EMPLOYEE DEDICATION AND PERFORMANCE OF TRANSPORT OPERATORS IN THE MARINE SECTOR IN PORT HARCOURT, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated the relationship between employee dedication and performance of marine transport operators in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Data for the study was generated from a 205 sample size out of a 420 population size derived from 60 marine transport outfits operating within the 7 marine terminals in Port Harcourt. However, in relation to data analysis, the Pearson’s Product-moment Correlation Coefficient as supported by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21) was used. Analysis of all the data gathered from the respondents proved that employee dedication positively and significantly relates with all measures of performance. In view of these findings the study concluded that employee dedication is an indispensable aspect of engagement behavior necessary for improved and sustained performance of marine transport operators in Port Harcourt and as such recommended that: (i) employees be allowed to contribute to issues that concern their job. (ii) Employers should give their employees opportunities to improve on themselves; this could be in the form of adult education. (iii) Life assurance policy be introduced in these organizations because if employees know that their family would be taken care of in case of eventualities in the course of their job, they will be dedicated and put in their best. (iv) Effective reward (intrinsic and extrinsic) scheme be put in place in order to continuously attract and retain employees with such behavioural trait.

Keywords: Employee dedication, Performance, Growth, Productivity, Survival, Port Harcourt.
INTRODUCTION

One of the most important conditions to evaluate an organisation is its performance in terms of profitability, growth, survival and the efforts of its employees to attain the goals and objectives of such organisation. Performance is considered an essential condition for organizational survival in a competitive and fast changing business environment. Performance became a necessary phenomenon in the organization because a non-performing organization is prone to face early entropy. This is because it is through sustained performance that an organization achieves growth in the form of expansion and profitability. Accordingly, Maran, Lawrence & Maimunah (2009) substantiated that performance can be viewed in terms of financial and non-financial performance. His studies have shown that no organization can actually achieve its objectives without the commitment and dedication of its employees. In the same vein, Mello (2006) asserts that effective and successful organizations are increasingly realizing that there are a number of factors that contribute to performance but that the human resource is clearly the most critical and valuable especially in the marine sector where not everyone is willing to work because of water phobia.

The marine transport business is one of the most profitable businesses in Port Harcourt. But in the midst of its viability in relation to return on investment there is still an observable level of poor performance, this usually plays out in the way they discharge their duties and render services when the need arises. For instance, these employees essentially sleepwalk through their day by putting in time without energy or passion to do the job. It is on this note the issue of employee dedication is considered as a predisposing phenomenon for effective performance. Dedication is an essential component of employee engagement work behavior that every organization wants to see displayed in its work place; it's about being inspired, enthusiastic and highly involved in your job (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Dedication is an individual 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). Further evidence points to the fact that there is a direct linkage between employee engagement behavior such as dedication and profitability (Czarnowsky, 2008) and organizational performance. Employees with this kind of behavioral tendency often display a deep positive emotional connection with their work and are likely to display attentiveness and mental absorption in their work (Saks, 2006). However, in spite of the contribution of employee dedication in the improvement of performance outcome, not much of empirical research has been carried out in this area and especially not in the chosen region of study (Port Harcourt). Some of the empirical studies recorded in this direction include Shraga & Shirom (2009) that explored the facilitators of barriers to work engagement in Nursing Home. Luthans and Peterson (2001) in employee engagement and manager self-efficacy while Kinyita and Hannah (2015) investigated the relationship between work stress and performance of employee in Nairobi City County. It is on this grounds that this study intends to examine the relationship between dedication and performance of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt.
Objectives of the Study

In line with the study purpose, the following are the objectives:

i. To understand the relationship between employee dedication and productivity of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt.
ii. To understand the relationship between employee dedication and growth of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt.
iii. To understand the relationship between employee dedication and survival of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt.

Research Questions

The research questions present a framework in which the purpose of the study can be achieved. In view of this, the following research questions were formulated:

i. To what extent does employee’s dedication influence productivity of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt?
ii. To what extent does employee’s dedication influence growth of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt?
iii. To what extent does employee’s dedication influence survival of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt?

