



Workplace Safety and Employee Commitment of Oil and Gas Firms in Rivers State

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Abstract: *The study surveyed oil and gas workers in Rivers State to assess company culture and performance in these areas. We were able to pick a sample size of 175, out of a total population of 320, among oil and gas personnel at 10 businesses in Rivers State, by applying the Krejcie and Morgan formula for selecting sample sizes. Although 175 surveys were distributed, only 125 were completed and returned. In the SPSS 25.0, we used the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient to test the hypotheses and a frequency distribution analysis to look at the characteristics of the respondents. Dedication on the part of workers was proven to have a substantial effect on the security of the workplace. The study found that employees at oil and gas companies in Rivers State felt more committed to their jobs when they felt safe on the job, both in the short and long terms. According to the results of this study, oil and gas companies can increase employee loyalty by emphasising workplace safety.*

Key words: *Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Employee Commitment, Management Safety Practices, Workplace Safety.*

Introduction

Without dedicated human resources, no organisation could possibly achieve its goals (Srivastava, 2008). An employee's dedication to their work and the company, as well as their desire to remain working there, should be given serious consideration. According to Jones and George (2013), managers' attitudes towards their organisation as a whole are reflected in their feelings and beliefs about their employees. McShane and Von Glinow (2015) highlight the importance of job satisfaction; nevertheless, "total job attitude" encompasses much more than just job happiness. According to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), an employee's commitment is "the motivation that keeps them moving in a direction that helps them reach their goals." Luthans (2011) defines employee commitment as the extent to which an individual takes on the traits or ethos of the firm. However, according to Ruokolainen (2011), employee commitment exists when "an employee demonstrates clear belief in and acceptance of the organization's philosophies.". So, if an employee remains associated with a company of their own free will and makes a significant contribution to the attainment of the organization's goals, they can be said to be devoted to that company. The best work behaviour and performance come from committed personnel (Leblebici, 2012).

Affective and persistent commitment were proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990) as measures of employee dedication. The term "affective commitment" is used to describe an employee's emotional investment in their job and the company they work for (McShane & Von Glinow, 2015). According to several studies (Klein, Molloy, & Brinsfield, 2012; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 2013; Solinger, Van Olffen, & Roe, 2008), employees who have a personal connection to their workplace are more dedicated to their jobs. McCranie and Von Glinow (2015) A long-term pledge is a financial investment in the business. Two different methods have been identified in the literature for determining attachments (Taing, Granger, Groff, Jackson, & Johnson, 2011; Vandenberghe & Panaccio, 2012).

Ensuring workplace safety is essential for employees' health, which is where workplace safety comes into play. The primary objective of the discipline of workplace safety, which addresses the welfare and safety of employees, is to guarantee that employees carry out their activities in a secure atmosphere (Makhamara & Simiyu, 2016). The office setting has been connected to not only worker protection but also worker satisfaction, motivation, and commitment (Michael et al., 2005). Despite this awareness, most firms fail to adequately promote the use and compliance with safety rules. A high number of workplace accidents and hazards means that workers are more likely to be unhappy in their jobs, less productive, less motivated, and less committed to their organisation, all of which can have a negative impact on productivity and efficiency. A company's success depends on its employees, thus it's important for them to feel comfortable in their workplace (Bernardin, 2007; Hong, 2001).

In his research on employee attitudes towards workplace safety and job satisfaction, Gyekye (2005) identified management safety practises as an important factor. Increased productivity, employee retention, decreased costs (due to injuries), and regulatory compliance are just some of the benefits that businesses can reap from implementing safety practises and programmes to reduce the likelihood of workplace injuries and illnesses (Vesterinen, 2016). Improving the efficacy and efficiency of business operations is a primary goal of management safety practises, which centre on the creation of programmes and particular measures in order to ensure the safety of the workforce (ILO, 2005).

