

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORKERS' COMMITMENT IN WATER PRODUCING COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between self-awareness and workers' commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study focused on three dimensions of emotional intelligence which are: self-awareness, relationship-management and social skill as a predictor variable and workers' commitment as a criterion variable. The study adopts a survey research design. The target population elements for the study were 424 employees from the 10 water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample size of 233 was obtained using the Taro Yamen's formula. Data for the study was collected through structured questionnaire. Data was analyzed using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation coefficient with the aid of statistical package for social science version 27.0. The findings revealed that self-awareness has a significant and positive relationship with all three measures of employee commitment. Employees who are more self-aware tend to better understand their roles, align more closely with organizational values, and form stronger emotional bonds with their workplace. Based on these findings, it is concluded that self-awareness is a critical driver of employee commitment across various dimensions. Enhancing self-awareness can lead to increased loyalty, reduced turnover intentions among workers in the sector. The study recommends that management should implement self-awareness training to reinforce normative commitment, promote self-reflection tools to enhance continuance commitment, and foster a culture of emotional intelligence and empathy to strengthen affective commitment

Keywords: Self-Awareness, Workers' Commitment, Affective, Normative, Continuance Commitment.

INTRODUCTION

The complexity of societal processes, rising competition, technological advancements, growing customer demands, and evolving organizational needs have necessitated the employment of skilled managers and committed employees for optimal performance. Despite this need, prior studies in the Nigerian corporate sphere highlight a prevailing "I don't care" attitude among personnel, signaling a deeper issue of organizational commitment (Okpara & Wynn, 2018; Bambale, Shamsudin & Subramaniam, 2012). Water-producing companies, in particular, are grappling with the challenge of enhancing employee commitment and productivity (Akinbode & Oni, 2021). As a result, scholars in Nigeria have begun to focus on workplace commitment within sectors such as water production (Ahiauzu, 2012), noting that employee commitment is critical for improving job performance, reducing turnover, minimizing absenteeism, and promoting organizational citizenship behaviour (Mathieu & Zajac, 2009).

Mowday, Steers, and Porter (2000) describe commitment as the degree to which an individual identifies with and becomes involved in an organization, emphasizing belief in the organization's goals, willingness to exert effort, and a desire to remain within the company. A key factor influencing this commitment is emotional intelligence defined as the ability to recognize and manage one's own emotions and those of others. Emotional intelligence has emerged as a significant concept in organizational studies, encompassing a broad range of personal and interpersonal skills beyond intellectual and technical abilities (Rezayee & Khalilzadeh, 2009). It is increasingly regarded as a driver of workplace motivation, cohesion, and effectiveness, drawing the interest of professionals across disciplines such as psychology, management, and education.

Internationally, studies have investigated various aspects of emotional intelligence in relation to student performance, managerial effectiveness, social behavior and adolescent development across countries like India, Iran, Slovenia, Kazakhstan, and Brunensis (Saxena & Jain, 2013; Ebrahimpoor et al., 2013; Jug, 2015; Yermantataeeyeva et al., 2013; Vasina & Bagel, 2010). Locally, Nigerian researchers have examined emotional intelligence in relation to employee retention and commitment in sectors such as healthcare and telecommunications (Eketu & Edeh, 2015; Tamunosiki-Amadi et al., 2020). While these studies confirm the positive association between emotional intelligence and employee commitment, there remains a notable gap in literature concerning the specific influence of self-awareness a key dimension of emotional intelligence on affective, normative, and continuance commitment. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the role of self-awareness in shaping workers' commitment within the water-producing sector in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between self-awareness and workers' commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The objectives were to;

- i. Examine the relationship between self-awareness and normative commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- ii. Examine the relationship between self-awareness and continuance commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- iii. Examine the relationship between self-awareness and affective commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows the diagrammatic presentation of the study variables. On the left is the predictor variable (self-awareness), while on the right is the criterion variable (workers' commitment) measured with normative commitment, continuance commitment and affective commitment, as presented in figure 1.

