# EMPLOYEES' AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN RIVERS STATE

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated affective commitment and organizational growth of hotels in Rivers State. The study decomposed organizational growth into market share, efficiency and service quality. The study employed a descriptive research design and used a questionnaire to collect primary data. The study sampled 172 management level staff of hotels in Port Harcourt on a sample frame of one respondent per hotel. Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used to test the relationship between affective commitment and organizational growth. The study found that a positive and statistically significant relationship exists between employee commitment and organizational growth of hotels in Port Harcourt. The study thus concludes that growth of hotels in Port Harcourt, Rivers State relies on employees' affective commitment and recommends that management of hotels should consider employees' goals and values, care about their opinion and wellbeing and provide support for them when needed. The study also recommends that management of hotels should exhibit a high level of commitment to their employees based on the conviction that a high level of employees' commitment is not likely, if employees are concerned about losing their jobs.

***Keywords:*** Efficiency, employees' commitment, hospitality industry, market share, organizational growth, service quality

## INTRODUCTION

An organization is a voluntary association of productive assets, including human, physical, and capital resources. Organizational growth can be viewed as the efficiency with which a firm is able to meet its objectives in terms of market share, product quality, efficiency and profitability (Barney, 2001). Those providing the assets will only commit them to the organization so long as they are satisfied with the value they receive in exchange, relative to alternative uses of the assets. As a consequence, the essence of growth is the creation of value. So long as the value created by the use of the contributed assets is equal to or greater than the value expected by those contributing the assets, the assets will continue to be made available to the organization and the organization will continue to exist. Therefore, value creation, as defined by the resource provider, is the essential overall performance criteria for any organization. How that value is created is the essence of most empirical research in management.

Brannick *et al*. (2007) noted that when employees are not committed to an organization, they will route their commitment in other directions. Thus, it is important to know how to develop the right type and level of employee commitment to ensure that competent employees are retained. Employees who develop a high level of employee commitment tend to be highly satisfied and are fulfilled by their jobs. Most organizations have realized that the performance of their workers plays a vital role in determining their success (Zheng, 2010; Ajila & Awonusi, 2004). As such, it is important for employers and managers alike to know how to get the best of their workers. One of the determinants of workers' performance is believed to be employee commitment (Ali, 2010; Ajila & Awonusi, 2004). Akintayo (2010) and Tumwesigye (2010) noted that one of the reasons commitment has attracted research attention is that organizations depend on committed employees to create and maintain competitive advantage and achieve superior growth. Committed employees who are highly motivated to contribute their time and energy to the pursuit of organizational goals are increasingly acknowledged as an organization's most important assets (Hunjra, 2010).

Employees provide intellectual capital; and also generate social capital that facilitates organizational learning. This is however most likely when employees commit to the firm. It is therefore important for organization determine how employee commitment develops, and the factors that drive employee commitment. Literature identify several determinants of employee commitment, including participation in decision-making (Nwulu & Ateke, 2018, Wainaina *et al*., 2014), perceived organizational support (Ateke & Akani, 2018, Muhammad, 2014) leadership style (Lo, 2009), organizational fairness (Ponnu & Chuah, 2010); corporate social responsibility (Ali *et al*., 2010) etc. However, most past studies treated employee commitment as an outcome variable (see Nwulu & Ateke, 2018; Ateke & Akani, 2018; Muhammad, 2014; Wainaina *et al*., 2014); while others that have treated employee commitment as a treatment variable were mostly conducted in business environments other that in Nigerian business. Thus, this study opts to contribute to literature by examining employees' commitment and organizational growth in a hospitality industry in Rivers State.

This study is justified by the dynamic nature of hotel business. It is relatively common for employees to quit the system every year either voluntary or involuntary. Labour turnover is costly. It lowers productivity, kills morale, leads to loss of customers and this gets worse if it is not urgently addressed. The argument that employee commitment creates the assurance that employees share the same vision with management of the organization and is significantly related to satisfaction and increased output (Dockel, 2003) also gives impetus to this study which seeks to determine the relationship between employee commitment and organizational growth.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