Job accidents and risks can increase the physical demands on workers and cause stress in the job, both of which can reduce productivity. Employers who prioritise worker safety see increased productivity and morale. One way in which businesses might accomplish this is by prioritising the safety of their employees. An increase in both physiological and psychological stress among workers has been linked to inaccuracies in the development and implementation of safety standards (Shikdar & Sawaqed, 2003). Workplace accidents, stress, and anxiety have all been linked to lax safety practises, which in turn has been shown to lead to employee dissatisfaction, subpar output, and a general lack of commitment on the job. On the other hand, workplace safety has been found to increase employee involvement, contentment with their jobs, motivation, and output (ILO, 2016).

Nangih (2017) used data from a cross-section of Port Harcourt, Nigeria-based enterprises to investigate the safety practises and operational efficacy of the oil and gas maintenance sector. It was shown that safety precautions have a major effect on the efficiency of oil and gas companies.

And furthermore businesses see positive results in terms of operational profit margin and return on turnover after instituting safety policies. Obiorah, Oyegun, and Ugbebor just finished their study on the oil and gas industries' safety protocols for 2019. Employees' levels of education were positively associated with their adherence to safety requirements ($r = 0.842$), and this relationship was statistically significant ($p=0.045$). The survey found that oil and gas companies in Nigeria strictly follow all regulations concerning worker safety. The influence of management's dedication to safety on innovation in the oil and petrol sector was investigated by Obiorah, Ugbebor, and Oyegun (2019). The study found a very positive correlation ($r = .900$) between management's dedication and employees' ability to think creatively. To see if there was a connection between organisational commitment and workplace safety, Mensah and Tawiah (2016) looked at the mining industry in Ghana. There was a significant correlation between normative, affective, and continuous commitment and occupational safety.

It is clear, however, that no one has investigated the connection between employee dedication and workplace safety in the context of indigenous oil and petrol firms in Rivers State. Because of these context differences, there are major discrepancies. The goal of this research was to find out why employees at oil and fuel companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, felt about workplace safety.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine how oil and gas companies in Rivers State rate in terms of workplace safety and employee dedication. This leads us to the following detailed goals:

- to examine the relationship between management safety practices and affective commitment.
- to investigate the relationship between management safety practices and continuance commitment.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between management safety practices and affective commitment.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between management safety practices and continuance commitment.

Concept of Workplace Safety

Employers, employees, customers, and anybody else with a stake in the workplace can benefit from workplace safety regulations, standards, and initiatives (Bhagawati, 2015). Alli (2008) defines it as the study of foreseeing, recognising, evaluating, and regulating threats and hazards in the workplace that threaten the safety of workers while also considering the impact on society and the environment.

The International Labour Organisation (2010) defines workplace safety as "a multifaceted field with the following objectives:" protecting the health of workers in all fields; lessening the possibility that employees would suffer from occupationally-related illnesses.; keeping workers

safe from workplace hazards; and facilitating workplace adaptations for people with varying degrees of mobility and health. An economy can't expand without the input of workers. Businesses can now compete on a regional, national, and international level thanks to this development.

Concept of Management Safety Practices

Management that is focused on ensuring the health and safety of its people is said to practise safety management (Hanafi, 2018). In addition, risk assessment and accident analysis are only two components of safety management (Calway, 2001). Safety management primarily focuses on organising safety training, promoting safety, implementing accident prevention strategies, and developing a safety culture (Kirwan, 1998).

The company's safety-maintenance functions and procedures correspond to the true purpose of safety management. Common Sense and Company. Furthermore, safety management is a subsystem of organisational management that employs a variety of safety-management strategies to guarantee safe operations (Hofmann & Morgeson, 1999). To safeguard workers from hazards and intruders, firms implement safety-management systems (Hanafi, 2018). Safety-management techniques encompass the policies, strategies, practises, and procedures that are employed to lessen the number of injuries sustained by workers and to cut down on the overall cost of safety (Elke, 2006).

