

## THE IMPACT OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT ON STAFF COMMITMENT TO DUTY IN NIGERIA ORGANIZATIONS

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### Abstract

*This study adopted a descriptive survey in its design and covered a population of 30 senior staff members in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC), Owerri branch. Due to the smallness of the population, the entire population was used as its sampled unit. Data was generated through a five point likert scale questionnaire, and the hypotheses tested with t-test (t) with the aid of the 20.0 version of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 20.0). This paper concludes that organizations should begin to identify career development beyond just a onetime event or an act to incentivize employees. They should see it as a continuous process and a strategic activity of the human resource department that can ensure the attainment of both the economic and psycho-social need of the employees with the profit and sustainability goals of the organization. Sequel to the results obtained in this study, the following recommendations are made; Organizations should invest more in career development with special interest in innovation driven skills and that there is need to guarantee employees security if their commitment must be secured and sustained*

*Keywords: Career Development, Staff Commitment, Duty in Nigeria*

### Introduction

Organizations in pursuit of their corporate goals hire employees from diverse background who equally has personal goals to achieve. To ensure that their employees are equipped with requisite skills that can make them consistently significant in the fulfillment of the task for which they are hired, organizations in most cases provides skill based training and development opportunities to their employees. Be that as it may, the quest to elicit and sustain performance driven motivation in the employees requires that those innate goals and expectation which individual employee has on the organization through their job be met. Part of these innate goals and expectation are job security and growth prospect; this defines career development.

From the psychological perspective, career development can be defined as the formation of a work identity or progression of career decisions and/or events as influenced by life or work experience, education, on-the-job training, or other factors (American Psychological Association, 1988). According to Patton and McMahon (2006), career development can be

divided into two aspects: content and process. Similar to the internal career, the content-oriented career development refers to employee intrinsic motivation in improving their works, such as interests and values. By contrast, the process-related career development is similar to the external career. The process-related career development refers to interaction and change of career over time, such as position and status.

On the side of the organization, they demand that employees should develop a long lasting psychological attachment to the organization; its principles, policies, visions and missions. This also explains the “commitment” expectation from the employees by the employers. To achieve this therefore, the need to achieve goal congruence becomes expedient. However, most studies on employees’ commitment to the organization often focuses on the effects financial rewards and compensation has on employees commitment, with little correlation established between non-financial rewards especially career development on employees commitment. This study will therefore try to fill this knowledge gap. In this study, career development is measured with indices such as; training, career growth prospect and mentorship programmes while employees’ commitment is measured with employees affective, continuance and normative commitment.

### **Statement of Problem**

The Nigerian work environment is today challenged with so many sad tales; one of them is the incessant lay-off of staff as a cost-cutting measure especially in the private. While this action does not defile academic and business sense, it however has created fear and sense of insecurity among the workers. This may have created the lack of commitment to duties as employees cannot guarantee their long stay in the organization and may regard any act of commitment as unrewarding.

Again, organizational memory is one of the drivers of competitiveness, innovativeness and quality service. This memory may not be acquired if employees’ capacities are not explored and exploited through regular skill training and career development. In Nigeria today, many organization do not consciously invest in the skill training and career development of their employees. This often creates a skill-gap once there is a technological change in the environment, this breeds loss of both financial and non-financial incentives to the employees and this may dampen their continuance commitment to the organization. The problem of this study therefore is to examine the impact of career development has on the commitment of the employees to the organization.

### **Research Objectives**

The central objective of this paper is to examine the impact career development has on employee’s commitment. Its specific objectives include;

- i. Examine the impact of training on employees’ affective commitment
- ii. Examine the impact of career growth prospect on employees’ continuance commitment
- iii. Examine the impact of mentorship programmes on employees’ normative commitment

### **Research Questions**

- i. What are the impacts of training on employees’ affective commitment?
- ii. What are the impacts of career growth prospect on employees’ continuance commitment?

iii. What are the impacts of mentorship programmes on employees' normative commitment?

### Hypotheses

H<sub>01</sub>: Training does not have significant impact on employees' affective commitment.

H<sub>02</sub>: Career growth prospect does not have significant impact on employees' continuance commitment.

H<sub>03</sub>: Mentorship programmes do not have significant impact on employees' normative commitment.