This study is based on the human relation theory and expectancy theory. The human relation theory believes in the importance of recognizing human beings and their needs as paramount in achieving organizational commitment and high productivity. Human relations theory emphasize the fact that participation aid management in integrating workers with the organization. Both managers and employees can realize goal and attain stronger commitment and satisfaction. The theory asserts that, there are many rewards managers expect from participative management. These include conducive work environment, greater commitment, motivation, manageable workload, greater freedom to manage resources to reach objectives and greater job satisfaction (McGregor, 1960). According to Agba *et al*. (2010) the theory contends that participative decision making is a veritable management tool. Onuka (2012) asserts that human relations school also believes that effective communication facilitates employees' commitment and participation in decisions that affect them in the work place. This is because people are the main factor of productions and unless they have conducive work environment that facilitate commitment, the organization will die overtime. While the human relations school revolutionized management theory, they are also quite problematic. Wilson and Rosenfeild (2001) observed that major studies on human relations school consists small samples (6 in the relay study, 13 in the bank wiring study), so the results are definitely suspect from a scientific vantage point. Furthermore, some people would agree that Hawthorne effects were really the result of workers who were more afraid of unemployment, rather than communication relationship.

The second baseline theory of this study is expectancy theory. Expectancy theory is a contingency model, which states that there is no universal method of motivating people towards achieving organization objectives. This theory was propounded by Vroom (1964) in his study of "staff motivation and job satisfaction". The major tenet of the theory is that whether a person works hard will depend essentially on what they expects to get out of the effort they put into work. Ushie *et al*. (2010) observed that the basic tenet of the theory is that human behaviour in a given situation is a joint function of the degree to which that behaviour is instrumental in attaining an outcome and the subjective probability that the outcome will be forthcoming. Outcome may be positive such as good work environment, pay, security, manageable workload, trust etc. or negative such as harsh work environment, non-payment of salary, and threat of dismissal among others. The key to expectancy theory therefore, is the understanding of an individual's goal and the linkage between effort and performance; between rewards and individual goal satisfaction. Motivation of staff to work is closely affected by the amount of rewards that people derive from jobs, while their level of performance is closely affected by the basis for attainment of rewards. Individuals are satisfied with their jobs and are ready to put in their best for the attainment of organizational objectives to the extent that effective performance leads to the attainment of what they desire.

**Concept of Employee Commitment**

Employee commitment and productivity issues are emerging as critical workforce management challenges in today's business climate. This is more so, as employee loyalty concerns, corporate restructuring efforts and competition for key talent, becomes central to worker management. For many firms, surprise employee departures can have a significant effect on the execution of business plans and cause a decline in productivity. Kreisman (2005), classed employees into "those who are engaged (loyal and productive) those who are not engaged (just putting in time), and those who are actively disengaged (unhappy and spending their discontent), even in the best of time."

Employee commitment is conceived differently by different scholars. What is central to most conceptualizations is that employee commitment reduces employee turnover (Nwulu & Ateke, 2018). The cost of employee turnover thus underscores the importance of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 2001). Wei and Tai (2010, as cited in Nwulu & Ateke, 2018) posit that employee commitment describes the relationship employees have with their organizations. Evidence in literature suggests that employee commitment is a core condiment for creating competitive and profitable organisations, especially in the contemporary business-scape where the profitability and sustainability of firms derives from the skills and competences of its employees (Nwulu & Ateke, 2018; Ateke & Akani, 2018). Organizations benefit significantly from a committed workforce (Wainaina *et al*., 2014). Committed employees are retained; they perform effectively and work compatibly in teams. Employee commitment reduces withdrawal behavior, such as lateness, absenteeism and turnover (Louis, 2009). Committed employees are productive and are good organizational citizens (Mayer & Martin, 2010).

Monday *et al*. (2002) refers employee commitment to congruence between the goals of the individual and the organization whereby the individual identifies with and extends effort on behalf of the general goals of the organization. Meyer and Allen (2000) also state that employee commitment is a psychological state that characterizes employees' relationships with the organization and have implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization. Matheus and Zajac (2001) contend that commitment is the measure of the relative strength of an employee's identification with and involvement in an organization. It could be seen as identification and acceptance of organizational goals and values.

Literature on commitment show different types of commitment to an organization, as well as a wide variety of antecedent conditions that tend to influence levels of commitment. Reiling and Chatman suggested three different types of psychological bonds that provide foundation for commitment, namely, compliance, identification and internalization. Meyer and Allen (2004), distinguished between continuance, affective and normative of commitment, identified the three dimensions of exchange, affiliation and identification commitment. (Banjoko, 2006) indicates that employee commitment can be differentiated between calculative, continuance and affective commitment. Bragg (2002) believes that employee commitment is dependent on fairness, trust and concern for employees. Thus, employers that desire to build commitment must create an environment of fairness, trust, care and concern by acting consistently in ways that employees perceive as fair, trusting and caring.