Safety-management strategies are vital tools for managing corporate safety and reducing occupational accidents, as evidenced by a survey of the literature on the topic (Judith, 2004). Moreover, safety-management strategies should seek to communicate the workplace's safe atmosphere (Ajmal et al., 2022). An examination of the safety management literature reveals that senior executives of businesses must enhance safety performance through efficient safety management procedures (Naji et al., 2020; Di Nardo et al., 2016; Marer, 2006).

Concept of Employee Commitment

According to Akintayo (2010), an employee's commitment is measured by how loyal they are to their company. Ongori (2007) defines employee commitment as "an individual's emotional investment in, and responsiveness to, the success of the organisation as a whole." In a similar line, employee commitment was defined as merely an employee's attitude towards the organisation by Zheng et al. (2010). Employees who are dedicated to their jobs show their appreciation for the company's leadership. Management should constantly be concerned with assessing the level of dedication shown by current and prospective management. According to Meyer and Allen (1996), employee commitment encompasses a wide range of traits, such as loyalty, a willingness to go above and beyond for the organisation, a belief in the firm's values, and a determination to remain employed there.

According to Shahid and Azhar's (2013) thesis, a company's need for employee commitment has increased as it helps the company retain more personnel, which in turn boosts the company's achievement, productivity, and effectiveness. The level of dedication shown by its staff has traditionally been a leading indicator of business success. Furthermore, employee satisfaction,

fairness, and care and concern are the three most significant factors impacting employee commitment. According to Beheshtifar and Hosseini (2013), a worker's dedication may be gauged by how much they care about and feel like they belong to the company. Both Bratton and Gold (2007) and Lee and Chen (2013) argue that employees' dedication to their jobs results from their personal stake in the success of their companies. Also, an exploratory study conducted by Bennett and Robinson (2000) identified three psychological foundations for organisational attachment.

Concept of Affective Commitment

According to Meyer and Allen (1991), employees exhibit affective commitment when they feel a deep connection to the organisation and a desire to make a difference via their work. A worker's level of emotional investment in their job can be affected by their perceptions of job autonomy, task relevance, work identity, skill variety, and feedback from their supervisor. Organisational dependability (how much employees trust their boss to look out for them) and perceived participative management (how much employees feel they have a say in shaping their workplace and other important aspects of their lives) are also important (Madi, Hamilton, Squirrell, Mioulet, Evans, Lee, & King, 2012). They also argued that Rowden's (2002) findings that these antecedents all provide pleasurable environments that are naturally friendly to the growth of affective commitment are correct.

Individual involvement, identification with the proper purpose, and value congruence are the three pillars upon which Meyer and Herscovitch's (2001) theory of affective commitment rests. According to Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), a high level of affective commitment is a better predictor of employee retention than a low level. Emotional attachment and participation in the organisation are also implied by the term "affective commitment," as defined by Bal et al. (2014). Affective component was previously defined by Allen and Meyer (1991) as a feeling of belonging and identity that develops through participation and participation in a group. Also, it has been stated that affective commitment demonstrates a dedication that is dependent on the bonds an employee emotionally forms with the company through positioned job experiences.

Concept of Continuance Commitment

According to Bal et al. (2014), the perceived costs of leaving a company are a major element in employees' commitment to remaining around. Continuous commitment was defined by Kanter (1968) as a cognitive orientation in which costs are taken into account whether departing or staying with the company. An employee's continued pledge is seen as a commitment because of the significant cost of quitting the company. Predictors of staying in a job include age, length of service, satisfaction with one's job, and plans to leave. Both age and length of service have been widely accepted as reliable measures of long-term dedication to an organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1997). According to Madi et al. (2012), an employee's tenure is indicative of non-transferable investments such as the development of strong working relationships with coworkers, the saving of money for retirement, and the development of skills exclusive to the company. Job satisfaction was cited as a more direct predictor of the career-related investments at risk if an employee left

the company. They went on to explain that markers of future loyalty are things like employees' "sunk costs" in staying with the company.

