

EMPLOYEE DEDICATION AND ORGANISATIONAL INNOVATION OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between employee dedication and organisational innovation of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The study adopted the correlational design as the design for the study, with data generated from 20 management staff from a population of four (4) telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire, and the adopted methodology for the study was the quantitative methodology. Three null hypotheses were tested in the study, using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation coefficient. Results show that there is a significant relationship between employee dedication and the three measures of organisational innovation. Following the result from the analysis, all null hypotheses were subsequently rejected as findings affirmed to the significance of employee dedication in improved outcomes of organisational innovation. It was concluded that through increased focus on creating conducive and supportive work environment, organisations can further reap the benefits of employee dedication. It was recommended that the management of the telecommunication companies in Rivers State can enhance employee dedication through the recognition and reward of employees for their efforts, thus reinforcing employees' feelings of placement, and membership of the organisation.

Keywords: Organisational innovation, employee dedication, process innovation, product innovation, market innovation

INTRODUCTION

Organisational innovation is crucial to the organisation's capacity for recognition and value. To stand out and drive its competitiveness, organisations must be able to innovate and create services or operate in forms that clearly demonstrate their creativity and brand uniqueness (Devi, 2017). Govender and Bussin (2020) emphasizes creativity as reflected in both individual and group action. At the individual level, creativity is expressed in the workers demonstrated cognitive and emotional involvement in their roles and their ability to express themselves in a more personalised form, different from what is traditionally obtainable. This further contributes

to group level creativity where ideas from individuals are assessed and applied in the group action. However, much of the individual and as such group creativity stems from the employee’s level of engagement (Saks, 2020).

In contemporary organizational discourse, the concept of dedication, a form of employee engagement has garnered significant attention due to its profound implications for organizational success and sustainability (Saks, 2020). Dedication reflects the behavioural commitment of individuals towards their work roles and the organization they serve (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Dedication and its relationship to employee performance represent critical areas of inquiry within the field of management sciences and human resource management (HRM). As organizations navigate an increasingly complex and competitive landscape, the ability to harness the full potential of their workforce has become paramount for achieving sustainable success.

Dedication is a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organization’s goals and values, motivated to contribute to organizational success, and are able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being (Satata, 2021). Most organizations are highly involved in helping employees become more deeply dedicated to their work and reduce the effect of job burnout (Devi, 2017; Gruman & Saks, 2011). However, organisational innovation literature scarcely addresses the role of dedication as an antecedent. This is because much research (Saks, 2020; Lee et al, 2017; Blessing & White, 2011) has centred on outcomes of organisational innovation as a group-based activity outcome with scant attention paid to the role of dedication. Thus, this study, as a departure from previous emphasis, investigated the relationship between dedication and organisational innovation of telecommunication firms in Rivers State.

The objectives of the paper are to:

- i. Examine the relationship between dedication and product innovation of telecommunication firms in Rivers State
- ii. Ascertain the relationship between dedication and process innovation of telecommunication firms in Rivers State
- iii. Examine the relationship between dedication and market innovation of telecommunication firms in Rivers State

Conceptual Framework

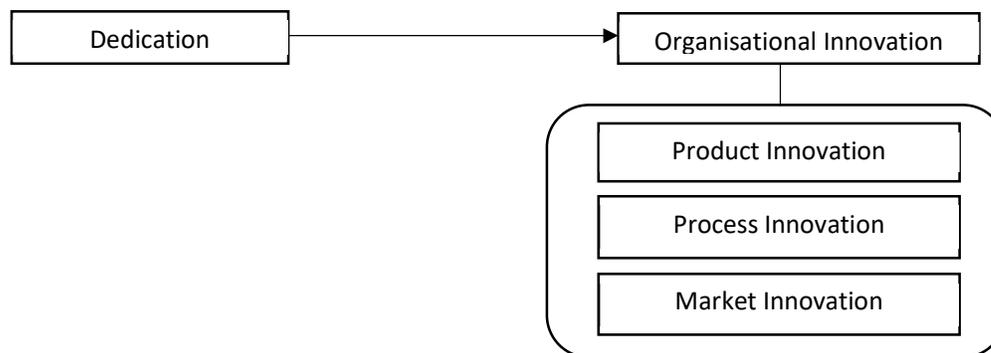


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for employee engagement and organisational innovation

Source: Desk Research (2025), with the measures of organisational innovation sourced from Alharbi et al (2019)

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the research as follows:

- i. What is the relationship between dedication and product innovation of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between dedication and process innovation of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State?
- iii. What is the relationship between dedication and market innovation of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Social exchange theory

Employee engagement has been studied over different theories and the SET model proposed by Homans in 1958 (Gruman & Saks, 2011) has a stronger theoretical rationale in understanding the underlying psychological mechanism involved in employee engagement (Gruman & Saks, 2011). Social exchange theory was developed by a sociologist, George Homans (Gruman & Saks, 2011) focusing on people and behaviour and it first appeared in "Social Behaviour as Exchange" (Gruman & Saks, 2011). The discourse on social exchange theory dates as far as Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics and consists of distinctions between social and economic exchanges (Devi, 2017). The main idea of the theory is that parties enter and sustain social exchange relationships with others in anticipation that doing so will be rewarding (Gruman & Saks, 2011). As per the theory, each party owns something of value that the other wants and the parties decide what to exchange and the quantity.

