EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION AND EMPLOYEES' ENGAGEMENT IN INDIGENOUS OIL AND GAS FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between employee orientation and employee engagement in indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State. The base line theories that were used to underpin this study were the resource-advantage theory and the human capital theory. The cross sectional and correlation research design were used in the study, while 60 managers of indigenous oil and gas companies in Rivers State were used as the population size, and sample size, as the census method was adopted for sample size determination. Primary data were used for this study, and were collected with the aid of questionnaire instrument. Spearman Ranking Order Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypothesis, and from the analysis, it was found that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between employee orientation and employee participation, there is a strong positive relationship between employee orientation and employee commitment of indigenous oil and gas companies in Rivers State. And it was concluded that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between employee orientation and employee engagement of indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State. Based on the conclusion, it was recommended that managers of indigenous oil and gas firms should graft policies and programs that has to do with employee orientation, so as to enhance employee engagement of indigenous oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Keywords: Employee orientation, employee engagement, employee participation and employee commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary organizations are faced with array of complexities, coupled with the dynamic nature of business environment, as well as the effect of globalization at the workplace. These complexities are sometimes within and outside the control of managers or organizational leaders. Organizations interact with both internal and external environments, and these environments influence their existence. Thus, organizations are social systems that interact to achieve predetermined goals such as: survival, goodwill, good citizenship, profitability, improved market share among others, which can be very difficult to achieve, if employees are not properly engaged (Jaja, & Wobodo, 2019).

Employee engagement describes a situation where employees feel involved, committed, passionate, empowered and these feelings are exhibited in the work behavior (Mone & London, 2010). This means that employee engagement involves the level of commitment, participation and teamwork displayed by employees towards the organization. Employee engagement has been a subject of attraction for almost two decades (Albercht, Gruman, & Saks, 2015); and in recent years, it has been echoed strongly with business executives (Macey, Schneider, Barbera & Young, 2009). Additionally, organizations believe that engagement is a main source of competitive advantage. Therefore, the impact of employee engagement cannot be overemphasized. It has been shown to influence a range of attitudinal, behavioural, performance, and financial outcomes (Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011; Halbesleben, 2010; Macey *et al*., 2009).

Halbesleben (2010) meta-analysis revealed that engagement is positively linked with commitment, health, turnover intention and performance. Thus, it is an approach that increases the probability of business success, beneficial to both individual and organization, as well as improves productivity and well-being of employees. Moreover, it has become widely used in human resource management (HRM) domain. This is because it covers other concepts that other commonly used terms like motivation, satisfaction and commitment do not manage very well (Torrington, Hall, Taylor & Atkinson, 2014). It was observed that during economic downturn, that engaged employees were instrumental in achieving competitive edge and subsequent survival or success of business organization (Richman, 2006).

Employee orientation is the process of giving new hires a general overview of the company and their position. It is essentially regarded as a part of the employer's socialization process for new hires. It is possible to think of socialization as a continuous process of instilling in each employee the dominant attitudes, norms, values, and behavioral patterns anticipated by the company. Socialization is crucial for both organizational stability and worker performance. Knowing what they should and shouldn't do is a major factor in how well new hires perform at work. Being able to perform tasks correctly is a sign of effective socialization (Asare-Bediako, 2008). Therefore, it would seem that the term "orientation" should refer to some reflection or representation of an individual's overall motivational state at a specific time.

According to Joo and Mclean (2016), orientation programs are frequently used to forecast workers' (new hires') job satisfaction in a business. This is so because orientation training paves the way for the growth of anticipated attitudes and views that may favorably impact how an employee approaches his or her task, productivity, and job satisfaction. Compared to other forms or types of training, orientation training is known to have a stronger direct relationship with job satisfaction. As a result, businesses are urged to invest more money in a carefully thought out and executed orientation training program.