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework graphically shows the relationship between study variables. Thus in this study, it displays the relationship between employee dedication and performance.

Figure 1: Operational Framework for the Study

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses stated below in the null form were tested as a means of ascertaining the nature of the relationship between the variables for the study. They are as follows:

H01: there is no significant relationship between employee dedication and productivity of transport operators in the marine sector of Port Harcourt.
H02: there is no significant relationship between employee dedication and growth of transport operators in the marine sector of Port Harcourt.

H03: there is no significant relationship between employee dedication and survival of transport operators in the marine sector of Port Harcourt.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Theoretical Framework**

The baseline theory on which this study’s variables are built on is the Social Exchange Theory (SET). Social exchange theory is a sociological theory developed to analyze the behavior of people in terms of exchange of resources. This theory opines that people get involved in social exchange because of limited or scarcity of resources, thereby needing other parties inputs (Levine & White 1963) as cited in (Das & Teng 2002). According to Zafirovski (2005), social exchange theory derives from the corresponding claim of rational choice model and behaviourism as its key bases and sources. He opines that the actors in social exchange theory while being guided by cost-benefit considerations make choices freely in regards to alternative courses of action. Within contemporary management research, the aspect of this theory that has garnered by far the most research attention has been the notion of workplace relationships (Shore, Tetrick, Taylor, Coyle-Shapiro, Liden, & McLean-Parks, 2004). Social exchange relationships evolve when employers take care of employees, which thereby engender beneficial consequences. The essence of social exchange theory is that obligations are generated through a series of interactions between the parties who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence.

Thus, the amount of cognitive, emotional, and physical resources that employees are prepared to devote in the performance of their work roles is contingent on the economic and socio-emotional resources received from the business enterprise.

**The Concept of Employee Dedication**

**Dedication:** This dimension refers to being strongly involved in one’s work, and experiencing a sense of importance, passion and challenge. It refers to a strong involvement which results in positive feelings like inspiration, significance, pride and enthusiasm (Gubman, 2004). Having a dedicated employee is considered an asset to the organization. Dedication is not the same thing as longevity because the fact that a certain employee is the oldest in the organization or has worked for the organization all his or her life does not make him or her dedicated staff member. Dedication involves desire, commitment; ownership and a continual strive to improve (Schaufeli & Bakker 2003). Any employee who is dedicated to the organization will understand and support the values as well as go extra mile to protect the corporate image of the organization thereby facilitate value alignment and organizational commitment. An employer can arouse dedication according to Schaufeli & Bakker (2003), employers that show genuine interest and care for the customer and employees will create an atmosphere that encourages dedication.
According to (Rayton and Yalabik, 2014), dedication is about being inspired, enthusiastic and highly involved in your job. It is an individual deriving a sense of significance from work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about the given job, feeling inspired and challenged by the job (Song et al. 2012). Mauno Kinnunen, Ruokolainen (2007) observe that employee dedication has conceptual similarities with job involvement. According to the authors, employee dedication can be described as a strong psychological involvement or the sense of identification, which the worker feels for his or her work (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009). However, Kanungo (1982) distinguishes between employee dedication and job involvement. In his distinction, he characterizes the primary difference between employee dedication and job involvement as being whereas employee dedication refers to a sense of consistency and commitment to a cause (in this case, the job), job involvement denotes an individual’s psychological identification with a particular job or with work in general. Additionally, both concepts are regarded as related and stable phenomena. The reason for this being that the difference between both concepts is not as clear-cut as it may appear and has not been clearly argued. However, employee dedication is observed to be a broader concept and to entail much more than job involvement because dedication comprises of feelings of pride, hope, inspiration and challenge whereas job involvement is more concerned with the psychological relevance of the job in the worker’s life (Mauno et al 2007).