Conceptual Review

Dedication

Dedication is ones' sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. Dedication is characterised by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Dedication is about being inspired, enthusiastic and highly involved in your job (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Dedication is an individual's deriving a sense of significance from work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about the given job, and feeling inspired and challenged by the job (Song, Kolb, Lee & Kim, 2012). Dedication entails a great deal of concern for a cause. When employees have commitment, they offer everything they have to the completion of work. This is an important characteristic to exhibit in the profession. Sometimes things may not happen as per their wish, and if they aren't committed, instead of rising, they will remain down and unhappy, possibly leading to quitting.

Organisational innovation

The early concept of innovation in economic development and entrepreneurship was popularized by Joseph Schumpeter, a German economist. Innovation, in his view, comprises the elements of creativity, research and development, new processes, new products or services and advance in technologies (Camison & López, 2010). To Rosli and Sidek, 2013, innovation is the creation of new wealth or the alteration and enhancement of existing resources to create new wealth. It is also seen as a process of idea creation, a development of an invention and

ultimately the introduction of a new product, process or service to the market (Darroch, 2005). Presently, this concept is applied in every facet of social lives and activities which makes it more multidimensional and intricate. Beaver believes that innovation is an essential element for economic progress of a country and competitiveness of an industry (Beaver, 2010).

Product innovation: Product Innovation is an introduction of a new product to the markets (Nieves & Quintana 2018). Product innovation is an act to create a new product suite to what market needs. (Azar & Chiabusch 2017). According to Lin and Liu (2012), product innovation is a changing of the product, which is preceded by a research process and development in a company. Product innovation is the introduction and development of new types of goods or services that complement the deficiencies of the prior product with more emphasis on quality (Nieves & Quintana 2018). According to the Ali et al (2016) Innovation is a research, development and/or engineering activity that aims at developing new value. In the scientific contexts, innovation is new ways to transform existing science and technology into products or process of production.

Process innovation: Process innovation is the application of meaningfully improved production or delivery method. This includes significant changes in techniques, equipment and software. Process innovations can be made to reduce unit prices of production or delivery costs, to increase the quality, or to produce significantly improved products and offer the best services (Nieves & Quintana 2018). Ali et al (2016) stated that process innovations give a positive effect on the total quality management efforts of the organizations. However, for the production cost reduction impact, Choi (2004) argue that not all the innovative processes may lead to savings cost, but some permits the firm to market their products at competitive prices.

Market innovation: Market innovation refers to significant changes in the way the enterprise's outlets accept changes in design and major changes in product design and packaging, new methods in product promotion and distribution, new branding, new methods of selling, new methods in pricing policies, new presentation methods, opening of new markets, etc. (Jimenez-Jimenez & Sanz-Valle 2011). First of all, marketing innovation must provide value to customers. If marketing innovation cannot satisfy customers or provide value to customers, it cannot be considered as a marketing innovation. Then, marketing innovation must be useful to competition and must be effective for the company (Ali et al, 2016).

Empirical Review

Dedication and organisational innovation

Dedicated employees are more active in their work, have better health, and perform better (Susana et al., 2007). Compared with employees who are not dedicated, dedicated employees get more satisfaction from work, higher organizational commitment, and less willingness to leave the organization (Yang, 2005). Dedicated employees have positive behaviour (Wilmar & Arnold, 2006). Overall, dedicated employees have more active organizational behaviours and are willing to pay more. This has been validated in the study of Dutch employees, in which engaged employees have more overtime than disengaged employees (Sonnentag, 2003). Salanova et al. (2005) studied the relationship between organizational resources, employee engagement, and employee performance. Based on a survey of 342 employees in 114 hotels, it was concluded that organizational resources can have a positive impact on employee engagement, in turn, employee engagement will have a positive impact on employee performance.