Indigenous oil and gas companies constitute a sector of the oil exploration, producing and servicing industry in Nigeria that is highly risky, regulated and capital intensive with these companies all vying for limited contracts to survive. It is therefore imperative that any of such companies with incompetent employees, managers, or technicians are already doomed for failure. Therefore, it is important for these companies to understand the concept of staff onboarding and engagement in order to prevent those who do not possess the skills, ability and behaviour that are required to lead, participation, commitment, utilize information and (or) make rational decisions from occupying critical positions in the organization (Azerbaijan Sakineh, 2012).

Despite the conceptualization of employee orientation by Kahn (1990), there is paucity of both theoretical and empirical literature on the influence of employee orientation on employee engagement. For instance, Theresa (2021) examined Staff Onboarding: Improving Employer and Employee Relations, Syed(2020) Impacts of implementation of Extensive onboarding process on Employee retention**,** Sandhya and Divya(2015) investigated Effective Onboarding As A Talent Management Tool For Employee Retention, Kalaa Chenji and Raghavendra(2021) also examined Onboarding Effect on Employee Creativity: The Moderating Role of Psychological Empowerment, Mosebeck and Mobasheri (2021) examined the Impact 0f Working From Home on Effectiveness of Onboarding of New Employees and Znidersic (2016), also examined Onboarding and Integration of New Employees: A Qualitative Investigation of Employees' Concerns Before the first day of work. However, from the review of literature, there is a lacuna in literature on staff onboarding and employee engagement, it is against this backdrop that, this paper will critically review the concept of employee orientation and employee engagement in the indigenous oil and gas companies in Rivers State to bridge the gap in literature. Hence**,** the purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between employee orientation and employee engagement in indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

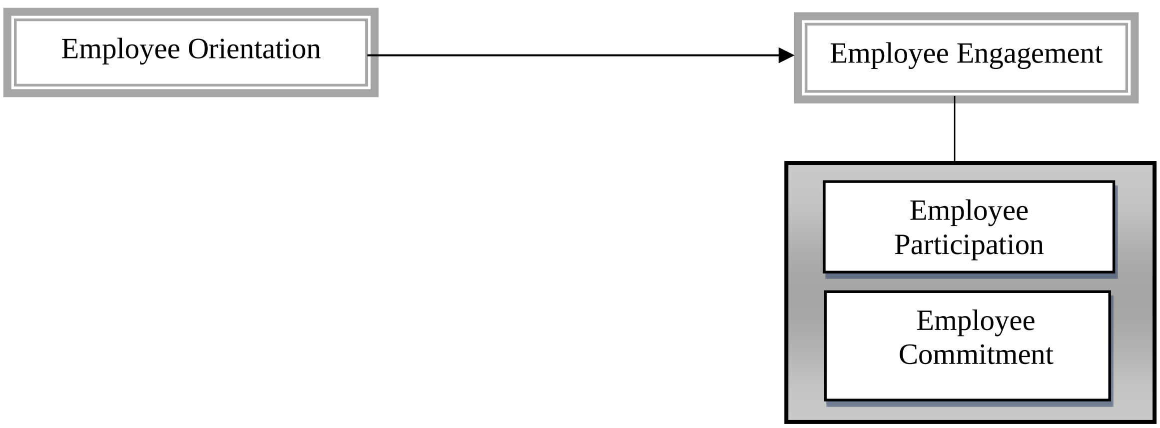

Figure 1: Employee orientation and employee engagement

Source: Dimensions were conceptualized from (Carter ,2015).

To guide this study, the following research questions were raised:

i. What is the relationship between employee orientations relates with employee participation of indigenous oil and gas firms in River State?

ii. What is the relationship between employee orientations relates with employee commitment of indigenous oil and gas firms in River State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The baseline theories that were use to underpin the study variables are the Resource-Advantage Theory and the human capital theory. These theories were adopted because it had been used by several scholars in related studies in previous empirical investigation; these theories were explained more in details.

