

WORK ENVIRONMENT AND OFFICE WORKERS' COMMITMENT IN OIL AND GAS FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE

Dr. I. G. Nwabali
Department of Office and Information Management
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This research investigated Work Environment and Office Workers' Commitment in Oil and Gas Firms in Rivers State. The population of the study was comprised of all the 241 employees in Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State. The study employed a census sampling. Reliability of the instrument was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and it yielded a coefficient of 0.86. Research questions and hypotheses were tested with mean and standard deviation. Findings of the study revealed among others that a positive correlation exists between physical work environment and workers commitment in oil and gas firms in Rivers State. The study recommended among others that Workers in oil and gas firms in Rivers State should be provided with the necessary facilities and equipment in order to boost their moral and increase their levels of commitment in the organization.

Keywords: Work Environment, Employee Commitment, Human Resource Policy.

INTRODUCTION

Extensive amount of literature is available on the effect of workplace environment and office workers' commitment (Oselan Leaman and Bordass, 2000, Clements-Croome, 2000) (as cited in Haynes n.d) also support this evidence, but then there is no universally accepted theoretical framework developed yet through which the influence of workplace environment on employees' performance could be observed and measured. Haynes (n.d) explained that previous researches have been conducted by establishing a link between physical components of workplace environment and office workers' commitment. Some of the literature also acknowledged the influence of social dimensions of workplace environment; i.e the behavioural components on workers' commitment. Work environment is a place that one works. It is a social and professional environment in which employees are supposed to interact with a number of people and have to work with coordination in one way or the other. Safe and healthy working conditions ensure good health, community of services, decreased by labour management relations, etc. A healthy employee registers a high performance. Employees are cheerful, confident and may prove an invaluable asset to the organization. It consists of safe physical and mental working situations and determining working hours. Employee commitment on the other hand is said to be the nature of the relationship that exists between an employee and the organization. Haynes (2008) described physical environment and behavioural environment. Haynes described the physical environment as consisting components that relate to employees ability to physically connect with their environment. While the behavioural environment consists of components that relate to how well the employees ability to physically connect with their environment. While the behavioural environment consists of components that relate to how well the employees connect with one another and the impact the work environment can have on the behaviour of individuals. Meyer and Herscovitch, (2001) viewed it as the psychological attachment felt by the organization thereby reducing the problem of employee turnover and as a mind-set that takes different forms and binds an individual to a course of action that is of importance to a particular target. Types of Organisational commitment include, affective commitment continuance commitment etc, Affective commitment relates to an emotional attachment; which is normally linked to a favourable working environment and relationships with other employees (Chung-Chen & Chin-Ten, 2013); organizational members who are committed to an organization because they view their personal

employment relationship as congruent to the goals and values of the organization (Black & Wilson, 2000).

Continuance commitment on the other hand relates to such terms of employment as job contracts, which may leave the current job very costly or troublesome, it is calculative in nature because of the individuals' perception or weighing of costs and risks associated with leaving the current organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Meyer and Allen (1991) also stated that employees whose primary link to the organisation is based on continuance commitment remain because they need to do so.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that most employees are not committed to their jobs. This may be due to poor work environment and other factors. In a study by Anita (2014), work environment was found to be significantly associated with office workers commitment. Conditions prevailing at the workplace have a greater impact on employees for them to realize their performance.

Springhett (2003) found that measures to improve work environment contributed to employee satisfaction and engagement. Despite several studies conducted on work environment and workers' commitment, there was none known to the researcher that was able to use the dimensions of work environment, such as physical environment, technological environment to measure the dimensions of office workers commitment such as affective commitment, continuance commitment in Rivers State.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

