

# CORPORATE CULTURE AND EMPLOYEES' COMMITMENT OF SELECTED SUPERMARKETS IN PORT HARCOURT

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of corporate culture on employees' commitment of selected supermarkets in Port Harcourt. A total of 52 staffs were randomly drawn from Next Time, Everyday and Linjo supermarkets in Port Harcourt. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire and oral interview and 52 copies of questionnaire were analyzed. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that corporate culture is significantly related to employees' commitment. Based on these findings it was concluded that corporate culture has a significant influence on employees' commitment. The study therefore recommends that supermarkets in Port Harcourt should strengthen their involvement and adaptability traits in order to attain a high affective and normative commitment.

**Keywords:** *Corporate Culture, Employees' Commitment, Involvement Traits, Adaptability Traits, Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

It seems recently to be acknowledged that corporate culture is a significant determinant of organizations behaviour and performance. In the press and mass media, they sometimes mention a specific corporation's culture, such as the HP philosophy, the IBM way and the 3M value, and attribute it to each company's competitive advantage. Also, there have been several books and various case studies on corporate culture showing how it works, how it changes and evolves and how it influences the member's behaviour and corporate performance (e.g., Deal and Kennedy 1982, Schein 1985, and Collins and Poras 1994).

The concept of organizational culture received unusual attention in the late 1980s and early 1990s as management scholars were exploring how and why the American firms failed to compete with their Japanese counterparts. Organizational culture is frequently said to be

responsible for all manner of organizational ills and on occasions, credited with creating positive qualities (Ouchi, 1981; Barney, 1986; Kathryn, 2002; Shani and Lau, 2005). According to Brooks (2006), an intimate knowledge and awareness of culture should improve our ability to analyze organizational behaviour in order to manage and lead.

The Denison's Model of culture (1990), posits that there are four key culture traits: Involvement, consistency, adaptability and mission. Mission & consistency are linked to financial performance, while involvement and adaptability can be linked to customer satisfaction and innovation. The four traits were strong predictors of subjectively-rated effectiveness criteria of the total sample of firms, but were strong predictors of objective criteria such as return-on-assets and sales growth only for larger firms.

Organizational commitment which is defined as the degree to which an employee identifies with the organization and wants to continue actively participating in it (Newstrom and Davies, 2002) is an interesting topic in the field of organizational behaviour. The interest in this topic is due to the fact that employees' commitment is vital to contemporary organizational success (Pfeffer, 1998). The stronger an employees' commitment to the organization, the less likely the person is to quit (Guest, 1991; Shore and Martin, 1989). Strong commitment is also correlated with organizational citizenship (Handsoff, 1994; Shore and Wayne, 1993), job satisfaction (Anis et al. 2011; Sharma and Bajpai, 2010), job performance (Bergman et al., 2000; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Samad, 2007; Ward and Davis, 1995; Yousef, 2000) and employee retention (Anis et al., 2011).

The three-component model of commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) arguably dominates organizational commitment research (Meyer et al., 2002). This model proposes that organizational commitment is experienced by the employee as three simultaneous mindsets encompassing affective, normative, and continuance organizational commitment. Affective commitment reflects commitment based on emotional ties, the employee develops with the organization primarily via positive work experience. Normative commitment reflects commitment based on perceived obligation towards the organization; for example, rooted in the norms of reciprocity. Continuance commitment reflects commitment based on the perceived costs, both economic and social, of leaving the organization.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Several supermarket giants in the world have faced one form of failure & success over the past years. Supermarket giants like Walmart and Carrefour have come under severe failure due to cultural effects, mismanagement, ethical codes among others.

According to Kwintessential (2014), analysts still argue about the reasons behind the failure of Walmart in Germany. However, among them are a number of culture-related issues that come up rather often. There were two groups of factors which contributed to Walmart's failure in Germany. This first cluster is related to mismanagement. Some of the American employee management practices just didn't fit in the German context. For example, each employee before the shift had to participate in a morning exercise. It was perceived to be harmless, but the best thing about the practice was that they had to do it chanting "WALMART! WALMART! WALMART!" If in America such practice could be used to boost morale and inspire loyalty, then in Germany it was looked upon with annoyance, to put it mildly. Secondly, Walmart's ethical code caused much frustration as well. For example, the practice of actually spying on

your co-workers and reporting any misconduct may be acceptable in the U.S. However, in Germany it is not the case. One only has to think back to the 1940s and post-war Germany when citizens were actually doing this on a social level- thus the modern abhorrence. Thirdly, the feedback of the employees was ignored. Top management apparently didn't listen to anything the lower employees and subordinates had to say. Such a situation caused enormous amount of frustration among the employees. Morale was significantly undermined as well. This in turn, had a negative impact on the overall efficiency of the venture.

