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## Organizational Trust and Employee Commitment of Telecommunication Companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examined the relationship between organizational trust and employee commitment in telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt. The study adopted a cross-sectional research survey design in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured questionnaire. The target population was 437 employees of the four General System of Mobile telecommunication (GSM) firms in Port Harcourt. The study sample was 208 employees calculated using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was also achieved through confirmatory tests using Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Data generated were analyzed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman rank order correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. Empirical findings revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational trust and employee commitment in telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt. The study concludes that organizational trust significantly influences employee commitment in telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt. The study thus recommends that management of telecommunication companies should create a very friendly environment to enable the employee develop trust in the management which will go a long way to improve productivity. The study clearly proves that if trust is created between the management and employees are improved then commitment will increase.

**Keywords:** Organizational Climate, Employee Commitment, Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment

### I. INTRODUCTION

Employees have a complex relationship with the organization in which they work. Many constructs contribute to this relationship, including the employees' commitment to the organization. Employees' commitment to the organization impacts business outcomes, efficient operations, turnover rates, and productivity (Arnolds & Boshoff, 2004; Park & Rainey, 2007). Employees' commitment to the organization has been found to be related to their intent to leave, turnover, on-the-job behavior, employee health, and wellbeing (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnysky, 2001). Employees' commitment to the organization has also been linked to the employee's willingness to contribute to the goals of the organization (Park & Rainey, 2007). Brown, McHardy, McNabb and Taylor (2011) argued that committed employees remain within the organization therefore saving the organization of the costs required to recruit, train and develop new staff. In addition, high staff turnover increases customer satisfaction due to discontinued service delivery (Scott, 2007).

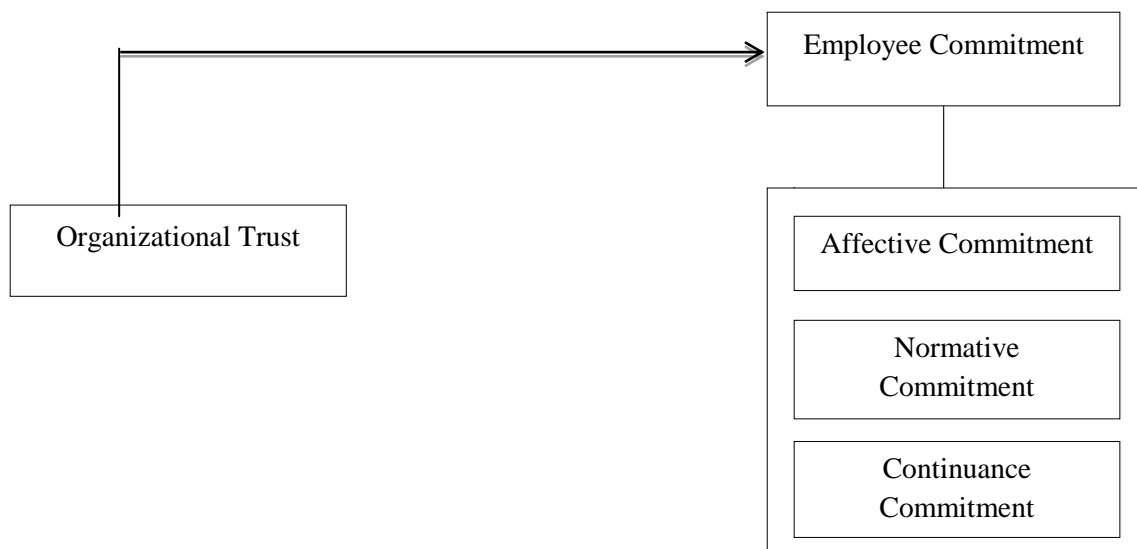
Committed employees are increasingly becoming a valued asset in organizations. For the purpose of this study employee commitment is viewed as commitment to the organization as well as employees' commitment to their occupations (Robinson, 2009). Over the last ten years, the study of commitment has advanced in many different directions. A variety of disciplines have adopted the topic as a theme in their research and these have offered fresh and significant insights (Brown, McHardy, McNabb & Taylor, 2011). These recent advances include new approaches to the conceptualization of employee commitment. No organization in today's competitive world can perform at peak levels unless each employee is committed to the organization's objectives and works as an effective team member (University of Pretoria etd-Coetzee, 2005). It is no longer good enough to have employees who come to work faithfully every day and do their jobs independently. Employees now have to think like entrepreneurs while working in teams, and have to prove their worth. However, they also want to be part of a successful organization which provides a good income and the opportunity for development and secure employment (John & Elyse, 2010). Employee commitment is help