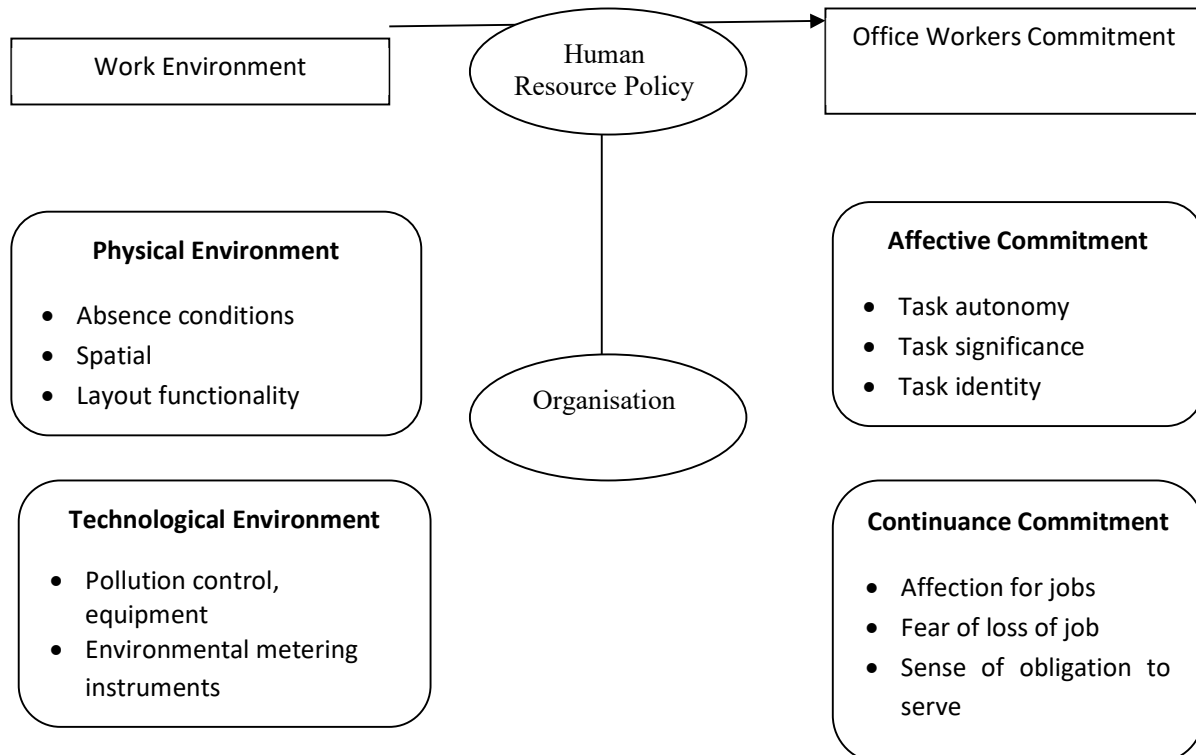


Fig. 1.1: Showing Conceptual Framework of Work Environment and Office Workers' Commitment

Source: Desk Research, 2022.

Purpose of the Study

The main aim of this study is to find out the influence of work environment on office workers commitment. Specifically, the study sought to find out the following;

1. The influence of physical environment on affective commitment of office workers in oil and gas firms in Rivers State.
2. The influence of technological environment on continuance commitment of office workers in oil and gas firms in Rivers State.
3. The moderating influence of human resource policies on work environment and office workers' commitment on office workers' commitment in oil and gas firms in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the study.

1. What is the influence of physical environment on affective commitment of office workers in oil and gas firms in Rivers State?
2. What is the influence of technological environment on continuance commitment of office workers in oil and gas firms in Rivers State?
3. What is the moderating influence of human resource policies on work environment and office workers commitment in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null (Ho) hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance were tested in the study.

1. There is no significant influence of physical environment on affective commitment of office workers in oil and gas firms in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant influence of technological environment on continuance commitment of office workers in oil and gas firms in Rivers State.
3. There is no moderating influence of human resource policies on work environment and office workers commitment in oil and gas firms in Rivers State.

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

This research is anchored on Human relations theory by Ellan Mayo in 1932. The theory holds that social work conditions at the workplace improves workers' productivity.

The theory has significant relevance to this work because it explains how work environment influences employees' performance. When organizations provide employees with good social environment where they are consulted and involved in decision making, they will improve their performance and productivity. Hence, organizations should not assume that employees are only motivated to higher productivity; but are also **motivated** when they are provided with good working conditions.

Concept of Work Environment

An attractive and supportive work environment can be described as an environment that attracts individuals into an organization, encourages them to remain in that organisation and enables them to perform effectively. The purpose of providing attractive work environment is to create incentives for recruitment and for remaining in the organisation. In addition, supportive work environment provides conditions that enable employees to perform effectively, making best use of their knowledge, skills, competencies and available resources in order to provide high-quality performance.