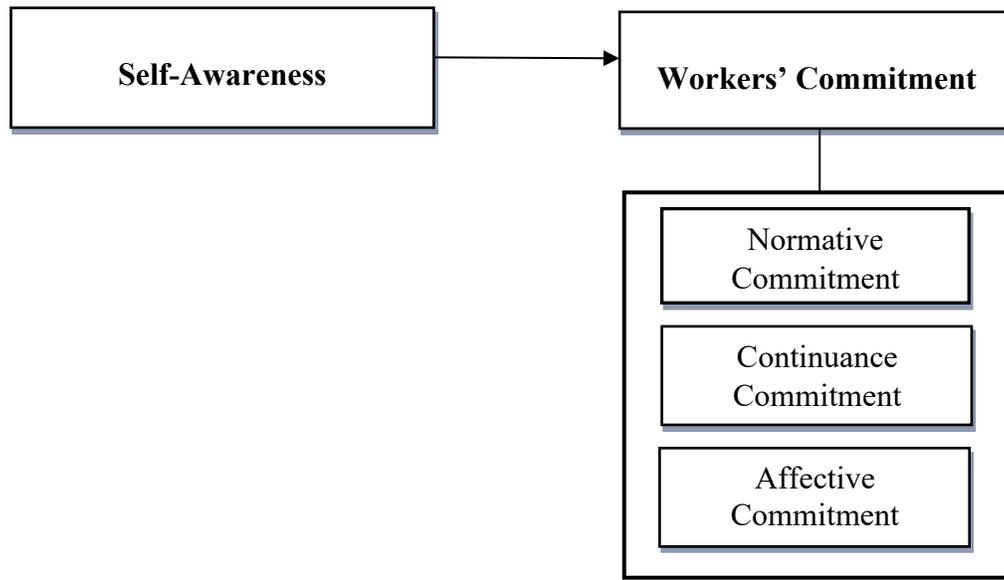


Figure 1: Indicates the relationship between self-awareness and workers' commitment of water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Source: Research Desk, (2025)

Research Questions

In line with the purpose and objectives of the study, the following research questions were raised;

- i. What is the relationship between self-awareness and normative commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the relationship between self-awareness affect continuance commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the relationship between self-awareness and affective commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and normative commitment in the water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and continuance commitment in the water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and affective commitment in the water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The Affective Events Theory (AET), developed by Thompson and Phua (2001), explains how employees' internal states such as cognition, emotions, and mental conditions interact with workplace incidents to influence their job performance, satisfaction, and commitment (Wegge et al., 2006). The theory suggests that affective work behaviors are primarily driven by emotions and moods, whereas cognitive behaviors are stronger predictors of job satisfaction. It highlights that emotionally charged events at work whether positive or negative can trigger significant psychological responses that manifest in an employee's long-term behavior and attitudes. Rolland and De Fruyt's (2003) study supports this view, linking traits like conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness, and extraversion to the emotional responses described in AET. Moreover, performance feedback from managers plays a critical role, as it can directly impact an employee's affective state and, consequently, their satisfaction and productivity (Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000). Locke's (1976) Range of Affect Theory complements AET by emphasizing that the degree to which an employee values specific job facets like autonomy determines the intensity of satisfaction or dissatisfaction experienced when expectations are or are not met.

Additionally, the theory underscores that overexposure to valued job facets may amplify dissatisfaction (Spector, 1997). Parallel to these developments, various scholars have explored emotional intelligence theories, generally converging on four major components: perceiving emotions in oneself and others, understanding those emotions, and effectively using that emotional knowledge. Salovey and Mayer (2003) originally proposed their model in 1990 and later introduced the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) to empirically assess it. Similarly, Goleman and Boyatzis (2002) developed a theory grounded in practical competencies, measured through the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI). Despite different theoretical origins, both frameworks converge on the importance of emotional awareness and regulation at both the individual and social levels, offering valuable insights into how emotional intelligence shapes workplace behavior and commitment.