**Concept of Organizational Growth**

Organizational growth became more prominent and switched to being a concept from the status of a construct (Henry, 2011). This concept is related to issues such as the ability of an organization to access and absorb resources and consequently achieve its aims (Federman, 2006). Cameron (2008) and Gigliotti (2007) pointed out that organizational effectiveness is the proficiency of the organization at having access to essential resources. However, McCann (2004) noted it as the criterion of the organization's successful fulfillment of their purposes through core strategies. Vinitwatanakhun's (2008) study illustrated that organizational effectiveness should focus on human resources and organizations and help individuals to achieve skills and self-esteem in order to control the new environment and find security and support. As Baker and Branch (2002) pointed out, the organizations, laboratories and universities that are involved in scientific researches suffer most, because they have to present effective management, behave more responsibly, and do jobs with limited resources in order to improve their effectiveness. Although willing to improve their effectiveness, the managers in these organizations first see themselves as scientists and then managers.

Organizational growth can be defined as the efficiency with which an association is able to meet its objectives (Balduck & Buelens, 2008). Organizational growth is the concept of how developed an organization is in achieving the outcomes the organization intends to produce. Growth is not spontaneous. It is a consequence of decisions: decisions to hire or to fire, decisions to increase output in response to demand, decisions to stimulate demand, and so forth. Relationships between specific decisions and ultimate expansion of the organization may be tenuous, but expansion necessarily depends upon some decisions and actions that follow them.

These decisions are, in turn, functions of goals pursued by members of the organization. Thus, organizational growth can take place only if increased size relates positively to achievement of the organization's goals or goals of individual members of the organization (McGuire, 1963).
This is not intended to suggest that organizations and their members make decisions that achieve desired outcomes. Organizational growth may work contrary to the interests of some, or even most, members of the organization. Growth may not be the best way to achieve goals it is intended to achieve. On occasion, growth may be a transient exploration of an organization's environment that, proving to be unrewarding, is subsequently abandoned. The point is simply that the growth of an organization is not a random event.

Increased organizational size may be a goal itself, in at least two senses. First, growth may be valued as a symbol of achievement. Growth is often difficult to accomplish because growing organizations must deal with intra-organizational stresses and overcome external forces. Society recognizes obstacles to growth and awards prestige and admiration to members of organizations that have expanded successfully, particularly those members who were instrumental in the expansions. These people also receive internal rewards in the form of feelings of success and pride in their achievement (Nourse, 1944). In this study, organizational growth is viewed through the lenses of market share, efficiency and service quality.

Market share is the quotient of a total market that a firm is able to capture and serve. Gunasekaran et al. (2005) suggests that market share assesses how well consumers patronize a given product. Market share is also used to denote the market position of a firm in relation to other firms in an industry; such that a larger market share means better organizational health (Ateke & Nwulu, 2017). Market share is shows how a firm is faring compared to competitors and also allow the firm to quantify the outcome of its strategies and tactical maneuvers. In addition, market share enables executives to monitor total market growth or decline, identify key trends in buyer behaviour and identify market potentials and opportunities (Ateke & Nwulu, 2017).

Efficiency relates to optimal utilization of resource and reduction of cost and waste (Nwokah, 2006). It is a metric used to measures the output of a system from each unit of input (Maheswari et al., 2006). Traditionally, efficiency as an aspect of the productivity discourse addresses attempts to minimize cost of operations and reduce wastes (Sodhi & Son, 2009). In the view of Weber (2002, as cited in Nwokah, 2006) by improving efficiency, costs of operations are controlled in order to cause an increase of return to shareholders. The concept of efficiency thus focuses on improving a system’s processes to run on less cost, minimize resource consumption, and reduce wastage, while providing consistent quality of services. It is not just about achieving goals but streamlining operations to deliver better products at better prices and to reduce unnecessary expenses (Vereecke & Muylle, 2006). Efficiency is paramount to the success of organizations. Through efficiency, processes are simplified; resources are freed for alternative used, while growth and profitability is achieved (Youn et al., 2013).

