient represents a moderate correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between conscientiousness and continuance commitment in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt.

## 5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed a significant relationship between relationship conscientiousness and employee commitment in manufacturing companies in Port Harcourt. This is in-line with Organ & Lingl (1995), Erdheim *et al.* (2006) and Kumar and Bakhshi (2010) that conscientious employees with “greater job involvement tendency” receive good rewards and would resort to be continually committed to the organisation after taking into cognisance the costs of leaving will probably acquire fulfilling work prizes and in view of the plausible expenses of leaving the present association it was sensible to trust that they ought to have more noteworthy levels of continuance commitment. Kumar and Bakhshi (2010) and Darbanyan *et al.*, (2014) conclude that conscientiousness and affective commitment are positively related. This work negates the conclusion of Kumar and Bakhshi (2010) and Darbanyan *et al.* (2014) it shows a negative correlation between conscientiousness and affective commitment.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conscientious individuals who are responsible to others and self-controlled might be emotionally attached to the organisation if they are willing to pursue the goals of the organisation. They would want to be continually committed to an organisationally after carefully considering the possible costs of leaving it. Employees who conscientious traits would be committed to the organisation if the shared beliefs and norms of the organisation conform to their values.

The study therefore recommends that in the process of recruiting, employers should look out for and give preference to people with conscientious traits, because, they do not just carry out their tasks well, but they also perform them well, reduce turnover and are committed to the goals of the organisation.

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