Conceptual Review

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the foundational step in managing interpersonal interactions and understanding one's own emotions. Garner (2009) defines it as being conscious of our emotions, recognizing their causes, and reflecting on behavioral patterns that result from these emotions. It involves the ability to understand and manage one's emotions and drives, as well as their impact on others, all of which contribute to achieving organizational goals. Goleman (2002) further explains that self-awareness entails a deep understanding of one's emotions, strengths, limitations, values, and motives, which enhances performance and collaboration in the workplace. Key traits of self-awareness include self-confidence, realistic self-assessment, and a humble sense of humor. Individuals with high self-awareness are adept at self-monitoring, adjusting behaviors, and forming effective interpersonal relationships (Shivers-Blackwell, 2006). They can accurately identify their feelings and connect them to thoughts and actions, a skill often referred to as emotional literacy (McGarvey, 1997). Tischler (2002) notes that self-awareness enables a balanced regulation of rational and emotional processes, providing emotional support that aids in making logical and socially acceptable decisions and judgments.

Workers' Commitment

Workers' commitment is a psychological bond that links an employee's job performance to their identification with and allegiance to the organization (Wallace, 2011). It is a central concept in industrial-organizational psychology and organizational behavior, often considered alongside job satisfaction as a key component of overall job attitude (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 2000; Brockner, Senior, & Welch, 2014). Research has demonstrated that workers' commitment can predict a range of positive organizational outcomes, including improved job performance, lower turnover and absenteeism, reduced withdrawal behaviors, and enhanced organizational citizenship behavior (Brown, Hillman, & Okun, 2012). It reflects the extent to which employees align themselves with the organization's goals and values, influencing their dedication and workplace conduct. Biljana and Dordevic (2004) emphasized that employee commitment is crucial for forecasting behaviors such as performance and turnover, while Gutierrez, Candela, and Carver (2012) asserted that highly committed employees, who willingly invest their time and energy into achieving organizational objectives, are increasingly regarded as a vital organizational asset.

Measures of Workers' Commitment

Normative Commitment

Normative commitment, as defined by Meyer and Allen (1991), refers to an employee's sense of obligation to remain with an organization, often stemming from internalized beliefs about duty and moral responsibility. Employees with high normative commitment stay not necessarily because they want to (affective) or need to (continuance), but because they feel they ought to, perceiving it as the right thing to do. This sense of obligation may arise from the organization's investment in their training, the feeling of being recognized as part of the organizational success, or ethical values instilled through socialization processes. Wiener (1982) explains that such beliefs develop through both familial and cultural pre-entry influences and post-entry organizational

socialization. As individuals observe and adopt societal, familial, and organizational expectations, they internalize the belief that remaining committed is appropriate. Suliman and Iles (2000) and McDonald and Makin (2000) support this view, noting that accepted norms of reciprocity strengthen normative commitment, whereby employees feel compelled to repay the organization's support and investment with loyalty and sustained performance.

Continuance Commitment

Continuance commitment, as described by Allen and Meyer (1991), refers to an individual's perceived cost of leaving an organization, where the decision to remain is primarily based on an evaluation of the economic and personal disadvantages associated with departure. Unlike affective commitment, which is driven by emotional attachment and identification with organizational goals, continuance commitment is calculative and instrumental, rooted in the recognition of benefits such as job security, tenure, and financial stability. Becker (1960) and subsequent studies (Aranya & Jacobson, 1975; Ferris & Aranya, 1983; Parasuraman & Alutto, 1984; Stevens et al., 1978) suggest that factors like age and tenure influence the strength of this form of commitment, with younger employees being more likely to voluntarily leave due to fewer perceived costs and limited work experience. Meyer and Allen (1984) also observe that individuals with high continuance commitment may not necessarily align with the organization's values but choose to stay because they feel they need to, often due to accumulated investments such as benefits, time, and effort. This form of commitment highlights a transactional relationship, where the continued association with the organization is maintained largely for the extrinsic rewards and avoidance of potential losses rather than emotional or value-based reasons.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment employees feel toward their organization, marked by a strong sense of identification and active involvement. Allen and Meyer (1990) assert that individuals with high affective commitment remain in an organization because they genuinely want to, driven by intrinsic motivation rather than obligation or necessity. This form of commitment is grounded in personal volition and emotional connection. Although the exact mechanisms that cultivate affective commitment remain debated, Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) suggest that it develops when individuals become engaged in a particular course of action, perceive its relevance to their self-concept, and derive a sense of identity from their association with the organization or activity. These elements—engagement, personal relevance, and identity alignment—serve as foundational conditions for affective commitment. Among the three types of organizational commitment— affective, continuance, and normative— affective commitment has attracted the most scholarly attention due to its profound implications for employee retention, motivation, and organizational performance.