Service quality is conceived as customers’ assessment of the overall excellence of service they receive, based on a comprehensive evaluation of a particular service and the extent to which it meets their expectations and provides satisfaction (Al-Jazzazi & Sultan, 2017; Ghotbabadi et al., 2015). The ability of organizations to deliver quality service to customers is essential to success and survival (Nwulu & Nadube, 2022). This is because service quality enables commercial enterprises achieve increased profits through new customer acquisition and retention of current ones (Ateke & Amangala, 2021). Ghotbabadi et al. (2015) posit that service quality is essential to attracting, keeping, and expanding customers, as well as motivating and eliciting purchase or purchase intention. Service quality as a construct got its earliest conceptualizations based on the peculiar properties of service and comparison of actual service performance to set standards (Parasuraman et al., 1988, cited in Nwulu & Nadube, 2022). So, service quality is judged in relation to how well service deliveries meet customers' expectation or companies' promises (Grönroos, 1984, cited in Ateke & Amangala, 2021).

**Employee Commitment and Organizational Growth**

Employee commitment is identified as a factor that influences organizational growth (Chew, 2008). Personal factors include (performance goal orientation and) and contextual factors include (organizational learning culture and developmental feedback). Employee commitment is increased when goal orientation is increases. Supportive alliances in organizations, leadership, recruiting right persons for the job enhances employees' satisfaction (Baek-Kyoo et al., 2010). It is evident that supportive relationships enable employees to learn and help them in developing their goal (Ellen, 2011). All three dimensions of employee commitment have positive effect on organizational growth, but normative commitment has positive and significant relationship on employee's job performance (Negin & Memari, 2013). Research shows that employee commitment and organizational growth are connected. Career-focused employees might develop strong involvement with the firm and would probably increase their desire to remain in the company, if the firm is also paying attention to employees' needs like recognition, reward and career development (Andrea et al., 2011). Employee development activities also contribute to increased employee commitment.

Commitment increases when continuous learning opportunities were provided for employees. Therefore, when organizations commit to the development of employees; employees will be committed to the growth of the organization. Hence, employee commitment is reciprocal. This does not mean that employees work only for their success and for getting promotions. When they are engaged, they do really care for the organizations' they work in and use discretionary efforts to achieve the organizational goals (Kruse, 2012). Engagement and intention to stay within the organization are affected by relationships built at work and demonstrated behaviors. Employees should be given importance by their employers to make them engage in their work (Kular et al., 2008). It was found that when organizations provide better work conditions, employees become more engaged and commitment levels increases (Cho et al., 2006).

Research shows that organization that engaged their employees have better control over their success and failure (Heslin, 2003). Engagement along with other contributors like, behavior, attitudes and intentions of employees can increase organizational success (Andrew & Sufian, 2012). Besides the engagement factor, work family conflicts, organizational and family support can increase or decrease job satisfaction (Komarraju, 2006). Research shows that affective commitment of employees enhances organizational growth (Coetzee & Villiers, 2010). Understanding employees' needs, favorable work environment and providing required resources for the job can increase their level of engagement (Coetzee & Villiers, 2010). So, it may be argued that when employees are properly engaged by their firm through proper communication, recognition, and career development; they work to enhance the firm's growth.

Chen et al. (2009) studied the relationship between employee commitment and organizational growth and found that there was a positive relationship between the two variables. Also, Negin et al. (2006) explain that employees' continual, normative, and affective commitment influences job performance of Malik Bank employees. Similarly, Qaisar et al. (2002) demonstrate the influence of organizational commitment (continual, normative and affective) on employee's performance in the context of Pakistani police. Statistical results showed that continual, normative and affective commitment independently and jointly predicts employee's performance. Suliman and Lles (2008) investigated organizational commitment and employee performance in three industrial units and reports that all three dimensions of commitment have positive relationship with job performance. In view of the foregoing positions and reports of prior studied, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

$Ho_1$: There is no significant relationship between affective commitment and market share of hospitality industries in Rivers State.
$Ho_2$: There is no significant relationship between affective commitment and efficiency of hospitality industries in Rivers State.
$Ho_3$: There is no significant relationship between affective commitment and service quality of hospitality industries in Rivers State.