According to Bal et al. (2014), the expenses of quitting the organisation are a major element in determining whether an employee will remain consistently engaged. Employees who have a strong affective connection to the company will stay because they care about its success, while others who are strongly committed to either continuance or norms will remain because they believe they are morally bound to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Similarly, employment contracts and other forms of continuity commitment can make it difficult and expensive to leave a position (Mullins, 2001). Since the accumulation of investments or side bets that would be lost if the individual abandoned the course, as well as the lack of a plausible alternative to the existing course, strengthens a person's commitment to the course of action (Powell & Meyer, 2004).

Theoretical framework

Social Exchange Theory

Homans's social exchange theory (SET), which aims to define the variables determining social conduct, is predicated on the premise that social interactions involve the trade of both material and immaterial commodities. Those who are generous expect to be similarly rewarded, whereas those who are recipients of generosity feel compelled to repay the favour. When the numerous trades are balanced, this process of influence usually leads to a condition of equilibrium. People's obligations to one another strengthen the links they develop in social interactions, and trade activities provide the micro-foundation for broader sociological phenomena. According to the research of Marescaux et al. (2013), SET "proposes that HRM practises establish a favourable exchange connection, to which employees respond with favourable attitudes and behaviour towards the organisation and/or employment." Social exchange theory's exchange relationship is captured by HRM. Employees perceive an organization's compliance with human resource practises as a sign of that organization's commitment to them in this regard. Employees repay such organisational commitment by demonstrating their own dedication (Geetha & Mampilly, 2012). The inference is that workers are more willing to trade their dedication for tools and perks offered by their employer.

High Reliability Theory

The high reliability theory originated with Charles Perrow's Normal Accident Hypothesis in 1984. Accidents in high-stakes, complex organisations are what these theories are trying to explain (Lekka, 2011). Although normal accident theory has helped us learn more about the characteristics of organisations that raise the risk of disastrous mistakes, it has also been criticised. The high reliability organisation theory provides solutions to these problems by investigating the conditions under which complex systems can keep up a high level of safety performance. At the University of California, Berkeley, Roberts Karlene, Gene Rochlin, and Todd conducted considerable research on high reliability theory (Roberts, 1989).

Companies have been making efforts to standardise their safety culture. A corporation is considered highly trustworthy if it has achieved a near-zero accident rate (Lekka, 2011) despite operating in potentially dangerous areas.

Methodology

Research Design

This study relied on a survey approach. Ten oil and gas maintenance companies in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, served as the sample for this study. The Krejcie and Morgan table was used to select a sample size of 175. From a total of 320 workers in the oil and gas sector in Rivers State, this number was arrived at. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument, and it was found to be between .70 and .80, which is within the range recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Both external and internal validity were utilised. Out of the initial 175 surveys sent out, only 125 were completed and returned. There were four questions presented, and respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement by assigning a score from one to five on a Likert scale. The hypotheses were tested and the demographics (gender, age, and education level) of the respondents were analysed using frequency distribution in Statistical Package for the Social Science Software (SPSS) Version 25.0.

Result and Discussions

Table 1: Demographic (Descriptive) Data Analysis

Gender	Response Rates
Male	93
Female	32
Total	125 (100%)
Age of the Respondents	Response Rates
30-39Yrs	27
40-49Yrs	69
50-59Yrs	17
60 and Above	12
Total	125 (100%)
Education Qualification	Response Rates
HND/BSC	82
M.Sc./MBA	34
Ph.D	9
Total	125 (100%)

Table 1 shows that out of the total sample size, 93 (74.4%) are men and 32 (25.6%) are women. According to these statistics, males make up a slightly larger percentage of the responders than females do.

The age ranges of the respondents, as indicated by the questionnaire, are as follows: 30–39 years old; 40–49 years old; 50–59 years old; and 60 years old and up. With 55.2% of respondents falling

within that age range, the employers can take heart in knowing they employ an actively contributing workforce.

According to table 1, 82 respondents hold a first-level university degree or above, 34 hold a master's degree, and 9 hold a doctorate.