Performance

Performance is perceived as a necessary essential outcome in business. This is because the continuous existence of any establishment depends on its performance. According to Zejobipi (2015), organizational performance refers to the record of achievements made by an organization over a given time measurable through several indices. It means that individual performance is the record of achievement made by an individual over a period of time measurable through several indices. Organizational performance involves analyzing a company’s performance against its objectives and goals. In other words, organizational performance comprises real results or outputs compared with intended outputs. Hence, employee performance is measuring his/her output against their targeted goals and objectives by the organisation. The analysis in this research focuses on three main outcomes, productivity, growth and survival. Performance is a term used in a variety of disciplines. For example, athletes out-perform the field when they jump the highest or run the fastest. Organizational performance is at the heart of strategic management and accounting disciplines (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986).

Although widely used in theoretical and empirical research, the notion of organizational performance remains largely unexplained and recourse is taken to commonly used operationalization of performance. There is relatively little agreement about which definitions are ‘best’ and which criteria should be used to judge the definitions (Barney, 1997). Moreover, many definitions capture the notion of performance only partially. The reason why organizational performance is so difficult to define is to be found in the multidimensionality of the performance concept. For example, performance can be defined in financial terms (e.g., market value, profitability, value-at risk), but it is often used in other environments,
such as operations (e.g., efficiency, effectiveness, number of outputs, throughput-time, product or service quality), marketing (e.g., customer satisfaction, number of customers retained over a certain period), and others. Performance measurement is virtually always important in management, especially in highly competitive, dynamic, complex, and global environments where managers are expected to have a strong grasp on dozens of issues (Fleisher, 2003). This is particularly true in ensuring that organizations determine, implement and adapt organizational strategies successfully. An organization’s strategy is the rudder that steers the ship (David, Donald and Albert, 2003).

Furthermore, the performance measurement system is the glue that holds the strategy together by consistently evaluating the strategy's effectiveness amidst unpredictable external forces. Kaplan and Norton’s (2001) posit that creating a strategy-focused organization, is quite simple: “Measure the Strategy!” According to Kaplan and Norton (2004), an organization’s strategy describes how it intends to create value for its shareholders, customers, and stakeholders. Strategies are also the means by which long-term objectives are achieved (David et al, 2003). Essentially, the strategy should define a set of organizational activities / performances that have to be accomplished in order to move the organization in the desired direction. Strategic performance is thus the performance that the entire organization endeavors to achieve, to obtain its goal and vision. Robbins, Hayday and Perryman (2004) explain that wherever strategy changes, structure should follow and the structure should then typically encompass various organizational facets such as; the corporate vision (end goal), mission (statement of purpose), the various organizational departments or functions, the corporate culture as well as the organizational activities / performances (David et al, 2003). Considering the above, it would therefore only make sense to measure the impact or the success of the strategy.

Measures of Performance

Productivity
In general, productivity is a measure of performance or output. Productivity is reaching the highest level of performance with the expenditure of resource. It is the ratio between the output volume and the volume of inputs. In other words, it measures how efficiently production inputs such as labor and capital are being used in an economy to produce a given level of output. An employee with positive behavior will improve productivity. According to Jaja (2003), productivity improvement is seen to be a function of innovation, the shift of resources from old and declining employments to new and more productive ones. It is increased through the continuous improvement of resources. Productivity is not everything, but in the end, it is almost everything. Nwachukwu (1998) defined productivity as the measure of how well resources are utilized to accomplish a set of results. Productivity is referred to as being about doing the work because they provide the strongest linkage to the strategic goals of an organization, customer satisfaction and economic contributions. Harper (1984) developed a comprehensive productivity measurement framework that integrated productivity-related indicators into a network. He advocated the use of the ratio-format indicator; he recognized that the ratios had been extensively utilized, especially in the areas
of financial management (liquidity, debt-equity, inventory turnover, profit margin, return on investment, return on assets, etc.).