Resource Advantage Theory

The resource-based view of the company is the foundation of Hunt's (1995) resource-advantage theory, which is articulated to management, marketing, and other social sciences (Hunt, 1997). This theory assumes that the firm's competitive advantage derives from resource heterogeneity and that a resource's worth to a firm is measured in terms of its capacity to produce competitive differentiation to improve performance outcomes (Hunt, 2000). According to Griffith and Yalcinkaya (2010), there are two types of organisational resources that might affect competitiveness and performance: "tangible entities" and "intangible entities." As a result, the financial, physical, and legal resources are considered tangible resources, while the human, organisational, informational, and relational resources are considered intangible resources.

Organizational resources are the firm's policies, cultural routines, and competences like marketing competency. The study will make use of this fundamental theory since it links employee engagement through staff onboarding and aslo, how a firm can turn its resources, such as human resource to its advantage through staff onboarding, thus performance may be enhanced.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory was adopted as the framework within which this work was conducted, as well as the background against which this work rests. It is important to invest in education whether formal or informal, in order to enhance employee’s productivity and performance. Fitzsimons (2015) defines human capital as the total health, knowledge, abilities, and skills acquired by an individual over a period of time.

The Human Capital theory is an economic theory which explains that the summation of an individual's skills, abilities, competencies etc. within a given population will lead to economic development and growth. In fact, according to Gulaliyev *et al.* (2019), a deep correlation exists between GDP and expenditure on education and training in the countries of the world. This indicates that economic development of a country largely depends on the degree of development of its human capital. In this same vein, when narrowed down to the organizational level, the term 'human capital' is synonymous with a firm's human resources (employees).

The nurturing and development of these resources to improve employee performance, is what gives a firm competitive advantage and leads to overall organizational efficiency. Human capital is represented as individual knowledge that can be in the form of skills, experience, expertise, ideas, knowledge, competencies, capabilities and values that employees have. Fitzsimons (2015) states that the performance of employees is a function of their education and training. Human capital theory focuses on the effects of the variance in employee skills on performance. Today, many organizations depend on this theory to determine what type of HRD practices will yield the highest level of performance. The theory of human capital was adopted for this study because it focuses directly on maximizing employee engagement through staff onboarding to enhance organizational competitiveness performance and innovativeness, the theory highlights the importance of employee orientation, employee training and mentoring, and their significant influence on organizational efficiency.

Conceptual Review

Employee Orientation

Orientation can be viewed as a special kind of training designed to help new employees to learn about their tasks, to be introduced to their co-workers and to settle in their work situation – a vital ingredient of internal corporate communication (Bakker, 2011). Employee orientation can be broadly defined as the familiarization with, and adaptation to, a new work environment. It refers to the process by which a new employee is introduced to the organization, to the work group, and to the job. Traditionally, organizations approach orientation by describing to the new employee the organization's history, structure, fringe benefits, rules and regulations.

A more progressive approach is to view orientation as an opportunity to communicate the organization's vision and values, shape the new employee's values and integrate him/her into the organization's structure (Mu, & Benedetto, 2011). The first few months within any organization represent the critical period during which an employee will or will not learn how to become a high performer. It is this principle of learning that ensures that productivity potential is enhanced, while, simultaneously, both the company and employee expectations are integrated (Njine, 2016).

Employee orientation is the procedure of providing new employees with basic background information about the firm and the job. It is more or less, considered as one component of the employer's new-employee socialization process. The socialization process could be seen as an ongoing process of initialing in all employees the prevailing attitudes, standards, values, and patterns of behavior that are expected by the organization. Socialization is important for employee performance and for organizational stability (Onyema, 2014). For new employees, work performance depends to a great extent on knowing what they should or should not do. Understanding the right way to do a job is a measure of effective socialization (Onyema, 2014). After completing the documentation required, he/she is expected to perform the role with minimal introduction.

Traditionally, organizations conduct orientation by outlining the organization's history, structure, perks, and policies to the new hire. A more forward-thinking strategy is to use orientation as a chance to share the organization's mission and values with new hires, help mold their values, and integrate them into the organization's structure (Asare-Bediak, 2008). According to Klein and Weaver (2006), new hires who participated in orientation training adapted to the company more so than those who did not. The result was that those that attended were more satisfied with their jobs than the others. After their orientation procedure, newcomers are known to have a very high level of socializing and an initial favorable attitude on the work. This causes their rate of job satisfaction to peak at the time they join an organization (Boswell, Shipp, & Payne, 2009.).