Dimensions of Work Environment

Physical Environment

The physical work environment consist of elements that relate to the office occupiers ability to physically connect with their office environment.

Scott, (2000) reported that working conditions are associated with employees job involvement and job satisfaction. In a study by Strong et al, (1999) it was observed that social, organisational and physical context serve as the impetus for tasks and activities and considerably influence workers performance. The influence of work environment has been exhaustively examined in the past decades. Kyko (2005) posited that there are two types of work environment namely, conducive work environment and toxic work environment. Conducive work environment gives pleasurable experiences to employees and enable them to actualize their abilities and behaviour. For instance, an irresponsible employee changing into a responsible one in a conducive work environment. Toxic environment according to Kyko brings about unpleasant experiences and at the same time, de-actualize employee behaviour. It reinforces low self-actualizing behaviours and it leads to the development of negative tracts of the employees' behaviour. However in a toxic environment, responsible and sensible employees can change into irrational and irresponsible employee as a survival strategy. (Kyko, 2005). One essential need of employees is that they want to learn more and enhance their skills. If a job is not enriching their skills, they may not be interested in that job. Therefore, it is important for the organizations to provide employees with regular training in order to develop their skills. Another important factor is to provide needed resources for work.

Technological Environment

There are quite a number of definitions of the technological environment. Oxford study Laboratory (n.d) explains that the technological environment includes inventions, charges in information and mobile technologies, innovations in internet and e-commerce etc. The technological environment is associated with the introduction of innovations in business, focus is mainly on digital and internet technologies, which significantly limit a full understanding of the technological factors affecting business. When studying the technological environment of business, we should go beyond innovative process and thoroughly understand the nature of the technology. From the economic point of view, technology is a way of transforming factors into products. It refers to the method of processing materials, changing their shapes and characteristics used in the production process.

Concept of Office Workers' Commitment

In today's business world of highly competitive environment, every organization is striving to maintain a stance so as to remain relevant in delivery of services to customers. Effective delivery of quality services to the consumers will not only make consumers to be loyal to the organization but will also facilitate costumers' retention thereby increasing sales and profitability. Organizations cannot achieve these goals without committed employees. Khan, (2013) opined that organizations can achieve their set objectives when competent and committed employees are engaged. Udu and Ameh (2010) asserted that organizational performance technically is the aggregate net performance of the individual employees in the organization, this is because the organization is a composition of employees under it. An organization does not achieve anything on its own except the cumulative achievements of employees that make up the organization.

Dimensions of Office Workers' Commitment

Affective Commitment

Researchers over the past 20 years have generally agreed that the construct of affective commitment can be described as the emotional attachment to an organization as manifested by an individual's identification with, and involvement in that organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mayer & Allen 1991; Mayer etal, 2002). Iqta and Yahya (2013) outlined some of the indicators of a committed employee which include but not limited to lack of interest in job elsewhere, willingness

and ability to make useful contributions, eagerness to work with less supervision, and not given to unnecessary excuses. The chances that employees will remain committed to the organization rely mainly on their level of productivity and the organization's commitment to support them. Sahid and Ahzar (2013) opined that motivated, committed and proficient people are extensively valuable because they can often make things work less.

Continuance Commitment

One of the dimensions of organizational commitment according to Meyer and Allen theory is continuance commitment, which is based on the theory of investments (Rafei & Navid, 2014). It is explained as commitment related with expenses that workers perceive are associated with abandoning the institution. This type of commitment is grounded on the number of investments (side-bets) individuals make in their current institutions and absence of job opportunities (Dixit & Bhati, 2012). Continuance commitment is grounded on the benefits the worker has made in an institution (Folorunso Adewale & Abodunde 2014). It is the ability of an employee to stay in the organization on account of the venture which incorporates warm association with other employees, benefits, individual funds and the period of time the work has been in the institution, involvement in communal activities, and additional rewards that make it costly for one to quit working for the organization (Adekola, 2012). According to Lew (2012), continuance commitment plays a crucial role in improving the performance of workers. Continuance commitment is associated with remaining or quitting an organization. If a worker realizes that the cost of leaving in organization is greater than the advantages of training within an organization, then the concerned employee will rather remain than quit the organization.