The cumulative effect of poor management and total absence of analyses of the local market or culture could not but had serious impacts on Walmart's position. Frustrations of both employees and the customers played a major role in the downfall of Walmart in Germany. As for financial performance, Walmart never officially published the losses it experienced during its stay in Germany. However, some analysts estimate that the losses of Walmart were US\$200 – US\$300 million per annum. Even though the exact number will remain a mystery, the retreat of the giant who is not particularly used to failure, speaks louder than number. Walmart did fail in Germany and cultural factors did play their role in it.

On the other hand, According to Fedor (2014), in 2007, France supermarket giant, Carrefour started aggressive international expansion in other countries particular attention was given to the rising Asian markets. One of the main targets was China. There were many retail experts filled with skepticism on the matter. Difference between France and China in terms of management and customer behaviour were among the most mentioned reasons for failure, as has been discussed on Walmart and Carrefour with issues of cultural effects on their overall performance and commitment of their employees' to work. This is not far-fetched with supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

Shinichi et al., (2007), hypothesized that firms with strong-culture are more likely to retain the incumbent employees, have internally promoted managers, and reduce the probability of default and hostile takeovers than weak-culture firms.

Previous researches have focused on the impact of culture on performance, we can easily suppose that while some cultures enhance performance, others may harm it; it is not easy to detect statistically significant effects of culture as means of improving employees' commitment. In Nigeria, research focusing on employees' commitment (Affective and Normative) is scant. This study aims to help fill this gap by examining the relationship between corporate culture and employees' commitment of Supermarkets in Rivers State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study:**

- To examine the relationship to which involvement trait influences employees' commitment in selected supermarkets in Port Harcourt.
- To examine the relationship to which adaptability trait influence employees' commitment in selected supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

### **Research Hypothesis:**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between involvement trait and affective commitment in selected supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between involvement trait and normative commitment in selected supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

H0<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between adaptability trait and affective commitment in selected supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

H0<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant relationship between adaptability trait and normative commitment in selected supermarkets in Port Harcourt.

## II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of corporate culture on employees' commitment (affective and normative) cannot be overemphasized as it lies in the fact that it will bring to focus, improvements to both scholars and practitioner.

### **Theoretically**

This study will add to the body of knowledge accumulated on corporate culture and employees' commitment, (by researchers and scholars in the field of organizational behaviour) as it will provide further insight to the understanding of corporate culture of organizations.

### **Operationally**

This study will help companies, policy makers and other users of such information relating to corporate culture and employees' commitment in dealing with situations arising from corporate culture in their respective organizations.

Furthermore, this study will reveal the inadequacies that exist in supermarkets and attendant impact on their level of efficiency. It will underline the benefits accruable to supermarkets in the area of corporate culture.

Finally, the study will bring to light the recommendations proffered on how to improve the efficiency of corporate culture and commitment of Supermarket employees' in Port Harcourt.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEWS

It has long been discussed that corporate culture can be a significant contributor to corporate performance. Corporate culture, sometimes called organizational culture, is defined as "a set of values, beliefs, and norms of behavior shared by members of a firm that influences individual employee preferences and behaviors" (Besanko, et al. 2000). Previous researchers claim that the culture can be a major source of efficiency in organizations and improve corporate performance (e.g. Kotter and Heskett 1992, Cremer 1993, Besanko, et al. 2000, Hermalin 2001). They argue that performance benefits of corporate culture derive from three effects. The first effect is the goal setting effect: the culture specifies the goals of the firm and helps the employees make daily decisions easily. The second effect is the coordination effect: the culture reduces the communication costs and facilitates coordination among employees. The third effect is the motivation effect: the culture raises the employees' motivation when they believe in the company's culture.