One aspect of socialization is orientation training, which helps new hires develop interpersonal relationships, clarify their goals, and become aware of the politics within an organization. Through orientation, new hires are fully assimilated into an organization or work group, making it more enjoyable to learn and work in a new setting (Bauer. Bodner & Erdogan, 2007). It improves task and work clarity and establishes realistic expectations for the job. As a result, it is understood that job happiness is positively correlated with how well an employee understands his or her objectives, standards, and work group (social interactions), as well as how well the individual can promote harmony in these areas (Edwards & Cable, 2009).

Employee orientation is the process of giving new hires a general overview of the company and their position. It is essentially regarded as a part of the employer’s socialization process for new hires. It is possible to think of socialization as a continuous process of instilling in each employee the dominant attitudes, norms, values, and behavioral patterns anticipated by the company. Socialization is crucial for both organizational stability and worker performance. Knowing what they should and shouldn’t do is a major factor in how well new hires perform at work. Being able to perform tasks correctly is a sign of effective socialization (Asare-Bediako, 2008). Therefore, it would seem that the term “orientation” should refer to some reflection or representation of an individual’s overall motivational state at a specific time.

Employee Engagement

The development originated from the studies conducted in the 1920s on morale or a group‟s enthusiasm to achieve organizational goals, and used by the US Army scholars during World War II to forecast unity of effort and attitudinal battle, in order to get prepared before they confront their opponent (Siddhanta and Roy, 2010). Conversely, Torrington *et al.* (2014) averred that employee engagement is credited to the work of Khan (1990), who postulated the first grounded theory concerning personal engagement and disengagement at workplace. Thus, it was after this conceptualization, that employee engagement came into limelight. With respect to its definition and measurement, there has been divergence of views among scholars and practitioners. It has been defined differently by scholars and practitioners. Torrington *et al.* (2014) observed the lack of clear, precise, concise and widely agreed definition of engagement. This they attributed partly to the sheer number of different ways in which the verb to engage‟ is defined in dictionaries and commonly used in everyday speech.

Moreover, the lack of agreed definition is a limitation for researchers to reach a better understanding of how to measure it. Thus, employee engagement has been defined and measured differently by researchers and consultants, however, the meaning sound like other constructs like organizational citizenship behaviour and organizational commitment (Robinson, Perryman & Hayday, 2004). Consequently, researchers, practitioners and reviewers do not use the same components to describe employee engagement. Thus, there is no universally agreed definition and measurement, but has common elements such as: energy, involvement and an inclination to contribute to organizational success (Bakker, Albrecht & Leiter, 2011). Employee engagement is defined as "the harnessing of organization members‟ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (Kahn, 1990: 694). This is an all-encompassing definition that has three aspects of engagement: physical, cognitive and emotional.

The physical aspect centers on the physical vitalities exerted by individuals to achieve their roles. The cognitive concerns the belief of the employees‟ about the organization, the leaders and working conditions. The emotional aspect concerns the feelings employees‟ have about each of the factors and its effects, which could lead to positive or negative attitudes towards the organization and its leaders. This implies that engagement entails psychological and physical presence of employees when carrying out tasks in an organization. Similarly, Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker (2002:74) describe employee engagement "as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption". Vigor is described by high levels of energy and mental resilience, dedication depicts feelings of importance, passion, inspiration, pride and challenges while absorption involves being dedicated and occupied with the job and not thinking of quitting the job.