when there is trust for their administrators, colleagues and shareholders in the organization. According to Kollock (1994) commitment arises from the feeling of trust. If an employee has trust in an organization or administrators of that organization, this belief increases his commitment (Burke & Stets, 1999). Trusting in an organization increases the commitment and even there comes out some problems employees tend to preserve their existing relations.

Trust has become an important concept in management as a result of its influence on not just the performance of the employees but also of the organization in general. Parastoo and Karimi (2015) opine that the management based on trust is a new expression of old thoughts and its position is observed well in current relations and using its mechanisms can be effective in achieving good individual and organizational results. The presence of trust in the workplace is essential for organizational performance and competitiveness in an increasingly global economy (Lamsa & Pucetaite, 2006). Trust has also been linked to organizational outcomes such as higher sales and profits, lower employee turnover, increased job satisfaction among employees (Davis, Schoorman, Mayer & Tan, 2000), and increased levels of cooperative behaviour among employees (Gambetta, 1988). Trust is critical to organizational excellence in the 21st century (Shockley-Zalabak, Morreale & Hackman, 2010). Therefore this study examines the relationship between organization climate and employee commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt.

This study was also guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between organizational trust and affective commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt?
- ii. What is the relationship between organizational trust and normative commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt?
- iii. What is the relationship between organizational trust and continuance commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt?



*Fig.1 Conceptual framework for the hypothesized relationship organizational trust and employee commitment*

*Source: Author's Desk Research, 2020*

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework

#### Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory was advanced by Bandura (1977) and suggests that leaders influence their employees through the modeling of processes that involve the transition of values, attitudes, and behaviors. This makes the employees to learn more on what to do, and additionally what not to do, through watching their pioneers conduct and its outcomes. In this manner, moral leaders are probably going to be models by excellence of their relegated part, their status and accomplishment in the organization, and their energy to influence the results of employees. Nevertheless, pioneers who take part in untrustworthy practices in association make a setting supporting parallel aberrance, which lead to employees observing and imitating the inappropriate conduct from the leader. For effective ethical leadership workers can likewise figure out how to be moral by watching pioneers who stand up for doing what is correct, particularly if the pioneers are effective in doing moral direct. Treviño (1992) stressed that social learning suggestion in associations like to teach and sends

capable flags about the estimation of authoritative standards and pioneers' ability to remain behind them. This suggests representatives who are rehearsing the best thing anticipate that unfortunate behavior will be rebuffed brutally, and they are frustrated on the off chance that it is most certainly not.

The social learning theory argues that leaders have authority of energy to remunerate and rebuff. This makes representatives to give careful consideration and copy pioneers' conduct, and they will do what is remunerated and abstain from doing what is rebuffed in the association. In this way, prizes and disciplines ought not to be immediate but rather additionally can be adapted vicariously by watching how others in the association are remunerated and restrained (Yukl, 2002). This means that social learning theory support that leaders need ethical conduct of employees in organization. This incorporates that managerial urge to give an appropriate case of what is in store in moral activities so as to have others comprehend what this will resemble. A pioneer need to give a case of what they need to see will enhance the origination of moral practices for the other managers.