Empirical Review

Victoroff and Boyatzis (2012) reported that self-awareness enable employees to know themselves and thus recognized their behaviors when under the spot light and this in return enabled them to direct their behaviors towards achieving their set targets. Being self-aware also enables the employees to constantly remain conscious both as individuals and when in teams and this has been a very big factor to their positive performance. The findings also concurred with Cheok & O'Higgins (2011) who discovered that self-aware employees are in a much better position to recognize, understand and control their emotions and as a result they respond to situations in a more professional and objective manner hence a better and improved performance output. Self-awareness is way beyond simply having adequate knowledge about ourselves but rather extends to being in position to interpret this knowledge for the purpose of learning more about ourselves.

Dirette (2010), social-awareness is broken down into four levels of Arousal and attention, Sensory and motor, Cognitive and lastly Psychosocial. To them at the arousal and attention, attention to ideas developed or any arousal is either very slow or poor due to our inability to pay attention or respond with close concentration as a result of distracting surrounding us. The sensory and motor stage is where we are able to explain our sense of feeling such as movement, fatigue, satisfaction and even more advanced skills of processing our perceptions due to our developed competence to pay attention, comprehend and memorize.

METHODOLOGY

The research design of any study is the overall structure of the given study. It reveals the type of research, it exposes the researcher's priorities and it provides the framework through which data is to be collected and analysed (Bryman, 2005). Given the above statement about research design, this study adopted the Correlational Research Design. The population for this study comprised of 557 employees from the ten (10) water producing companies under study in Rivers State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was 232 which was determine using the Taro Yamane method. Primary data was collected using a quantitative data collection method, which in this case was the questionnaire. In order to determine the validity of the research instrument that was used for this study, the instrument was subjected to content and face validity. The researcher therefore used the measure of internal consistency dimension for the reliability by using Cronbach Alpha. This study adopted the quantitative method of data analysis, which means that the data collected were analyzed statistically and in two phases namely univariate analysis and bivariate analysis. The Spearman Rank-Order Correlation Technique (r_s) which measures the strength and direction of monotonic relationship between two ranked variables were adopted to conduct bivariate analysis and test hypotheses with the aid of SPSS version 27.0. Out of 233 (100%) copies of questionnaires distributed, only 219 (93.9%) copies of questionnaires were usable for data analysis in the study to make generalizations and draw conclusions.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Bivariate Analysis

The Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 95% level of confidence and a (0.05%) level of significance in order to draw conclusion and make generalization to the study population.

Self-Awareness and Workers’ Commitment

Table 1 shows the result of correlation matrix obtained for self-awareness and measures of workers’ commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. Also displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes us able to answer our research question and generalize our findings to the study population.

Table 1: Correlations for Self-Awareness and Workers’ Commitment

			Self-Awareness	Normative Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Affective Commitment
Spearman's rho	Self-Awareness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.740**	.637**	.556**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	219	219	219	219
	Normative Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.740**	1.000	.736**	.708**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	219	219	219	219
	Continuance Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.637**	.736**	1.000	.671**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	219	219	219	219
	Affective Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.556**	.708**	.671**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	219	219	219	219

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between self-awareness and normative commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria?

The analysis of the relationship between self-awareness and normative commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria, using Spearman Rank Order Correlation, revealed a correlation coefficient of rho = 0.740, indicating a strong and positive relationship between the two variables. This suggests that higher levels of self-awareness among employees are associated with increased normative commitment, implying that as employees become more self-aware, their

sense of obligation to remain with the organization strengthens. Furthermore, the statistical test of significance showed a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between self-awareness and normative commitment is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, establishing that self-awareness significantly influences normative commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between self-awareness and continuance commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria?