**Growth**

Every organization must expand from one stage to another for such organization to be categorized as one that is performing well. There is no organization in the world that is created to be static in nature; there must be growth or expansion. Therefore, a performing organization is one with profit that is improving, market share is improving, and sales are increasing and improving customer satisfaction (Salamon & Robinson 2008). There must be returns on the money and time invested by the different shareholders. Many researchers see growth as a major component of organizational financial performance. Venkatraman & Ramanujam (1987), in their studies, opine that the sales growth rate was a generally-accepted performance indicator. They found that sales growth is positively and robustly associated with other measures of firm financial performance. Castrogiovanni (1996) argued that in benevolent environments, a firm’s ability to exploit product market opportunities is measured by its sales growth rate. He further added that a firm’s ability to maintain or increase its sales level and market share in hostile environments, where there is increasing competition from both domestic and foreign firms, is a generally accepted performance indicator of short-term survival adjustment.

**Survival**

Organizations across all sectors continuously emerge, evolve, and cease to exist. Entrepreneurs propose new ideas, members join and leave, products and services ebb and flow, and resources accumulate and are spent (Aldrich, 2001). Survival is an organizational ability or state of continuing to live or exist, often despite difficulty, challenges or dangers. An individual/organization survives as long as it acquires inputs from suppliers and provides output to a giver (public, customers, clients) etc. Survival has many connotations - both subjective and objective. The most objective way to measure survival is to observe their continuing existence. Organizational Survival provides a rational, research-based approach to creating a durable business strategy designed to meet the needs of today's customers and position an organization to outperform while positively impacting society, the environment, community, and the bottom line (Gregory, Balestrero & Udo 2013). Certainly, the long-term desire for any organization is to be maintainable at all costs, to stay in business. Amid high times, low times and even steady times, a longstanding business proves to be a strong business. However, in terms of organizational survival, sustainability entails much more than sticking around for the long haul.

The survival of any organization depends on her ability to compete well in the face of other competitors. Gross (1968) argued that the concept of survival is a custom of every organization. This suggests that every organization should see as an absolute prerequisite for its serving any interest whatsoever. Several theories have been postulated to explain the concept of organizational survival. The theories that are related to this study are discussed below. According to Chopra (2005), business survival can be categorized into three: (a) economic survival theory (b) organizational survival ecology (c) organizational survival.
theory. Organizational survival theory is concerned with the study of organization internal factors. The interesting question in this is why some organizations survive while others fail. The economic survival theory stated that in industrial organization, economics concerns itself with the structural aspects of a market such as competitive intensity and concentration to determine firm performance. Structure conducts performance framework and holds a central position in the domain, under this theory, economist study survival under the umbrella of encompassing founding, dynamic charge and exits, which are determinants of market structure. Organizational ecology contributed heavily to the understanding of firm survival. Research in this domain is interested in understanding the social conditions that affect the formation, change and failure of organizational forms.

**Employee Dedication and Performance**

The industrial revolution and the movement away from agrarian society was the pivotal point in history that instigated the concern with workers output (Kartzell and Yanalorich, 2000). The major schools of thought, namely, Fredrick W. Taylor and the Human Relations Movement have impinged on productivity since the mid-nineteenth century. Among a number of factors that were since that time believed to have some influence on productivity are (a) the growth of organized labour unions, (b) technological advancement and (c) the changing role of government. For instance, government was assumed to have some influence on productivity, albeit often indirect through labour legislation, consumer protection regulations and even tax regulations, which may redirect the way in which factors of production are allocated. Declining productivity in Nigeria has become a persistent concern of economic and business analysts over the past five years and as the decline continues so does the search for solutions (Bowman, 1994; Burnstein and Fisk, 2003; Balk, 2003). Dozens of organizations have attempted to solve their productivity problems by application of various innovative management techniques (Balas 2004). Some private sector agencies have implemented incentive programs in order to influence and increase productivity.