### Review of Related Literatures

#### Conceptual Review

**Career Development:** A worker improved his/her career through an unceasing attainment of managerial or proficient skills and know-how which resulted in rewards and promotion. Career development is seen as a long-term effort in which the organization helps employees utilize their full potential (Gomez-Mejia et al, 2008). Also, Gutteridge (1986) defines career development as the outcomes of actions on career plans as viewed from both individual and organizational perspectives. He stresses and that organizations adopt career development programmes in response to pragmatic human resource concerns and because they believe it will help ensure a continued supply of qualified talented personnel". Hence, these programmes provide employees opportunities to acquire necessary skills and competencies required to perform their jobs successfully.

Armstrong (2001) concurred and pointed out that today's changing environment required unceasing proficient and managerial improvement. Shareholders ensured, if not already existing, a sort of structures and procedures to support the progress of the staff they needed now and for the future. Career development usually involved a detailed path of movement through the levels of a business. It was based on worth without regard for race, gender, age or ethnicity. When workers were aware that they had equal chance of making it to the top, it motivated them to do their best. Capelli and Hamori (2005) noted that insufficient improvement, for any reason, impaired a manager from reaching the top. In the business world, there were basically two groups that directed the career development course: top management and human resource personnel. Managers, for example, might be obliged to ensure the requirements of an organization concurred with the worker's career goals to attain a complete balanced work environment. Often skills, experience, and knowledge that employees needed would be identified in order to provide their best possible work. Human resource (HR) personnel were often responsible for providing career development information programs for employees (Faria, 2013). Even though career development was prevalent in most organizations; there had not been enough support from management through implemented policies to make the workforce secured. Decenzo and Robbins (2002) posit that a worthy choice of career was the career that gave room for progression and maintained the enthusiasm, urge and ability, steadiness in the work and home life and satisfaction.

#### Stages of Career Development

A model of employee cycle based on four periods was suggested by Levinson and a thorough search on improving career model with its five stages was also suggested by Greenhaus et al. (2000).

**Stage 1: Occupational Choice or Preparation for Work:** The individual at this stage anticipated on the kind of education to pursue that would best fit a particular career of his desire in future. The individual tended to discover the opportunities of a career to meet his needs in the future. Since the individual at this stage had not gained any experience, the choice of career was basically based on the information derived from such career.

**Stage 2: Entering the Organization:** Practical work life started for an individual at this stage. The individual tended to have a realization of his ideal value set as the job values and principles occurred. At this stage, he becomes conscious of his environment as well as his skills, abilities and competencies to an extent. The individual then evaluated his chosen career and decided to abandon or continue with his choice. The decision made concerning his career at this stage is done out of precise information attained.

**Stage 3: Early Career: Establishment as a Young Professional:** The individual is of the full knowledge of his work environment at this stage. With the principles, values and requirements of his career imbibed, he tends to focus on his capabilities in order to be a valuable professional. The challenge of gaining competence in his career lied on the individual but the support needed by the organization could not be ignored.

**Stage 4: The Mid-Career:** Levinson compared this stage with the needs and characteristics of middle adulthood (Godshlik et al. 2000). The individual is aware of his career path. He assumes more duties and plays a vital role in decision making in his organization. Aside the fact that the individual experienced steadiness at work, he tends to feel depressed due to a feeling of guilt for ignoring his personal life to attain good success in his career. Again, due to that feeling, he evaluates his career objectives and achievements. Those conditions were known by Daniel Levinson to be mid-career crises which were then accompanied by a compromise of the work life (Godshlik et al, 2000).

**Stage 5: Late Career:** Levinson had suggested two main tasks for the individual as he plans to retire at this stage. To begin with, his worth would still have been of value to the organization and must have maintained his self – credibility. Planning career after exiting an organization through retirement is the sole duty of the individual. Entirely, this may be untrue as the organization may require a mature and experienced mind that had been tested and trusted overtime to help improve the organization unless limited by health or personal challenges. Scott and Meegan (2003) deliberated upon the need for managing career throughout the individual's lifetime. Considering the dynamic nature of employment and the high degree for quality by the employees in their work, a career path was to be embarked on in an individual's life.

### **Importance of Career Development for the Organization**

According to Simonsen, (1997), to retain employees, career development is vital as it served as a motivation to the employees and a way to retain experienced and competent employees. A common goal between the employee and the organization yielded good results. Organizations might have brooded over the work life of the employee but the conditions and interest of the employee's personal life determined the outcome of his input at work. In other words, outstanding employees could perform poorly if their life at work did not meet the needs of their lives personally. It could be said that a good relationship is required between the

personal life and work life of the employee as part of career development. To attain the best of an employee, management has to assist in achieving a balance in the employee's life.