### **Organizational Trust**

Gilbert and Tang (1998) in Paliszkievicz and Koohang (2013) defined organizational trust as the feeling of confidence and support that employees have in the employer. They further noted that organizational trust refers to the employee's faith in corporate goal attainment and organizational leaders, and to the belief that, ultimately, organizational actions will prove beneficial for employees. Vineburgh (2010) posit that it is the feeling of confidence by the employee that management will only carry out plans or actions that will not be detrimental to him. Oktug (2012) opines that organizational trust is a reflection of the employee's perception, which is related to the support the organization provides. He further noted that it is a phenomenon that is developed and realized over time through harmonious behavior based on mutual respect and courtesy. Organizational trust, according to Yilmaz (2008), is an individual's comprehension of organizational support, belief in the administrators being trustworthy and will of organizations being open, concerned and reliable between the employee and the organization. A lot of benefits accrue to any organization with organizational trust. An atmosphere of trust plays an important role in the development of effective communication and organizational effectiveness.

Fukuyama (2000) defines trust as expectations that arise in societies where the members share common norms, behave honestly and cooperate with each other. Yilmaz and Kabadayı (2000) describe trust as the beliefs about the unselfishness of the other party, readiness to risk-taking and dependency at a certain level. Dyer and Chu (2000) view trust as one party's confidence that the other party in the exchange relationship will not exploit its vulnerabilities. In the view of Coote, Forrest and Tam (2003) trust exists when one party has confidence in the honesty, reliability, and integrity of their partner. Cohen and Dienhart (2013) opine that trust is a form of strategic behaviour or rational economic decision making in situations that involve risk and vulnerability. From the definitions of trust given thus far, it is clear that trust is an exchange between or among people.

Trust is an important issue in organizations that has effect on performance, and if broken is likely to have serious adverse effect. Employee trust in leaders will likely result to increase in employee compliance with organizational rules and laws, facilitate the implementation of organizational change; and improve employee contributions in terms of performance, intent to remain and civic virtue behaviour (Robbins 1996; Van Zyl & Lazeny, 2002 cited in Ponnu & Tennakoon, 2009). Employees are unlikely to follow leaders that are perceived to be dishonest and may likely take advantage of them (Robbins, et al., 2008). Covey (1998) encourages companies to examine the impact of trust on the bottom line in addition to profits, earnings-per-share, and other figures traditionally thought to determine the success of the company. Low levels of trust can result in organizational decay as relationships deteriorate political strife, infighting, and general inefficiency result; organizations with little or not trust have no basis for future success. Corporate leaders cannot separate the issue of trust from their business dealings. As Fulmer (2004) noted, ethics, values and trust are important issues to executives attempting to recover from a substantial downturn in the national and global economies. Studies have shown that greater trust exists in organizations when employees perceive an organizational climate as ethical. Trust within an organization can contribute to creating greater efficiencies in relationships between managers, subordinates, and top level executives (Leo, 1996). Organizational initiatives to improve trust often generate long term benefits. A good example of a corporate culture which focuses on quality and ethics is Starbucks. Starbucks has won a number of ethics awards and has been recognized as a role model of social responsibility. The company first priority is taking care of the employees in its retail stores who communicate with and serve customers. Starbucks executives believe that by taking care of these employees, the company can provide long-term value to shareholders (Schultz & Yang 1997). Trust is vital to all organizations and it expected that ethical leaders demonstrate behavioral consistency between words and actions; treat all employees fairly without violating human rights.

Fulmer (2004) noticed that morals, values and trust are critical issues to administrators endeavoring to recoup from a significant downturn in the national and worldwide economies. Contemplates have demonstrated that more noteworthy trust exists in associations when representatives see a hierarchical with moral. Trust inside an association can add to making more prominent efficiencies seeing someone amongst supervisors and workers (Loe, 2006).