The fact that the majority of employees hold a Higher National Diploma or Bachelor's degree is indicative of the value the company places on training and development for its employees. This also indicates that most workers grow professionally during their employment.

Analyses of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between management safety practices and affective commitment

Table 2: Management safety practices on affective commitment

		Mgt_Safety_Practices	Affective_Commitment
Mgt_Safety_Practices	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.787
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	125	125
Affective_Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.787	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	125	125

Source: SPSS 25.0 output on research data

A substantial positive linear association between management safety practises and affective commitment is shown by a Spearman Correlation coefficient of 0.787, as seen in Table 2. With a significance level of ($p < 0.005$), the Correlation test is extremely strong. There is a positive correlation between management safety practises and affective commitment.

This finding suggests a connection between management's safety practises and employees' emotional investment in the company. This led to the conclusion that the alternative hypothesis was valid.

This shows that managers who are more emotionally invested in keeping their employees safe also take greater precautions. This backs up the findings of Kaynak et al. (2016), who found that workers who felt secure in their jobs were more committed to their employers. The company's

safety policy had a moderate effect on the dedication of its workers. Christian et al. (2009) state that companies that have such rules demonstrate they care about their workers' well-being by fostering a workplace free of hazards. Preventative and control measures for hazards in the workplace can't be built without a clear and implementable policy to guide the way (Foot & Hook, 2008).

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between management safety practices and continuance commitment.

Table 3: Analysis of the effect of management safety practices on continuance commitment

		Mgt_Safety_Practices	Continuance_Commitment
	Mgt_Safety_Practices	Correlation Coefficient	.890
		1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	125
	Continuance_Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	125

Source: SPSS 25.0 output on research data

A Spearman correlation of 0.890 between management's safety practises and employees' willingness to stay the course is seen in Table 3. With a significance level of ($p < 0.005$), the Correlation test is extremely strong. The positive correlation between management's dedication to safety and its actual implementation suggests that the latter will improve as the former does. This finding indicates that there is a connection between management's commitment to safety and their willingness to ensure that it is maintained. This led to the conclusion that the alternative hypothesis was valid.

The level of dedication from workers was significantly impacted by management practises centred on safety. This conclusion is supported by the research of Michael et al. (2005). Employee outcomes such as enhanced job satisfaction, decreased withdrawal behaviour, and increased organisational engagement were found to result from management's dedication to the safety of workers. Employees are more invested in the success of their employer and more eager to work towards the organization's aims and objectives if they believe their employer cares about them personally (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Therefore, employees are thought to

mirror management's interest for their welfare by demonstrating dedication, which is consistent with Peter Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, which suggests that people do action in the hope of reaping benefits in the future.

Conclusion

A dedicated staff is crucial to any company's long-term survival. Employees that are fully invested in the company's success are motivated by a sense of personal pride and loyalty, and they know how their work contributes to the bigger picture. Having such a team on board will boost the company's productivity and help it compete economically with other firms in the same field. This study indicated that one strategy for management to foster employee commitment was to care about their health and safety on the job. This study draws the conclusion that oil and gas enterprises in Rivers State benefit from increased employee engagement (both affective and continued) when management safety practises are in place.

Recommendations

Based on the results and the author's interpretation of the data, the following recommendations are made to oil and gas enterprises in Rivers State, Nigeria, in order to promote workplace safety and employee commitment:

4. Investing in heat-resistant personal protective apparel for heated environments and providing protective equipment to new personnel can increase oil and gas companies' ability to attract and retain talented individuals.
5. Oil and gas companies should establish internal policies and procedures governing working conditions to ensure the affective and continuance commitment of employees, and implement a regular monitoring team to verify that employees are wearing the protective equipment they have been given before performing their duties.
6. The smooth running of operations, the trust of customers, the security of jobs, the protection of employees and property, the prevention of financial loss from injuries and accidents, the safeguarding of the public environment, and the reduction of sanctions from regulatory bodies are all reasons to improve safety practises.

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