Employee engagement drivers are those factors that facilitate job satisfaction. They are those things that when present in an organization, can make employees to go beyond their job demand and ensure the organization survives. From the review of extant literature, scholars have advanced several drivers of engagement, but below are the eight factors that we deduce from the extant literature that can drive engagement. Effective leadership affects employee engagement. A leader has a role to play in driving employee engagement. According to Reilly (2014), leaders and supervisors ought to inspire employee participation by identifying the obstructions to engagement as well as appreciate any solutions emanating from the employees in order to effect positive change. Thus, highlights the major drivers of engagement and when implemented by managers will cause the employees to be dedicated and work towards attaining goals and organizational survival.

Measures of Employee Engagement

Employee Participation

This is one of the key concepts in communication and media studies. Employee involvement in decision making is also referred to as participative decision-making (PDM). It is a process by which employees are involved in the organizational decision making in which they work. Vroom (1974) defined participation simply as involvement. In the view of Noah (2008), participation is a special type of delegation whereby the subordinate gain greater control as well as freedom of choice aimed at linking the communication gap between the management and employees. Similarly, Mitchell (1973) describes it as situation where decision making is shared in the work environment. Kim (2002) has argued that participative decision making is an essential element that improves job satisfaction in an organization.

Additionally, Cotton, Vollrath, Froggatt, Lengnick-Hall and Jennings (1988) contended the existence of strong relationship between organizational and individual effectiveness. Thus, managers in organization must treat their employees fairly, in order to achieve organizational goals (Irawanto, 2015). Moreover, scholars have carried out studies on employee participation and other variables that influence it. The study carried out by Cadwallader, Jarvis, Bitner and Ostrom (2010) revealed that a number of elements control the link between the participation of the employees in decision-making with organizational climate, including efficient cooperation and effective dissemination of information amongst others. When employees are allowed to take decision in an organization, they feel valued, secured and communicates freely with their peers without limits and formal courses of action. Also, Wood and De Menezes (2011) align with the above view, as their findings revealed that when employees take part in any decision making program introduced in organization, it increases their motivation.

Employees' involvement in decision making has several outcomes such as: in communication and media studies. Employee involvement in decision making is also referred to as participative decision-making (PDM). It is a process by which employees are involved in the organizational decision making in which they work. Vroom (1974) defined participation simply as involvement. In the view of Noah (2008), participation is a special type of delegation whereby the subordinate gain greater control as well as freedom of choice aimed at linking the communication gap between the management and employees. Similarly, Mitchell (1973) describes it as situation where decision making is shared in the work environment. Kim (2002) has argued that participative decision making is an essential element that improves job satisfaction in an organization.

Furthermore, Markos and Sridevi (2010) averred that for employees to achieve expected results, organizations should allow them to be independent on their job, thereby reassuring independent reasoning, critical thinking, and in taking feasible decision on the best way to complete their responsibilities. They further advanced that managers and leaders should attend to employees" concerns and recognize their contributions, as this will improve organizational performance.

Employee Commitment

Employee commitment has become one of the most popular work attitudes studied by practitioners and researchers. Akintayo (2010) and Tumwesigye (2010) noted that one of the reasons why commitment has attracted research attention is that organizations depend on committed employees |o create and maintain competitive advantage and achieve superior performance. Commitment employees who are highly motivated to contribute their time and energy to the pursuit of organizational goals are increasingly acknowledged to be the primary asset available to an organization (Hunjra, 2010). They provide the intellectual capital that, for many organizations, has become their most critical asset (Hunjra, 2010). Furthermore, employees who share a commitment to the organization and their collective wellbeing are more suitable to generate the social capital that facilitates organizational learning. It is therefore important for organization to know the aspects that play important role or have big impact in boosting the commitment of their employees.

Employee commitment is a psychological concept reflecting the relationship between the employees and the organization (Becker, 1960; Wei, Tai, 2010), It is the way employees perceive the organization and response to it (Mowday, 1979). The employees who are strongly committed [to the organization are those who are least likely to leave the organization. (Allen, Meyer, 1990). As Bayram, mentioned in his studies, the individuals who are committed to the organization, work as more compatible, productive, and loyal (Bayram, 2005). Organizations value commitment among their employees because it is typically assumed to reduce withdrawal behavior, such as lateness, absenteeism and turnover. Hence, there is no doubt that these values appear to have potentially serious consequences for overall organizational performance. The study of employee commitment is-important because as noted by Lo (2009), employees with a sense of commitment are less likely to engage in withdrawal behavior and more willing to accept change. Hence, there is no doubt that these values appear to have potentially serious consequences for a core of committed individuals who are the source of organizational life.