Trust is an essential factor in the acceptance of duties and information from supervisors. Generally, whether an action was performed on an employee's own volition, or it was requested by a superior, an employee is expected to, know better' than to act in ways that are unfavorable to the company and will be held accountable for any resulting consequences. If an employee feels that his/her supervisor may give incorrect information or a task that will not benefit the company, the employee may take extra precautions and/or be reluctant to perform when working Elmuti (2011). This behavior could result in slower task completion (Elmuti, 1997). In this scenario, the lack of trust established acts as an impediment to employee productivity, and consequentially results in losses for the company in the form of wasted employee time. McAllister (2014) stated that trust is a variable seen as critical to organizational coordination. When trust in supervisor is very low, subordinates may disregard directives from their supervisors out of fear that the information given to them is unreliable. In order to optimize the efficiency of the delegation of duties, it is important for supervisors to gain the trust of their employees.

### **Employee Commitment**

In recent time, several scholarly research works have been conducted in the area of employee and organization commitment. Commitment is a difficult concept to define (Meyer & Allen 1996; Meyer & Hercovitch, 2001). They defined commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target. Meyer & Maltin (2010) are of the opinion that the binding force can be experienced in different ways (i.e. can be accompanied by different mindsets), including an affective attachment and involvement with the target and an awareness of the cost associated with discontinuing involvement with the target and that in its pure form, these mindset are referred to as affective commitment (AC), normative commitment (NC) and continuance commitment (CC) respectively. According to Akintayo (2010) employee commitment can be defined as the degree to which the employee feels devoted to their organization. In the view of Ongori (2007), employee commitment is described as an effective response to the whole organization and the degree of attachment or loyalty employee feels towards the organization.

### **Measures of Organizational Commitment**

#### **Affective Commitment (AC)**

According to Meyer & Allen (1991) affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to identification with, and involvement in the organization based on positive feelings, or emotions, toward the organization. The antecedent for affective commitment include perceived job characteristic where there is task autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety and supervisory feedback, organizational dependability that mean extent to which employees feel the organization can be counted on to look after their interest, and perceived participatory management that they can influence decisions on the work environment and other uses of concern to them (Madi, Abu-Jarad, & Alqahtani, 2012). They further asserted that the use of these antecedents is consistent with the findings by Rowden (2002) that these factors all create rewarding situations, intrinsically conducive to development of affective commitment.

Also, Meyer & Herscovitch (2001) argued that the primary basis for the development of affective commitment are personal involvement, identification with the relevant target, and value congruence (Meyer, *et al*, 2004). As a result of the above view of Meyer & Herscovitch (2001), which states that when there is a high level of affective commitment, employees will be willing to remain in that organization, otherwise the reverse will be displayed. It has also been seen in the view of Bal, *et al*. (2012) that affective commitment reflects an emotional attachment and involvement in the organization.

#### **Normative Commitment (NC)**

According to Madi, *et al*. (2012) normative commitment refers to an employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organization where it based on the employee having internalized the values and goals of the organization. Normative commitment is said to reflect a sense of obligation on the part of the employee to maintain membership in the organization (Bal, de Jong, Jansen & Bakker, 2012). It has also been conceived that the potential antecedents for normative commitment include co-worker commitment where it includes affective and normative dimensions as well as commitment behaviour, organizational dependability and participatory management. And that coworkers' commitment is expected to provide normative signals that influence the development of normative commitment. It is worthy to mention that organizational dependability and participatory management are key issues that will foster and install a sense of moral obligation to reciprocate to

the organization. Normative commitment is said to reflect a sense of obligation instilled in the employee to sustain membership in the organization (Bal, *et al.*, 2012).

Unarguably, Meyer & Maltin (2010) opined that latter observation regarding normative commitment is consistent with recent findings; demonstrating that normative commitment can have two faces, one reflecting a moral imperative and the other reflecting indebted obligation (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). Firstly, the moral imperative mindset is experienced when normative commitment combines with strong affective commitment. Secondly, the indebted obligation mindset results from a combination of strong normative commitment and continuance with weak affective commitment. Also, Lee & Chen (2013) asserted that normative commitment relates to obligation employee may feel they owe the organization for being given a job when they need it most.