While the significance of corporate culture is widely accepted in academia and the media, empirical evidence seems to be insufficient. Most evidence has been anecdotal or case studies and thereby has been of little quantitative value. The exceptions are Denison (1984), Gordon and DiTomaso (1992), Kotter and Heskett (1992), and Sorensen (2002) who report that cultural strength is associated with superior performance. In our view, the scarcity of quantitative evidence stems from the following reasons: First, corporate culture and its strength are difficult to measure directly, which often prevents scholars from conducting quantitative analyses. Second, it might be difficult to detect the positive correlation between culture and performance, because some firms may have unadaptive or defective cultures that harm productivity (Kotter and Heskett 1992, Hodgeson 1996). Third, previous studies have mostly focused on the association between culture and performance, and have devoted less effort to explore the effect of the culture on the firm's policies and strategies.

According to Schein (1990), organizational culture is common values and behaviors of the people that are considered as a tool that leads to the successful achievement of organizational goals. According to Hofstede (1991), organizational culture is the mindset of people that distinguishes them from each other, within the organization or outside the organization. This includes values, beliefs, and behaviors of the employees different from the other organization. Organizational culture means stable arrangements of beliefs and norms, which are held commonly by a society or department in the organization (Kotter and Heskett, 1992). According to Greenberg and Robert, B (1995), organizational culture is a framework of values, beliefs, consisting of attitudes, norms; behavior of employees, and their expectations, which are shared within the organization by its members.

Strong culture in the organization is very helpful to enhance the performance of the employees that leads to the goal achievement and increases the overall performance of the organization (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). Employees' performance means the ability of employees to attain goals either personal or organizational by using resources efficiently and effectively (Daft, 2000). Sometimes, the term performance is mixed with productivity. Ricardo (2001) said that performance and productivity are two different terms. Productivity means the ratio which represents the volume of work done within the organization due to the period while performance is an indicator of productivity, consistency, and quality of work. He suggested that result oriented culture needed high level of education, concepts, instruments, training and management as well as leadership skills. According to the Stewart (2010), norms and values of organizational culture have high effect on those who are directly or indirectly involved with the organization. These norms are invisible but have a great impact on the performance of employees and profitability. He also suggested that norms and values are the first thing to look in the organizational culture. In today's business, it is confirmed by studies that organizations which have less focus in the area of managerial components, stakeholders, employees, customers and leadership, outperform, do not have the strong cultural characteristics in it (Kotter and Heskett, 1992).

In brief, these researchers argue that effective organizational learning can contribute to the attainment of the organization's competitive advantage and as a result, improves organizational performance.

Multiple definitions of commitment are found in the literature. Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) identified behavioral and attitudinal definitions of commitment. Behavioral commitment, also referred to as attributional commitment in the literature, involves “behaviors that exceed formal and/or normative expectations” (p. 225). Salancik (1977) proposed that behaviors that are explicit, irrevocable, volitional, and public bind individuals to the behaviors, thus causing greater commitment. In this approach, employees are viewed as becoming committed to a particular course of action, rather than to a particular entity; commitment is developed retrospectively (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

The three-component model of commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) arguably dominates organizational commitment research (Meyer *et al.*, 2002). This model proposes that organizational commitment is experienced by the employee as three simultaneous mindsets encompassing affective, normative, and continuance organizational commitment. Affective Commitment reflects commitment based on emotional ties the employee develops with the organization primarily via positive work experiences. Normative Commitment reflects commitment based on perceived obligation towards the organization; for example, rooted in the norms of reciprocity. Continuance Commitment reflects commitment based on the perceived costs, both economic and social, of leaving the organization. This model of commitment has been used by researchers to predict important employee outcomes, including turnover and citizenship behaviors, job performance, absenteeism, and tardiness (Meyer *et al.*, 2002). Meyer and Allen (1997) provided a comprehensive overview of the theoretical lineage of this model.