Concept of Human Resource Policy

The human resource policy and procedures are regarded as the backbone of any organization. These documents consist of all the details regarding the treatment, which needs to be given to the employees in the organization and make provision of assistance to the employees in acquiring an understanding of the organizational culture. The Human Resource (HR) policies and procedures manual is compiled first and thereafter an employee handbook is prepared in conjunction with the prevailing policies and procedures as laid down in the earlier document. Such documents make provisions for clear description in terms of the benefits and incentives that need to be given to employees. Within the organization, it is necessary to ensure that employees implement their job duties in accordance to the rules and policies and proper standards need to be recognized within the working environment. The significance of HR policies and procedures is primarily recognized in making provisions of essential information to the employees so they are able put into operation their job duties. In addition, they are able to generate information in terms of department personnel, organizational goals and so forth (HR policies and procedures manual, 2014)

METHODOLOGY

Methodology in which the research is carried out is discussed under the following subheadings: research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrumentation, validity of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, administration of instrument and method of data analysis.

Research Design

Descriptive research design was used in this study since it has been found to be most suitable for analysing the relationship studies (Wright & Pollert 2006). This design is easy to understand and is useful in describing the population characteristics of their variables (Kothari, 2015). It also shows clearly complete description of the situation being studied (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

Research Population

The population of the study comprises all the 241 employees of Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State. The study covered all the seven (7) Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The population of this study was 241 employees in the seven (7) Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State. The total population was used for the sample; which makes it a census sample.

Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument for the collection of primary data. The instrument was titled "Work Environment and Office Workers Commitment of Oil and Gas Firms in Rivers State". The Instrument was designed in a four (4) point rating scale format with the following response options: Very Great Extent (VGE) 4, Great Extent (GE) 3, Moderate Extent (ME) 2, and Low Extent (LE).

Validity of the instrument

The instrument was face and content validated.

Reliability of the Instrument

The term reliability of Instrument refers to the capacity of an instrument to measure the variables it was designed to measure consistently. To achieve this, the test-retest method was used. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to test the reliability of the instrument and it yielded a coefficient level of 0.86.

Administration of the Instrument

A total of two hundred and forty (241) questionnaire was administered to respondents in the seven Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State.

Method of Data Analysis

This subsection deals with how the data collected were analysed. Considering the response options of the questionnaire, the researcher adopted the arithmetic mean and standard deviation for the analysis of research questions. The response options were given number on the scale "Very Great Extent (4)", "Great Extent (4)", Moderate Extent (2)" and Low Extent (1)" respectively. The decision making scale was as follows:

0.1- 1.4. = Low Extent

1.5 - 2.4 = Moderate Extent

2.5 - 3.4 = Great Extent

3.5 And above = Very Great Extent

The arithmetic mean formula is stated thus:

ΣX

$X = \frac{\Sigma X}{N}$

N

Where:

Σ = summation

X = Total score

N = Total number of respondents.

Spearman Ranking Order was used for the test of hypotheses. The formula is presented below

$P = 1 - \frac{6 \Sigma d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$

n (n²—1)

Where:

n= number of pairs of data
d= difference between the ranking in each set of data.
£= summation

Decision Rule: If the calculated r value is greater than the critical r value, the null hypothesis was rejected, if otherwise, the null hypothesis was rejected.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Out of the 240 copies of questionnaire distributed, only 200 copies were retrieved.

Data analysis took the following process:

Data Distribution

Age Category

Frequency distribution of respondent age Category

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage
18=25 years	0	0
26-35 years	30	15
36-45	100	50
46-55 years	40	20
56 and above	30	15
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

The statistics generated from the table above revealed that majority of the respondents, described by 100(50%) were between the age Category of 36—45 years. Followed by the 40(20%) respondents who were between ages 46—55 years while those who fell within the ages brackets between 57 and above years and 26—35 years took 15% each and none of the respondent was of the age bracket 18—25 years. Therefore most of the employees of Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State fell between the age brackets of 36 and 45 year.

Gender

Frequency distribution of respondent on gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	130	65
Female	70	35
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Gender

From table 2 and fig 2 above findings indicates that 130 respondents, constituting 65% were male employees while the remaining 35% were females. It is also inferred that Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State are more inclined towards engaging male employees more than females.