### **Continuance Commitment**

Continuance commitment refers to commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization (due to the high cost of leaving). Potential antecedents of continuance commitment include age, tenure, career satisfaction and intent to leave. Age and tenure can function as predictors of continuance commitment, primarily because of their roles as surrogate measures of investment in the organization (Mayer & Allen, 1997).

Continuance commitment is seen as the commitment that is based on the cost that the employee is associated with when leaving the organization (due to high cost of leaving). And the potential antecedents of continuance include age, tenure, career satisfaction and intent to leave. Age and tenure can be seen as adopted predictors of continuance commitment, as a result of their roles as substitute measures of investment in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). In the view of Madi *et al.* (2012), tenure indicates non-transferable investments that means close working relationship with co-workers, retirement investments, career investments and skills peculiar to the particular organization while age can be negatively related to the number of available job opportunities. Career satisfaction was said to provide a more direct measure of career related investments which could be at risk if the individual leaves the organization. They went further to assert that whatever employees perceive to as sunk costs, resulting from leaving the organization, are antecedents of continuance commitment.

### **Relationship between Organizational Trust and Employee Commitment**

Parastoo and Fariba (2015) aimed to investigate the structural model between organizational trust and organizational silence with job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the employees of Islamic Azad University of Isfahan, (Khorasgan) branch Iran. The study method was descriptive-correlation. The study population was the employees of Islamic Azad University of Isfahan branch (Khorasgan) as 340. 180 employees were selected by simple random method and sampling Table. Data was collected through administration of questionnaire. Pearson correlation coefficient and structural equations modelling were applied in the analysis. The results of study showed that organizational trust had inverse and significant relation with organizational silence and had positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Also, there was an inverse and significant relationship between organizational silence and job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The results of structural equations modelling showed that organizational trust had direct impact on organizational silence, organizational commitment and job satisfaction and has indirect impact via organizational silence on organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Also, organizational silence had direct impact on organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Olamiposi, Adedeji and Effiong (2015) examined the influence of organizational trust and job satisfaction on teachers' job performance among teachers in Ekiti State Nigeria. Two hundred and fifty eight teachers randomly drawn from Ekiti State public secondary schools participated in the study. Organizational trust scale, Job satisfaction scale and Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale were used as measures of investigation. Four hypotheses were tested using the independent t-test and the two way Analysis of Variance. Results showed that organizational trust significantly influences job performance among teachers in Ekiti State. Also, it was revealed that job satisfaction significantly influences job performance among teachers. However, no significant interaction effect of job satisfaction and organizational trust was found on job performance. Result of data analyses also showed that sex has no significant influence on job performance among teachers in Ekiti State. It was recommended that teachers should be given responsibilities and authority with less supervision to boost their sense of belongingness, respect and commitment which sustains trust in organizations and enhance performances.

Moorman, Zaitman and Deshpande (1992), the relationship between trust and commitment is envisioned positive, because trust expectedly creates relationship. These authors also showed that the awareness of the relationship quality of an organization is influenced by the level of Integrity, honesty and reliability. The perception of the relationship quality in an organization will apparently affect employees' commitment. If the employees notice that there is high level of integrity, honesty, and reliability in the workplace, the result will be

a valued relationship quality that will stimulate commitment. On the other hand, where the relationship is fraught with secrecy and dishonesty, employee commitment cannot indeed be definite. It follows then that high level of trust will unconsciously lead to optimum employee commitment.

Bakiev (2013) in a study the impact of interpersonal trust and organizational commitment on organizational perception performance” found that there was a positive and significant relationship between interpersonal trust and organizational commitment. The results of studies showed that interpersonal trust in employees and creating trustful climate led into high level of commitment and performance improvement.

From the foregoing point of view, we hereby hypothesized thus:

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between organizational trust and affective commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt?