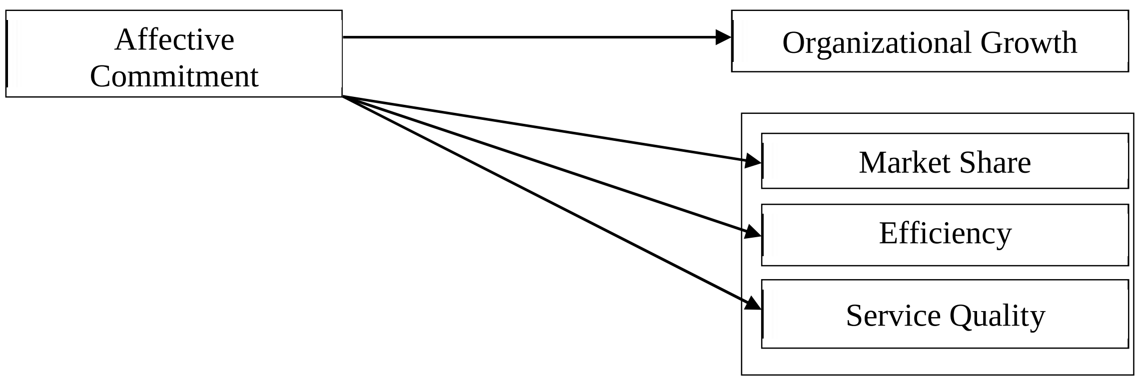


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework on employee commitment and organizational growth.

## METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study is to examine the relationship between affective commitment and organizational growth. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprises hotels in Rivers State. The study purposively selected 1 top management staff from a sample of 222 to serve as respondents. 171 responses were used in the final analyses, after data cleaning. A structured questionnaire served as instrument for primary data collection. The questionnaire was designed in 5-points Likert Scale format which allow respondents to significantly contribute their own opinion and also strictly align with the subject matter of the study. The data gathered from the field was analyzed using descriptive statistics, while the Spearman Rank Order Correlation was used to test the hypotheses. Spearman Rank Order Correlation is a non-parametric statistical tool used to obtain a measure of linear association between two variables. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was relied upon for all analyses. In testing hypotheses, the following rules were upheld in accepting or rejecting our alternate hypotheses: all coefficient values that indicate levels of significance (* or **) as calculated using SPSS were accepted and therefore our alternate hypotheses accept;

when no significance is indicated in the coefficient r value, we reject the alternate hypotheses. Our confidence interval was set at the 0.05 (two tailed) level of significance to test the statistical significance of the data in this study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1: Association between affective commitment and measures of organizational growth**

| | | | Affective commitment | Market share | Efficiency | Service Quality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Affective commitment | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .609** | .819** | .716** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | | N | 171 | 171 | 171 | 171 |
| | Market share | Correlation Coefficient | .609** | 1.000 | .408** | 556** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . | .000 | .000 |
| | | N | 171 | 171 | 171 | 171 |
| | Efficiency | Correlation Coefficient | .819** | .408** | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | . | .000 |
| | Service Quality | Correlation Coefficient | .716** | .507** | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | . | .000 |
| | | N | 171 | 171 | 171 | 171 |

**Source:** SPSS output of data analysis on affective commitment and organizational growth (2022)

Table 1 show that there is a positive relationship between affective commitment and market share of hotels in Port Harcourt. The correlation coefficient of 0.609 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is statistically significant at p 0.000<0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between affective commitment and market share of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 1 also shows a positive relationship between affective commitment and efficiency of hotels in Port Harcourt. The correlation coefficient of 0.819 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is statistically significant at p 0.000<0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between affective commitment and efficiency of hotels in Port Harcourt.

Furthermore, with a correlation coefficient of 0.716, Table 1 shows a positive relationship between affective commitment and service quality of hotels in Port Harcourt. The correlation coefficient confirms that a strong relationship exists between the variables; while the pv 0.000<0.05 shows that the relationship between affective commitment and service quality is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between affective commitment and service quality of hotels in Port Harcourt.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, this study concludes that affective commitment significantly relates to organizational growth of hotels in Port Harcourt and recommends as follows:

1. Management of hotels should consider employees' goals and values, care about their opinion and wellbeing and provide support when needed.

2. The hospitality organizations must exhibit a high level of commitment to employees. If employees are concerned about losing their jobs, there is very little likelihood of high level of commitment. If people are not given adequate resources, facilities and training they will not view the organization as being committed to them as well.

3. Management of hotels is advised to hire employees who are likely to become linked to the organization. Before they hire workers, they will have to look for compatibility between individuals' values and goals and the organization's values and goals. Value alignment and identification is central to every conceptualization of employee commitment

4. Management of hotels should promote employee career development this will enhance their commitment more to the organization

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