Educational Status

Frequency distribution of respondents' Education Status.

Education Status	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE	20	10
OND	50	25
HND/BSC	120	60

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Education Status

The data presented in the table above indicated that most of the respondents with a percentage of (120) 60% were HND/BSC holders, followed by 50(25%) representing OND holders. The rest

of the respondents representing SSCE and MBA/MSC were 20(10%) and 10(5%) respectively. It could be deduced that the majority of the respondent were HND/BSC holders.

Professional Experience

Frequency distribution of respondents' professional experience

Professional Experience	Frequency	Percentage %
under 5 years	20	10
11) 10 years	40	20
11-20 years	130	65

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Professional Experience

The statistics generated from the table above revealed that majority of the respondents, denoted by 60% had professional experience of 11—20 years. Followed by 40(20%) respondents who had 5—10 years professional experience while those who had under 5years of professional experience were 20(10%) and those with over 20years of professional experience were 10(5%) of the respondents. It could be deduced that majority of the employees of Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State have gained a lot of experience on their jobs..

Univariate Analysis

S/N	Work Environment	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	TOTAL	X
1.	A well planned work arrangement in organizations motivates workers	140	20	20	10	200	2.5

In accessing the relationship between work environment and effective commitments the table above showing the mean value above 2.5 point, majority strongly agreed that a well-planned work arrangement in organizations motivates workers, choice of when to undertake work motivates office workers, providing employees the chance to choose where they can work motivates them. Based on the result of the study above, it was found that there is a positive correlation between work environment and effective commitments of Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State.

Bivariate Analysis

Work Environment and Continuance Commitment

There is no significant correlation between physical environment and affective commitment of office workers in Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State.

Ho2: There is no significant correlation between physical environment and Continuance Commitment of office workers in Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State.

Ho3: There is no significant correlation between physical environment and normative commitment of office workers in Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State.

Multivariate Analysis
Physical work environment and Commitment

S/N	Physical work Environment and Commitment	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	TOTAL	X
1.	Work space in the adequate	100	50	20	10	200	3.54
2.	There is congestion in the offices	110	60	10	10	200	3.45
3.	Workplace machines and tools are readily available	100	30	30	40	200	3.35

Source: Field Survey, 2022

*key: ranking of the scale VHE=4, HE=3, LE=2, VLE=1. While the arithmetic mean above 2.5 is accepted and below 2.5 is rejected. In accessing the relationship between physical work environment and Commitment table above, with the mean value above 2.5 point, majority strongly agree and that work space in the office is adequate, there is congested in the offices, workplace machines and tools are readily available. Results of the study showed that there is a positive correlation between work environment and Continuance commitment of Oil and Gas firms in Rivers State.

Summary of findings

The demographic information gathered from respondents showed that males were predominant in the same population while majority of the respondents were within the age range between 31—40 years. Majority of the respondents in terms of educational background had HND) BSC, and a good percentage of the respondents had 11—15 years working experience. The study made some outstanding discoveries with respect to the correlation between work environment and affective commitment. Chandrasekar (2011) study discovered that there is an association between work environment and office workers commitment. It was found that office workers commitment, is highly influenced by work environment conditions. The study also revealed that a positive correlation exists between work environment and Continuance commitment. This is in line with Tamessek (2009) who opined that on the association perceived, employees’ physical work environment and performance found that employees highly value their social needs and this motivated them to stay in organization. The study further discovered that there is a positive correlation between physical work environment and Commitment of office workers. This supports the study of Awan (2015) whose study found that work environment which cover work life balance and psychology conditions and social dialogue leads to increase in employee performance and organizational productivity. Bolman and Deal (2014) found that there is need for autonomy and intrinsic reward contributes to achievement of office workers commitment at the workplace. This is also in line with the findings of Joyce (2012) that provision of housing scheme within or close to the workplace make it possible for employees to get to their office on time. These social amenities also provide some level of financial relief for employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are put forward:

- (1) Workers in oil and gas firms in Rivers State should be provided with the necessary facilities and equipment in order to boost their moral and increase their levels of commitment in the organization.
- (2) The government should monitor these oil and gas firms to ensure that they provide a healthy working environment for their employees.

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