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between organizational trust and normative commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between organizational trust and continuance commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional research survey design in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured, self-administered questionnaire. The target population was 437 employees of the four General System of Mobile telecommunication (GSM) firms in Port Harcourt. The study sample was 208 employees calculated using the Taro Yamane’s formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was also achieved through confirmatory tests using Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Data generated were analyzed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman rank order correlation Coefficient. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### Hypotheses Tests

Data analysis was carried out using the Spearman rank order correlation tool at a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the tests cover a Ho<sub>1</sub> hypothesis that was bivariate and declared in the null form. We have based on the statistic of Spearman Rank (rho) to carry out the analysis. The level of significance 0.05 is adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ( $p > 0.05$ ) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ( $p < 0.05$ ).

*Table 1: Correlations for Trust and the Measures of Employee Commitment.*

		Trust	Affective commitment	Normative commitment	Continuance commitment	
Spearman's rho	Trust	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.748**	.694**	.710**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	100	100	100	100
	Affective commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.748**	1.000	.914**	.820**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	100	100	100	100
	Normative commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.694**	.914**	1.000	.863**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	100	100	100	100
	Continuance commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.710**	.820**	.863**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	100	100	100	100

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

Source: Research Data 2020, (SPSS output version 23.0)

Table 1 illustrates the test for the last three postulated bivariate hypothetical statements. The results show that for:

***Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between autonomy and affective commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt?***

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a positive relationship between trust and affective commitment. The *correlation coefficient* 0.563 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and statistically significant at  $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$ . The correlation coefficient represents a moderate 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 trust and affective commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt.

***Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between autonomy and normative commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt?***

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a positive relationship between autonomy and normative commitment. The *correlation coefficient* 0.687 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and statistically significant at  $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$ . The correlation coefficient represents a high 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 autonomy and normative commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt.

***Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between trust and continuance commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt.***

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a positive relationship between trust and continuance commitment. The *correlation coefficient* 0.710 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and statistically significant at  $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$ . The correlation coefficient represents a high 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 trust and continuance commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt.

## V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study using descriptive and inferential statistical methods investigated the relationship between organizational climate and employee commitment in telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between organizational trust and employee commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. This reinforces previous studies by Olamiposi, Adedeji and Effiong (2015) who examined the influence of organizational trust and job satisfaction on teachers' job performance among teachers in Ekiti State Nigeria and the results showed that organizational trust significantly influences job performance among teachers in Ekiti State. Also, it was revealed that job satisfaction significantly influences job performance among teachers. However, no significant interaction effect of job satisfaction and organizational trust was found on job performance. Result of data analyses also showed that sex has no significant influence on job performance among teachers in Ekiti State. It was recommended that teachers should be given responsibilities and authority with less supervision to boost their sense of belongingness, respect and commitment which sustains trust in organizations and enhance performances.

Moorman, Zaitman and Deshpande (1992), the relationship between trust and commitment is envisioned positive, because trust expectedly creates relationship. These authors also showed that the awareness of the relationship quality of an organization is influenced by the level of Integrity, honesty and reliability. The perception of the relationship quality in an organization will apparently affect employees' commitment. If the employees notice that there is high level of integrity, honesty, and reliability in the workplace, the result will be a valued relationship quality that will stimulate commitment. On the other hand, where the relationship is fraught with secrecy and dishonesty, employee commitment cannot indeed be definite. It follows then that high level of trust will unconsciously lead to optimum employee commitment.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the summary of the result it can be concluded that as organizational climate is improved it brings about an increase in employee commitment. Based on the findings obtained from summary of discussion and empirical findings, the study concludes specifically concludes that organizational trust has a positive significant influence on employees' affective, normative and continuance commitment in telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.

The study thus recommends that management of telecommunication companies should create a very friendly environment to enable the employee develop trust in the management which will go a long way to improve productivity. The study clearly proves that if trust is created between the management and employees are improved then commitment will increase.

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