As a way of ensuring equal employment opportunity and to promote diversity, career development had been known to be the utmost priority of human resources management concern within an organization. For an organization to experience such diversity, females are to be given such privileges as well as incompetent employees in order to take up greater tasks. By doing that, such employees would be committed to the organization and work hard to improve productivity through the organization's vision. Such employees could form competent team to change the organization for the better. Trust and goodwill is achieved for the organization through career development. As career development puts value on the employees, it also adds to the organization's value.

### **Importance of Career Development for Individual**

Developing one's career is perceived to be the sole responsibility of the employee as the outcome of such improvement would have served the goal of the employee successfully. Success in an individual's career is embedded in the overall process of career development and therefore the knowledge of career success should be known. The opinion of the individual in terms of career accomplishment is the internal and external signals which included creation of career rankings, stable monetary rewards, fulfillment and reaching the peak of his expertise. The strategy of career development influenced the achievement of the goals of employees which relates to all aspects of career success. With the process of career development, the path the individual toed determined the success ratio in job linked and personal achievement. Simonsen, (1997) claimed that if the value of the employee clashed with the value of the organization, then an existing relationship could not be beneficial for both parties.

Collective loyalty and direction for developing career by both parties to attain career goals were related. A well planned strategy inferred a high rate of achievement of career goals. It usually began with the individual taking the first initiative about their careers. Since the decisions that are work related are made by the individual are seemingly independent of any external factor, career development is regarded as the individual's obligation. Though most of those careers related decisions were dependent on individuals' will but the external factors greatly influenced those decisions. As the duty of the shift in the external factors could be formally assigned to specific agent/agents, therefore, for effective planning the career development process was being utterly borne individually.

**Commitment to Duty:** One of the definitions views employee commitment as a feeling of devotion to one's organization, willingness to work hard for the employer and the intent to remain with the organization (Jeet and Sayeed, 2014). Newstrom and Davies (2002) define employee commitment as the degree to which an employee identifies with the organization and wants to continue actively participating in it. Like a strong magnetic force attracting one metallic object to another, it is a measure of the employees, willingness to remain with a firm in the future. It often reflects the employees' belief in the mission and goals of the firm, willingness to expend effort in their accomplishment, and intentions to continue working there. Commitment is usually stronger among longer-term employees, those who have experienced personal success in the organization, and those working with a committed employee group.

Luthans (1995) explains that, as an attitude, organizational commitment is most often defined as:

- A strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization;
- A willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization; and
- A definite belief in and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization.

In other words, this commitment is an attitude about employees' loyalty to their organization and is an ongoing process through which organizational participants express their concern for the organization and its continued success and well-being. The organizational commitment attitude is determined by a number of personal (age, tenure in organization, and dispositions such as positive or negative affectivity, or internal or external control attributions) and organizational (the job design and leadership style of one's supervisor) variables. Even non-organizational factors such as the availability of alternatives, after making the initial choice to join an organization, will affect subsequent commitment. Due to this multidimensional nature of organizational commitment, there is growing support for a three component model proposed by Meyer and Allen (1996). The three dimensions are as follows:

- **Affective Commitment** involves the employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization;
- **Continuance Commitment** involves commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization; and
- **Normative Commitment** involves the employees' feelings of obligation to stay within the organization. Pareek (2004) defines organizational commitment as a person's feeling with regard to continuing his or her association with the organization, acceptance of the values and goals of the organization, and willingness to help the organization achieve such goals and values.

According to Madigan, Norton and Testa (1999), committed employees would work diligently, conscientiously, provide value, promote the organization's services or products and seek continuous improvement. In exchange, they expect a work environment that fosters growth and empowerment, allows for a better balance of personal and work life, provides the necessary resources to satisfy the needs of customers and provides for their education and training as well as that of their co-workers.

Hellriegel (2001) emphasizes that organizational commitment goes beyond loyalty to include an active contribution to accomplishing organizational goals. Organizational commitment represents a broader work attitude than job satisfaction because it applies to the entire organization rather than just to the job. Further, commitment typically is more stable than satisfaction because day-to-day events are less likely to change it.