Dedication is about being inspired, enthusiastic and highly involved in your job (Rayton and Yalabik, 2014). Dedication is an individual deriving a sense of significance from work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about the given job, and feeling inspired and challenged by the job (Song et al., 2012). The meaning of dedication in the oxford dictionary is the quality of being dedicated or committed to a task or purpose. The researchers are therefore going to use dedication and commitment interchangeably. Commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets (Herscovitch & Meyer 2002). ‘Binding’ refers to the maintenance of the relationship with the commitment object and is seen as the most important outcome of commitment (Meyer et al. 2002). Mowday, Porter, and Dubin (1974) suggest that high committed employees may perform better than less committed ones. Schein (2011) and Steers (1975) suggested that commitment may represent one useful indicator of the effectiveness of an organization. Employee Commitment is important because high levels of commitment lead to several favorable organizational outcomes. It reflects the extent to which employees identify with an organization and is committed to its goals. Biljana Dordevic (2004) stated that the commitment of employees is an important issue because it may be used to predict employees’ performance, absenteeism
and other behaviors. Impressive amounts of research efforts have been conducted to understanding the concepts and to identify implication of organizational commitment over the performance of the employees on the workplace. Aamir and Sohail (2006) examined the influence of organizational commitment on two—turnover intentions and on job performance. Rajendran and Raduan (2005) study explores that organizational commitment, leads to positive organizational outcomes. Komal and Samina (2011) said that job satisfaction has the highest impact on high employees’ commitment and productivity.

Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, and Jackson (1989) examined facts of a positive correlation between organizational commitment and job performance. Low commitment has also been associated with low levels of morale (DeCotii and Summers, 1987), non-committed employees may depict the organization in negative terms to outsiders thereby inhibiting the organization’s ability to recruit high-quality employees (Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982) and decreased measures of altruism and compliance (Schappe, 1998). Some study examines the relationship of commitment with various factors. Mathieu and Zajac, (1990) show that commitment has been positively related to personal characteristics such as age, length of service in a particular organization (Luthans, McCaul and Dodd, 1985), and marital status and have inverse relation to the employee’s level of education (Glisson & Durick, 1988).

Research conducted by the Institute for Employment Studies (Robinson et al, 2004) led to the conclusion that an engaged employee: (a) Is willing to ‘go the extra mile’ (b) Believes in and identifies with the organization (c) Wants to work to make things better (d) Understands the business context and the bigger picture (e) Respects and helps colleagues. Furthermore, when an employee is engaged in terms of his dedication and or commitment to organisational goals and objectives, there is bound to be a high rate of turnover, profitability and the tendency for that organisation to survive, nevertheless, there are instances where an employee is fully engaged and his/her engagement does not translate into a higher rate of turnover and profitability. With this, we are enthused to argue that dedication as a dimension of employee engagement does not have the tendency to affect performance by proposing that:

\[ H_0^4: \] There is no significant and positive relationship between employee dedication and organisational productivity of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt.

\[ H_0^5: \] There is no significant and positive relationship between employee dedication and organisational survival of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt.

\[ H_0^6: \] There is no significant and positive relationship between employee dedication and organisational growth of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt.
METHODOLOGY

The research design can be defined as the structure and framework which provides the platform upon which the researchers engage the events or phenomena of interest. It serves as a blueprint for empirical activities and the investigation of social phenomena (Sekaran, 2003). According to Kothari (2008), a research design is the arrangement of situations for compilation of scrutiny of data in a manner that aspires to link significance to the purpose of the study with effectiveness in procedure. Thus, the study adopts the cross-sectional survey in its assessment of the manifestation and relationship between employee dedication and performance. The methodology is primarily quantitative and variables were assessed based on the data availed through the administration of a structured questionnaire. The population of the study is 420 employees derived from 7 locations of marine transport operators’ terminals in Port Harcourt. Consequently, a sample size of 205 was drawn using the Taro Yamane approach while the study data was basically gathered from the respondents through the administration of a structured questionnaire. However, in relation to data analysis, the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient as supported by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21) was adopted. Furthermore, five (5) point likert-scale was also used to assess the respondents’ opinions ranging from very high extent to very low extent and items were extracted from each of the variables.