The analysis of the relationship between self-awareness and continuance commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria, using Spearman Rank Order Correlation revealed a correlation coefficient of $\rho = 0.637$, indicating a strong and positive relationship. This means that as employees' self-awareness increases, their continuance commitment—or the perceived cost of leaving the organization—also increases. The direction of the relationship suggests that self-awareness contributes positively to employees' decisions to remain with the organization due to perceived benefits or costs of leaving. Additionally, the statistical test of significance showed a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the relationship is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between self-awareness and continuance commitment is rejected, and the alternative is accepted, establishing that self-awareness significantly influences continuance commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between self-awareness and affective commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria?

The analysis examining the relationship between self-awareness and affective commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria, using Spearman Rank Order Correlation revealed a correlation coefficient of $\rho = 0.556$, indicating a moderate but positive relationship. This suggests that as employees' self-awareness increases, so does their emotional attachment and identification with the organization. The direction of the relationship signifies that heightened self-awareness contributes positively to affective commitment among employees. Furthermore, the statistical test of significance yielded a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold, confirming the significance of this relationship. Consequently, the null hypothesis stating there is no significant relationship between self-awareness and affective commitment is rejected, while the alternative is accepted. Thus, the study establishes a significant and positive relationship between self-awareness and affective commitment in water producing companies in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Self-Awareness and Workers' Commitment in Water Producing Companies in Rivers State, Nigeria

The study findings reveal a strong and positive relationship between self-awareness and workers' commitment in water-producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. Self-awareness, a vital component of emotional intelligence, empowers employees to understand their emotions, strengths, and limitations, which fosters improved self-regulation and alignment with organizational values. Employees who exhibit higher self-awareness are more capable of

recognizing their role within the organization and how their contributions impact its broader objectives. This understanding cultivates a greater sense of responsibility and dedication, leading to heightened organizational commitment. Furthermore, self-aware individuals tend to improve interpersonal relationships, communication, and teamwork, which strengthens their connection to organizational goals and collaborative success. The findings also emphasize that self-awareness enhances employees' ability to manage stress, resolve conflicts constructively, and make sound decisions, thereby reinforcing job satisfaction and organizational loyalty.

Supporting this, Voss, Gruber, and Reppel (2010) assert that social skills enhance leaders' ability to appreciate others' perspectives, thereby fostering a more productive work environment. Gardner and Stough (2002) stress that leaders who demonstrate empathy by aligning with their employees' experiences can inspire and motivate them through trust and understanding. Goleman (2002) further explains that social skills and empathy expand a leader's openness to feedback and change, ultimately contributing to effective leadership. Dirette (2010) also highlights the layered nature of social awareness, ranging from arousal and attention to psychosocial responsiveness. These stages suggest that improved attention, sensory processing, and cognitive engagement strengthen one's ability to interpret and respond to social and emotional cues, thus reinforcing the importance of self-awareness in shaping workplace behavior, commitment, and leadership effectiveness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that self-awareness significantly and positively influences workers' commitment—specifically normative, continuance, and affective commitment—in water-producing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The results indicate that as employees become more self-aware, they demonstrate stronger emotional attachment, a greater sense of obligation, and a higher tendency to remain with their organization due to perceived benefits. This underscores the importance of self-awareness as a critical psychological factor that enhances employees' dedication, loyalty, and alignment with organizational goals. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. To improve normative commitment, management should introduce self-awareness programs that align employees with the organization's values and goals, encouraging a sense of duty and moral obligation to remain with the company.
2. For continuance commitment, the use of self-reflection tools should be encouraged to help employees recognize the long-term personal and professional benefits of staying, thereby reinforcing rational decisions to remain.
3. To support affective commitment, organizations should foster a workplace culture that values emotional intelligence, empathy, and collaboration, helping employees build stronger emotional connections to their roles and the organization.

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