### **Stages of commitment**

Mullins (1999) suggests the followings as the three processes or stages of commitment

- Compliance, where a person accepts the influence of others mainly to obtain something from others, such as pay; this is followed by
- Identification, in which the individual accepts influence in order to maintain a satisfying relationship and to feel pride in belonging to the organization; which leads to

- **Internalization**, in which the individual finds the values of the organization to be intrinsically rewarding and compatible with the personal values.

### Sources of Commitment

Hellriegel (2001) argues that, as with job satisfaction, the sources of organizational commitment may vary from person to person. Employees' initial commitment to an organization is determined largely by their individual characteristics (e.g. personality and attitudes) and how well their early job experiences match their expectations.

Later, organizational commitment continues to be influenced by job experiences, with many of the same factors that lead to job satisfaction also contributing to organizational commitment or lack of commitment: pay, relationships with supervisors and co-workers, working conditions, and opportunities for advancement. Over time, organizational commitment tends to become stronger because individuals develop deeper ties with the organization and their co-workers as they spend more time with them; seniority often brings advantages that tend to develop more positive attitudes; and opportunities in the job market may decrease with age, causing workers to become more strongly attached to their current job (Hellriegel, 2001).

Employees today are increasingly self-assured and cognizant of their value to employers. They would consciously choose to work for those companies that meet their workplace expectations. Organizations that demonstrate their commitment to employees will attract and retain their desired workforce and will ultimately win the battle for the workforce share (Madigan, *et al.*, 1999).

Simpson (2007), in an article for the Mansis Development Corporation, emphasizes that employee behavior on the job is influenced directly - positively or negatively by his or her immediate supervisor. Positive influences are essential to strengthening employee commitment. Therefore, the first step in building commitment is to improve the quality of management. Much has been written recently about the need for improving the education and training of the workforce. As important as this is, at least equal emphasis must be given to improving the quality of management if business is to succeed in achieving greater employee commitment and thereby its profitability.

Nelson (1999) further concurs, in this regard, because he indicates that while money certainly plays a part in building employee loyalty, it's clearly not enough in today's work environment. Compensation is important, but most employees consider it a right an exchange for the work one does. He further emphasizes that people want to feel that what they do, make a difference and money alone does not do this; personal recognition does.

### Strategies for Increasing Employee Commitment

There are many ways to build employee commitment and employers often fail to realize that some of the most effective things they can do to develop and sustain motivated, committed employees costs very little or nothing at all. Nelson (1999) proposes the power of .the five is as discussed below;

- **Interesting work.** No one wants to do the same boring job over and over, day after day. Moreover, while any job will always require some boring, repetitive tasks, everyone should have at least a part of their job be of high interest to them.

- **Information.** Information is power, and employees want to be empowered with the information they need to know to do their jobs better and more effectively. Further, more than ever, employees want to know how they are doing in their jobs and how the company is doing in its business. Open channels of communication in an organization allow employees to be informed, ask questions, and share information.
- **Involvement.** Managers today are faced with an incredible number of opportunities and problems and, as the speed of business continues to increase dramatically, the amount of time that they have to make decisions continues to decrease. Involving employees in decision making, especially when the decisions affect them directly, is both respectful and practical. Those closest to the problem typically have the best insight as to what to do. As one involves others, one increases their commitment and ease in implementing new ideas or change.
- **Independence.** Few employees want their every action to be closely monitored. Most employees appreciate having the flexibility to do their jobs as they see fit. Giving people latitude increases the chance that they will perform as one desires - and bring additional initiative, ideas, and energy to their jobs.
- **Increased visibility.** Everyone appreciates getting credit when it is due occasions to share the successes of employees with others are almost limitless. Giving employees new opportunities to perform, learn, and grow as a form of recognition and thanks is highly motivating for most people. Madigan *et al.* (1999) provide practical strategies that organizations can use to increase employee commitment. They first propose that, in order for an organization to increase the commitment levels of its employees, it has to recognize the fundamental need of the employee to maintain a work-life balance. The recognition of personal and family life must be seriously considered. Organizations might want to consider implementing such practices as:
  - Flexible work schedules;
  - Personal time-off programmes;
  - job-share arrangements;
  - reduced work weeks;
  - Work-from-home arrangements; and
  - Training programmes that offer practical suggestions on how to better affect the balance between personal life and work life.