According to Blessing and White (2011), “Engaged Employees” are builders, they want to know the desired expectation for their role so that they can meet and exceed them. They

perform at consistently high levels, they want to use their talent and strengths at work every day, they work with passion and they drive innovation and move their organization forward. The Gallup Organization, potentially the most widely recognized name associated with employee engagement indicates that there is a direct cause and effect relationship between employee engagement and organizational innovation (Hanaysha, 2016). Every employee has an inborn capacity for creativity and innovation and engaged employees are far more likely to suggest or develop creative ways to improve management or business processes. However, research is yet scant on the relationship between dedication and organisational innovation when it comes to the context of telecommunication firms in Rivers State; hence this study.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a correlation study as it examines the relationship between employee engagement and organisational innovation of telecommunication firms in Rivers State. The population for this study is four GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Sourced from the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC, 2025) online directory. The choice and focus on the four GSM telecommunication firms, including the specificity of Rivers State, as the region for the investigation, borders on ensuring the feasibility of the study, through the adoption of an accessible population. This research population is four, thus it is considered small. Hence this research was conducted as a census. Key management personnel from the four telecommunication companies were engaged as representatives in the study. A total of 20 participants (five each) were sourced from the four organisations. The instrument utilized in the sourcing of data was the structured questionnaire. The reliability test for this study was tested using the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The 0.70 benchmark put forward by Nunnally (cited in Sekaran, 2003) was also adopted in the assessment of good (where $\alpha > 0.70$) or poor (where $\alpha < 0.70$) reliability of the instrument (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Three bi-variate relationships were assessed in the study, using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation coefficient.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Bivariate Analysis

The test for the role of dedication in the outcome of the measures of organisational innovation (product, process and market) is addressed in this section of the bivariate analysis. The analysis tests three null hypotheses about the relationship between the variables.

Table 1: Relationship between dedication and organisational innovation

| | | Dedication | Product Innovation | Process Innovation | Market Innovation |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Spearman's rho Dedication | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .805** | .882** | .744** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Product Innovation | Correlation Coefficient | .805** | 1.000 | .828** | .801** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Process Innovation | Correlation Coefficient | .882** | .828** | 1.000 | .769** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | . | .000 |
| | N | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Market Innovation | Correlation Coefficient | .744** | .801** | .769** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | . |
| | N | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |

Source: Research Data, 2025

The tests (Table 2) reveal a significant and positive relationship between the variables. From the result, it is evident that dedication significantly impacts very highly on product innovation (rho = 0.805 and P = 0.000), very highly on process innovation (Rho = 0.882 and P = 0.000) and to a high extent on market innovation (rho = 0.744 and P = 0.000). The result show that dedication drives the innovation outcomes of GSM telecommunication companies in Rivers State, thus demonstrating the extent to which employee dedication contributes toward improving the outcomes of product, process and market innovation. Following the outcome of the test and the observed significance of the relationship between the variables, the three related null hypothetical statements of no significant relationships were all rejected. The findings are stated as follows:

- i. There is a significant relationship between dedication and product innovation of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State
- ii. There is a significant relationship between dedication and process innovation of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State
- iii. There is a significant relationship between dedication and market innovation of GSM telecommunication firms in Rivers State

Discussion of the Findings

Dedication contributes to the extent of employee commitment and responsibility toward the organisation. It is crucial as it enriches the workers disposition toward their work and enhances the level of their creativity; thus, reinforcing the outcomes of product, process and marketing innovation (Hung et al, 2010; Argote & Hora, 2017). This position is supported by the findings of this study, which affirms to the significance of the role of dedication in the outcome of organisational innovation of GSM telecommunication companies in Rivers State. The findings affirmed to the imperatives of dedication in the performance of roles, particularly given the drive it offers in driving the functionality of the workers (Khan, 2007; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Flores et al (2012) noted that dedication is also a vital component of workers competitiveness. This is because dedicated workers are more inclined to be more emotionally involved and to offer themselves in ways that drive the objectives and goals of the organisation innovatively.

Developing conducive and supportive work environment is essential for building and encouraging employee dedication. According to Saks (2020), through the conduciveness of the work environment, management can effectively engage their workers, making them feel appreciated, respected and significant to the organisation. The significance of the relationship between dedication and organisational innovation also reinforces the social exchange and learning theories; enriching knowledge on the extent to which staff treatment can affect their behaviour, choices and overall perception and attitude toward their work and the organisation. The implications are that management and the leadership of organisations are expected to be more accommodating and receptive to worker's needs, facilitating work systems and environment that encourages workers input and active participation in the leadership of the organisation, through rewards and frameworks that allow for inclusivity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that the management of the GSM telecommunication in Rivers State, focus on creating work systems and arrangements that are conducive, participative, empowering of employee voice and creative input; such that enhances their sense of membership necessary for reinforcing their levels of engagement and thus achieving improved outcomes of product, process and market innovation of GSM telecommunication companies in Rivers State. Hence it is recommended that the management of the GSM telecommunication companies in Rivers State can enhance employee dedication through the recognition and reward of employees for their efforts, thus reinforcing employees' feelings of placement, and membership of the organisation. This is important for strengthening employees' feelings of obligation and duty to the organisation, and thus can contribute to the product, process and market innovation of the GSM telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

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