DATA ANALYSIS

Hypothesis 1

H01: There is no significant relationship between employee dedication and productivity of transport operators in the marine sector of Port Harcourt.

Table 4.20: Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dedication</th>
<th>productivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Source: SPSS output/research desk, 2018

The table above presents a Pearson product coefficient r of 0.879 at 0.01 level of significance (2-tailed). By interpretation, there is a very strong positive relationship between dedication and productivity. This finding has provided solution to the research question 1. Hence, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that infers that there is a very strong significant and dependable relationship between employee dedication and productivity of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt.
Hypothesis 2

H02: There is no significant relationship between employee dedication and organizational growth of transport operators in the marine sector of Port Harcourt.

Table 4.21: Correlations

<table>
<thead>
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<th>dedication</th>
<th>growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>.918**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.918**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS output/research desk, 2018

The table above presents a Pearson product coefficient r of 0.918 at 0.01 level of significance (2-tailed). By interpretation, there is a very strong positive relationship between dedication and growth. This finding has provided solution to the research question 2. Hence, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that infers that there is a very strong significant and dependable relationship between employee dedication and growth of transport operators in the marine sector in Port Harcourt.

Hypothesis 3

H03: There is no significant relationship between employee dedication and organizational survival of transport operators in the marine sector of Port Harcourt.

Table 4.22: Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>dedication</th>
<th>survival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
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<td>.917**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.917**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS output/research desk, 2018

The table above presents a Pearson product coefficient r of 0.917 at 0.01 level of significance (2-tailed). By interpretation, there is a very strong positive relationship between dedication and survival. This finding has provided solution to the research question 3. Hence, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that infers that there is a very strong significant and dependable relationship between employee dedication and survival of transport operators in the marine sector of Port Harcourt.

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DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the three tested hypotheses proved that there exist a strong positive relationship between employee dedication and performance. These findings are in consonance with the studies carried out by Harter et al. (2002), Smith and Marwick (2009) and Gallup (2006) that the dedicated employee may lead to mindfulness, intrinsic motivation, increased effort, and a more productive and happy employee leading to the increased likelihood of business success. This agrees with the findings of this research that engaged employees are dedicated to their job to a very high extent and are as well proud of the job that they do.

These findings further corroborate early findings of Nwinyokpugi (2015) that if workers were dedicated, there would be a high level of belongingness that permeates through the chains in any organisation. This means that an engaged employee can do all in his or her capacity to protect the organisation on all fronts. Also, the findings further agrees with the study of Rajendran and Raduan (2005) that engaged employees lead to positive organizational outcomes such as effective performance since they are satisfied with the kind of job they do, and also with the work of Alfes et al., (2010) that engaged employees perform better and are more innovative than others. They also discovered that employees who are dedicated are more likely to want to stay with their employers, enjoy greater levels of personal wellbeing and perceive their workload to be more sustainable than others. This inspiration is attributed to the fact that the work they do is full of purpose and meaning.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the findings of the study, we conclude that employee dedication is a fundamental aspect of employee engagement behavior necessary for improved and sustained performance of marine transport operators in Port Harcourt. Again, organizational policy such as life assurance schemes due to the risk associated with the job also plays an important role in the promotion of employee dedication even when they face adversity. Therefore, we recommend that: (i) employees be allowed to contribute to issues that concern their job. They should be allowed to contribute to decisions concerning them. Their input could better help the manager understand their point of view. (ii) Employers should give their employees opportunities to improve on themselves; this could be in form of adult education. The uneducated should be encouraged to get formal education; this will help them understand what self esteem is and the need to leave a good legacy for their children. (iii) Life assurance policy be introduced in these organizations because if employees know that their family would be taken care of in case of eventualities in the course of their job, they are more likely to be engaged therefore putting in their best. (iv) Effective reward (intrinsic and extrinsic) scheme be put in place in order to continuously attract and retain employees with such behavioural trait.
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