## Theoretical Review

### Theory of Work Adjustment

The Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) (Dawis, 2005) is a class of theory in career development that is anchored on the individual difference tradition of vocational behavior (Dawis, 1992) called person environment correspondence theory, viewing career choice and development as continual processes of adjustment and accommodation in which: (a) the person (P) looks for work organizations and environments (E) that would match his/her “requirements” in terms of needs, and (b) Environment (E) in turn looks for individuals who have the capabilities to meeting the “requirements” of the organization. The term satisfaction is used to indicate the degree that P is satisfied with E, and satisfactoriness is used to denote the degree that E is satisfied with P. To P, the most central requirements to meet from E are his/her needs (or reinforcers), which could be further dissected into categories of psychological and physical needs that are termed values. To E, however, the most central requirements are



abilities, which are operationalized as dimensions of skills that P possesses that are considered necessary in a given E. Overall, the degree of P’s satisfaction and E’s satisfactoriness would jointly predict P’s tenure in that work environment.

**Social Cognitive Career Theory**

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) according to Lent (2005) is anchored in Bandura’s self-efficacy theory (1977), which postulated a mutually influencing relationship between people and the environment. SCCT offers three segmental, yet interlocking process models of career development seeking to explain (a) the development of academic and vocational interest, (b) how individuals make educational and career choices, and (c) educational and career performance and stability. The three segmental models have different emphasis centering around three core variables, which are self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Lent (2005) defined self-efficacy as a dynamic set of beliefs that are linked to particular performance domains and activities. Self-efficacy expectations influence the initiation of specific behavior and the maintenance of behavior in response to barriers and difficulties. Consistent with early formulation by Bandura (1977) and others (e.g., Hackett & Betz, 1981; Betz, Borgen, & Harmon, 1996), Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) theorized that self-efficacy expectations are shaped by four primary information sources or learning experiences, which are personal performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states. Lent (2005) suggested that of the four sources of information or learning experience, personal performance accomplishments have the most powerful influence on the status of self-efficacy.

**Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey in its design and covered a population of 30 senior staff members in Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC), Owerri branch. Due to the smallness of the population, the entire population was used as its sampled unit. Data was generated through a five point likert scale questionnaire, and the hypotheses tested with t-test (t) with the aid of the 20.0 version of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 20.0).

**Results and Discussions**

T-test output for Hypothesis One

**One-Sample Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
TandAC	25	6.0000	4.36845	.87369
RANKS	25	3.0000	1.44338	.28868

**One-Sample Test**

	Test Value = 0					
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
TandAC	6.867	24	.000	6.00000	4.1968	7.8032
RANKS	10.392	24	.000	3.00000	2.4042	3.5958

The SPSS output as shown in the t-test table above shows that the  $t_{cal}$  i.e 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that training (T) has a strong impact on the affective commitment (AC) of employees to their duties.

T-test output for Hypothesis Two

#### One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CGPandCC	25	6.0000	3.27872	.65574
RANKS	25	3.0000	1.44338	.28868

#### One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
CGPandCC	9.150	24	.000	6.00000	4.6466	7.3534
RANKS	10.392	24	.000	3.00000	2.4042	3.5958

The SPSS output as shown in the t-test table above shows that the  $t_{cal}$  i.e 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that career growth prospect (CGP) impacts significantly on the continuance commitment (CC) of employees to their duties.

T-test output for Hypothesis Three

#### One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MPandN	25	6.0000	2.56580	.51316
C	25	3.0000	1.44338	.28868
RANKS	25	3.0000	1.44338	.28868

#### One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
MPandN	11.692	24	.000	6.00000	4.9409	7.0591
C	10.392	24	.000	3.00000	2.4042	3.5958
RANKS	10.392	24	.000	3.00000	2.4042	3.5958

The SPSS output as shown in the t-test table above shows that the  $t_{cal}$  i.e 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that mentorship programmes (MP) impacts significantly on the normative commitment (NC) of employees to their duties.

## Conclusion

This paper concludes that organizations should begin to identify career development beyond just a onetime event or an act to incentivize employees. They should see it as a continuous process and a strategic activity of the human resource department that can ensure the attainment of both the economic and psycho-social need of the employees with the profit and sustainability goals of the organization.

## Recommendation

Sequel to the results obtained in this study, the following recommendations are made;

- i. Organizations should invest more in career development with special interest in innovation driven skills that help boost its employee output.
- ii. There is need to guarantee employees security if their commitment must be secured and sustained in order to meet the target goals and objective.
- iii. The employees' commitment to duty should be encouraged through good career growth prospect display through training, and mentorship opportunity to take over new responsibilities.

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