### **Relationship between Corporate Culture and Employees’ Commitment**

Organizational culture has no single definition due to the fact that the culture of an organization in itself is an undefined nature of behaviour in an organization that is exciting but subtle in nature to the extent that it may not be consciously noticed by employees in an organization (Robbins, 2000). Mullins (1999) defined organizational culture as the collection of traditions, values, beliefs, policies and attitudes that constitute a pervasive content for everything one does and thinks in an organization. Deal and Kennedy (1982) on their part defined organizational culture as a set of values that underline how we do our duties around here. Harrison et al (1992) stated that organizational culture refers to a system of shared meaning held by members that distinguish one organization from other organizations. They stressed that these shared meaning are a set of characteristics, and that the organization values and the essence of an organization's culture can be captured in seven primary characteristics. These include innovation and risk taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, people orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness and stability. According to them, each of these characteristics exists on a continuum from low to high. They concluded that the appraisal of an organization on these seven characteristics, gives a composite picture of the organization's culture. The four dimensions of organizational culture as identified by Harrison et al., (1992) include power dimension, role dimension, achievement dimension and support dimension. The power dimension describes the organization's culture based on inequality of access to redemption. Role dimension focuses mainly on job description and specialization. Achievement dimension refers to task culture which involves focusing on realizing organizational goals. The support dimension describes an organizational climate that is based on neutral trust between the individual and the organization. Some other literatures such as Meyer and Allen (1991), and Ricardo and Jolly (2001) identified communication, training/development, rewards/recognition, effective decision-making, risk-

taking for creativity and innovation, proactive learning, team work, and fairness and consistency in most practice as dimensions of organizational culture. However; teamwork, communication, training/development and reward/recognition are the four dimensions that have greatest effect on employees' behaviour /commitment according to Lau and Idris (2001), and this was adopted for this study. In relation to the school, Hargreaves (1995) stated that school as an organization has culture as the bedrock of behaviours, which assists in the achievement of school efficiency. He concluded that the effectiveness of the school is rooted in culture along with the leadership activities. As a result, the school authority, those vested with the administration of the school need to understand that a strong culture is beneficial to the overall achievement of the school objectives. Employee commitment is the degree to which an employee identifies with the organization and wants to continue actively participating in it (Nystrom, 1993). Organizational commitment can also be defined as the degree to which an employee identifies with the goals and values of the organization, and is willing to put in efforts to help the organization to achieve these goals (Herseovitch and Meyer, 2002). Organizational commitment according to Muthuelo and Rose (2005) can also be described as the willingness of employees to accept the goals and value of the organization and to work towards the achievement of these goals. Meyer et al. (1991) identified three types of commitments, namely; affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. The affective commitment involves the employees' emotional attachment to identify with and involve in the organization. The continuance commitment involves commitment based on the cost that the employee associates with leaving the organization. The normative commitment on its part involves the employees' feelings of obligation to stay within the organization. Meyer et al., (1991) stressed further that the three components of organizational commitment are not mutually exclusive. This means that employees could be simultaneously committed in an affective, continuance and normative commitment at different levels of intensity. The employee may have a commitment profile that may reflect high or low levels of all components (Meyer et al. 1991). These different profiles would eventually lead to different effects on work place behaviour and could be influenced by many factors, one of it being organizational culture, (Herseovitch et al 2002).

Some studies have also found that significant relationship exists in some instances between organizational commitments with some demographic factors such as gender, age and length of service. Olanrewaju and Kanisola (2010), and Irving, Coleman and Coleman (1997) found out that organizational commitment is influenced by sex and concluded that female employees exhibit greater organizational commitment to their job when compared to the male employees. Akintayo (2010) and Aranya and Ahron (1986), however, found that male respondents show higher level of organizational commitment than the female respondents. In relation to the relationship between age and organizational commitment, Irving et al. (1997) in their studies found that age was not a significant predictor of organizational commitment. However, Meyer et al., (1991) found that age has influence on organizational commitment. They argued that age might be correlated with commitment in the sense that seniority is associated with the opportunity to better ones position on the job. In their study, Eilemer, Gilder and Herval (1998) found that older employees are more committed to their job than younger employees. Organizational commitment has also been found to be related to the employees' length of service in an organization. Akintayo (2010) however found that no significant difference exist between organizational commitments of respondents with above ten years of experience on the job than those with below ten years working experience. Elhemer et al., (1998) in their studies found that a demographic variable such as employees' length of service is related to organizational

commitment. They found out that employees with more length of service are more committed to their job than those with lesser length of service.

#### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population of this study will comprise selected Supermarkets in Port Harcourt. Hence the research will be narrowed down to three (3) Supermarkets in Port Harcourt, they are: Next-Time, Every day and Linjo Supermarkets.