Empirical Review

Employee Orientation and Employee Engagement

Said, (2018). Examined the Effect of Formal Orientation Process on Employees' Recruits Performance: The Case Study of Afghanistan Civil Servant. Public organizations' performance is directly related to performance of their employees. The current study has been conducted on the effect of recruitment/selection process on employees' performance in Afghanistan civil service. The primary data is gathered by distributing close-ended questionnaires to job candidates and employees to evaluate recruitment/selection processes and employees' performance. Provided data is analyzed by SPSS version 20. In order to achieve the goal of research, 120 questionnaires have been distributed, and the recruitment/selection is taken to account as an independent variable and employees' performance as a dependent variable. Furthermore, secondary data is collected through books, articles, and particularly annual report about Afghanistan. Finding shows a high level of correlation between employees' performance and recruitment/selection processes. A future study could also emphasize the development of a theoretical framework that links specifically to the peculiarities of the tertiary education sector in South Africa. 2009) have revealed that South African tertiary institutions are suffering from an ageing population; especially an ageing white population of South African science and scientific output. A further study could unpack how the components of recruitment and selection can be better harnessed to attract the interest of young Nigeria to academy.

Joo and Mclean (2006) posit that orientation training has been widely used to predict job satisfaction of employees (new comers) in an organization. This is because, orientation training sets a stage for the development of expected attitudes and perceptions that could positively affect an employees' approach to his or her task, productivity and the satisfaction derived from the job. Orientation training is known to have a more direct link to job satisfaction, than the other forms or types of training. As such, organizations are encouraged to devote more resources for a well planned and conducted orientation training program.

Georgellis, Lange and Tabvuma (2012) revealed that through employee orientation, an organization achieves high level of productivity, low turnover and growth. It has always been known that a happy worker is a productive worker. And a productive worker will always take an organization to higher levels of growth, while achieving a competitive advantage over rivals, and at the same time, advancing employees and bringing them to the point of achievement and self fulfillment. This explains why employee orientation is very important to both employees and employers. Thus, employers will need to put all resources necessary to make sure that they can achieve a better orientation training program, in order to set expectations and positive attitudes at an early stage of employment When orientation training is solid, that is effectively carried out, it reduces future negative behaviors like; absenteeism, demotivation, lack of commitment, quitting intentions and even other uncertainties that cannot be dictated immediately (Georgellis, Lange & Tabvuma, 2012). From the foregoing, it was hypothesized that:

H_{o1} There is no significant relationship between employee orientation and employee participation of indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State.

H_{02} There is no significant relationship between employee orientation and employee commitment of indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts the cross-sectional research design method, this involves a situation where data are collected just once from a sample selected to represent a larger population (Ahiauzu & Asawo, 2016). The population of the study will be at the micro level of the indigenous oil and gas companies in Rivers State. However, for the purpose of administering questionnaire, a total assessable population for the study were sixty (60) managers drawn from six (6) departments from the ten(10) indigenous oil and gas companies in Rivers State, Due to the small size of the population, this study will adopt the census method. However, the sample size of the study will be sixty (60) managers that constituted the population will be studied. Primary data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire that featured closed- ended questions on a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The research questionnaire was validated using the content validity technique while reliability was tested with the use of Cronbach's Alpha Correlation Coefficient with coefficients of all the study variables greater than 70%, as the threshold. The study hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient with aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS.

Bivariate Analysis and Test of Research Hypotheses

Relationship between Employee Orientation and Employee Engagement

Test of Hypothesis 1

H_{o1} There is no significant relationship between employee orientation and employee participation of indigenous oil and gas firms in River State.