The sample size was determined by using Taro Yamane's formula at a 0.05 level of significance i.e. 95% confidence level. The Taro Yamane's Formula is shown:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where  
 n = Sample Size  
 N = Total Population  
 e = Tolerable error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{60}{1 + 60 (0.05)^2} = \frac{60}{1 + 60 (0.0025)} = \frac{60}{1 + 0.15} = \frac{60}{1.15} = 52 \text{ (approximately)}$$

Organization	Number of Staffs	% No. of Questionnaires
Next Time Supermarket	30	60%
Everyday Supermarket	20	25%
Linjo Supermarket	10	15%
<b>Total</b>	60	100%

Source: <http://nexttimesupermarket.com/category/about-nexttime-supermarket/>,  
[http://www.everydaygroups.com/profile.php?cms\\_id=1](http://www.everydaygroups.com/profile.php?cms_id=1),



### HO<sub>1</sub> and HO<sub>2</sub>

		IT	AC	NC	
Spearman's rho	IT	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.120	.193
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.754	.812
		N	52	52	52
	AC	Correlation Coefficient	.120	1.000	.630**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.396	.710	.682
		N	52	52	52
	NC	Correlation Coefficient	.193	.630**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.169	.721	.631
		N	52	52	52

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

Involvement Trait (IT), Normative Commitment (NC), Affective Commitment (AC).

The first hypothesis shows a positive correlation between the two first hypotheses at .754 which is less than alpha 0.05. We therefore reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is a positive relationship between the two first hypotheses.

Hypothesis two shows a significant correlation coefficient of .710 which is also less than alpha 0.05. We also reject the null hypothesis which implies that there is a significant relationship between Involvement Trait (IT) and Affective Commitment (AC).

### HO<sub>3</sub> and HO<sub>4</sub>

		AT	AC	NC	
Spearman's rho	AT	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.150	.370**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.654	.713
		N	52	52	52
	AC	Correlation Coefficient	.150	1.000	.630**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.294	.741	.871
		N	52	52	52

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

Adaptability Trait (AT), Affective Commitment (AC), Normative Commitment (NC).

Hypothesis three shows a positive correlation between Adaptability Trait and Affective Commitment at .654 which is also less than alpha 0.05. This would lead us to rejecting the null hypothesis which would also mean that there is a positive relationship between Adaptability Trait and Affective commitment.

HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Adaptability Trait and Normative Commitment.

The Ranking from the response:

Adaptability Trait (AT)

SA - 18  
 A - 30       $\sqrt{52}$   
 D - 1      = 7.211  
 N - 2  
 SD - 1

Normative Commitment (NC)

SA - 16       $\sqrt{52}$   
 A - 16      = 7.211  
 D - 15  
 N - 5  
 SD - 0

Using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Formula:

$$r_s = \frac{1 - \frac{6\sum d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}}{1 - \frac{6(52)}{120}}$$

$$= \frac{1 - \frac{6(7.211)^2}{5(5^2 - 1)}}{1 - \frac{312}{120}}$$

$$= \frac{-311}{120} = -2.6 \text{ (approximately)}$$

Therefore, with a P-value of -2.6 which is less than alpha 0.05 between Adaptability Trait and Normative Commitment, We reject the null hypothesis meaning there is a relationship existing between Adaptability Trait and Normative.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.850	4

**VI. CONCLUSION**

Corporate culture and commitment of employees in the organization has been found to be very significant as it borders on the growth and increase in both the market share and reputation of the organization. Employees tend to increase their participation in work and offer more skills in overall performance of the organization.

Based on the above, it is concluded that corporate culture enhances the commitment of employees in the organization. This may be explained by the fact that supermarkets in Port

Harcourt ensure that their corporate culture is employee-friendly which enables employees perform optimally on the job.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Enhancing Job Satisfaction

Enhancing the job satisfaction of employees can increase employees' commitment. In addition to focusing on customers' needs, organizations must also take care of employees' needs by making sure that employees are satisfied with their job and work environment in order to increase the level of employees' commitment. One of the ways to achieve this goal is to focus on the superior-subordinate relationship in which the two individuals work hand in hand, thus ensuring that the job is performed smoothly.

### Offering Career Advancement Opportunities

Career advancement opportunities have a positive relationship to employees' commitment. Organizations should therefore make it clear that employees have the opportunity to move up the ladder of the organization based on their performance or seniority. An organization can boost the morale of employees at all levels by paying attention to them. By making rounds at various times of day, department managers can hold friendly discussions with employees, show their concern about problems, and offer compliments when things are proceeding smoothly. Organizations can also offer "employee of the month" awards based on some pre-specified criteria of performance. Though monetary incentives help, non-financial strategies such as the ones discussed also work effectively.

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