Table 1: Relationship between Employee Orientation and Employee Participation

Correlations				
			Employee Orientation	Employee Participation
Spearman's rho	Employee Orientation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.757**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	56	56
	Employee Participation	Correlation Coefficient	.757**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	56	56

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

Source: SPSS 25.0 Output, 2023

From the results in 1, the correlation coefficient shows that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between employee orientation and employee participation. The correlation coefficient of 0.757 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is statistically significant at p $0.000<0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a strong correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between employee orientation and employee participation of Indigenous Oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Test of Hypothesis 2

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between employee orientation and employee commitment of Indigenous Oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

Table 2: Relationship between Employee Orientation and Employee Commitment

Correlations

			Employee Orientation	Employee Commitment
Spearman's rho	Employee Orientation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.675**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	56	56
	Employee Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.675**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	56	56

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

Source: SPSS 25.0 Output, 2023

From the results in table 2, the correlation coefficient shows that there is a strong positive relationship between employee orientation and employee commitment. The correlation coefficient of 0.675 confirms that the magnitude and strength of this relationship between and it is statistically significant at p 0.000<0.05. Therefore, based on empirical findings, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between employee orientation and employee commitment of indigenous oil and gas companies in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The test of hypothesis one (Ho_1) in table 1. shows that there is a strong positive relationship between employee orientation and employee participation of indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State. The positive value of 0.757 shows strong positive relationship, and also, the P-value (0.00) is less than the level of significance at (0.05). Therefore, this suggests that a significant and strong positive relationship exist between employee orientation and employee participation. Hence, the study empirically found that there is a positive and strong relationship between employee orientation and employee participation of indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State.

Furthermore, the test of hypothesis two (Ho_2) in table 2 shows that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between employee orientation and employee commitment of indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State. The positive value of 0.695, shows a strong and positive relationship, and also, the P-value (0.00) is less than the level of significance at (0.05). Therefore, this suggests that a significant and strong relationship exist between employee orientation and employee engagement. Hence, the study empirically found that there is a positive and strong relationship between employee orientation and employee participation of indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State. These findings is in line with the study examined by Said, (2018), and found that a high level of correlation exist between employee orientation and employee engagement and participation. Also, Klein and Weaver (2000) attest that new employees who attended orientation training became more participatory, committed and adaptable to the organization, than those who did not attend the orientation program. Boswell, Shipp, Payne & Culbertson, (2009). Posit that orientation training is one facet of socialization, which facilitates interpersonal relationships, goal clarifications employee participation and commitment to new employees in organization. Edwards and Cable (2009), assert that employee orientation aids new employee to be fully integrated into an organization or work group, thus, enhancing their participation and commitment.

In the same vein, Vigoda (2000) suggest that orientation training is a good platform for new employees and has a positive correlated with employee participation and commitment, and that, through orientation; job characteristics and certain behaviors are built within the new comer, which boost his or her satisfaction with the new job and environment. And Joo and Mclean (2006) posit that orientation training has been widely used to predict job satisfaction of employees (new comers) in an organization. This is because, orientation training sets a stage for the development of expected attitudes and perceptions that could positively affect an employees' approach to his or her task, productivity and the satisfaction derived from the job. Orientation training is known to have a more direct link to job satisfaction, participation and commitment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, it is observed that there exists a strong relationship between employee orientation and employee participation, also, there is a significant relationship between employee orientation and employee commitment of indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State. Hence, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between employee orientation and employee engagement of indigenous oil and gas firms in Rivers State. As a result of the foregoing, it was recommended that management of indigenous oil and gas firms should put up employee orientation programs and strategies that will promote participation and commitment in the indigenous oil and gas firms. The managers of indecorous oil and gas should set up mentoring system in order to enhance employee skills, talent, participation and commitment. Because employees who perceived high levels of organizational support, are more likely to experience greater levels of engagement. And management of indigenous oil and companies should consider using staff onboarding to create a friendly work environment which is needed to stimulate, motivation, and encourage staff to be more fulfilled in their job, and in the long run improve their engagement.

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