

1 Work Environment and Employees' Commitment in Agro-Based 2 Industries in Cross River State, Nigeria

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7 Abstract

8 This study examines the effect of work environment on employees' commitment in agro-based
9 industries in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study drew participants from two major agro
10 industries in the state. One thousand, one hundred and ninety four (1194) respondents were
11 purposively selected for the study. Information was elucidated from participants using four
12 point Likert scale questionnaire. Data obtained was analyzed using Pearson product moment
13 correlation (r). Findings revealed that work environment such as consistent communication
14 flow, manageable workload, availability of electricity, and work place that is free from known
15 dangers are positively associated with employees' commitment, and hence performance. The
16 study recommended among others that management of agro-based industries in Cross River
17 State should establish and promote good work environments in their organizations so as to
18 boost employees' commitment, wellbeing and overall performance and productivity.

20 **Index terms**— consistent communication, employees, commitment, work environment, manageable workload,
21 agro-based industries, productivity.

22 1 Introduction

23 human beings are very complex in their psychological make-up and hence, managers cannot influence employees'
24 inner state directly, they can however create work environment that encourages quality performance. According
25 to Onwuka (2002), many managers and supervisors labour under the mistaken impression that the level of
26 employees' performance on the job is proportional to the size of the employees pay pocket. Although this may be
27 true in a minority of cases. In fact, salary increases and bonuses for performance in many instances, have a very
28 limited short term effect. The extra money soon come to be regarded not as an incentive but as an entitlement.

29 There are other factors such as conducive working environment free from danger, communication flow,
30 manageable work load when combined with other factors provide a more powerful determinant of employees
31 commitment. However, when these factors are missing, the employee come to work only for a check and is
32 present at work in body only leaving their mind outside the gate. It is the quality of the employees work
33 environment that must impact on their level of commitment and consequently on performance.

34 According to Beiz (2001) work environment involves the physical, geographical locations as well as the
35 immediate surroundings of the work place. Typically, it involves other factors relating to the place of employment
36 such as security, additional perks and benefits of employment.

37 Employees commitment is of a critical importance for the success of an organization since it influence the
38 key employee related variables such as absenteeism, low productivity, low morale, labour turn over and other
39 negative tendencies. To Onuka (2012) the level of cooperation desired to achieve the institutional goal demand a
40 deliberate and fortified work environment for both the management and workers. This assertion is fundamental
41 because both the management and employees are the stakeholders.

42 DeCremer (2012) expressed that the quality of work environment has an impact on the employees selfesteem
43 and job satisfaction and hence performance; for workers are the most variable and the least easy to understand and

44 control of all management resources. Employers are sometimes baffled when their high rated employees under-
45 perform and others reign and leave. Management fail to understand why some employees are not committed to
46 the organization even though they have proactively implemented fair compensation policies and human resource
47 practice to motivate and retain them. It can be costly if employees are not committed to their jobs, and if they
48 lack the motivation in their work environment to exercise their full potentials.

49 The environment where people work, especially in Nigeria is unsafe and unhealthy. Often times we have
50 poorly designed workstations, unsuitable furniture, lack of ventilation, inappropriate lighting, excessive noise,
51 insufficient safety measures in fire emergencies and lack of protective equipment. According to Chandrasekar
52 (2011), people working in such environment are prone to occupational disease and it impact on their performance.
53 This implies that commitment is affected due to work environment. This paper presents therefore analysis of
54 the working environment in two selected agro-based industries to understand the level of commitment due to the
55 work environment.

56 2 Literature Review a) Work environment

57 Work environment involves the physical geographical location as well as the immediate surroundings of the
58 work place. Typically, it involves other factors relating to the place of employment, such as the quality of
59 communication flows, secure environment, manageable work load and other additional perks and benefit of
60 employment. Onuka (2012) observed that aside from the job scope itself, one factor that significantly influences
61 employees commitment is the work environment. Accordingly, Ali and Zia (2010) noted that a positive work
62 environment makes employees' feel good about coming to work and this provides the motivation to sustain and
63 increase productivity. Akintayo (2010) Posits that keeping employee happy and productive requires frequent
64 and open communication. Anugwom (2004) stated that un-conducive work environment creates a feeling of un-
65 fulfilment, inhuman treatment and neglect for the workers and with this feeling, they can really put in their best.
66 Onogori (2007) asserts that when the worker fail to find his work fulfilling and satisfying, it lead to boredom,
67 reduced efficiency, fatigue, frustration and dependency.

68 Onuoka (2006:15) asserts that "if a worker is not carried along in terms of good working environment and
69 given all the necessary assurances and incentives to convince him that the days of militarizing the work is over,
70 he will continue to live in fear and unsatisfied. The fear according to him will cause lack of commitment and
71 job satisfaction. It is in support of this statement that Maicibe (2002:83) maintains that "if employees are not
72 deprived of what they are supposed to get from their work environment, it prevents them from feeling dissatisfied,
73 possible protest or complains. Ribelin (2003) lamented that poor work environment leads to decreased employee
74 performance, absenteeism, turnover, early retirement and job dissatisfaction. Okoh (2003) expressed that where
75 basic facilities are available and the work environment is conducive, the workers morale and productivity may be
76 positively affected. Unfortunately, Okoh lamented that many public and private establishments in Nigeria lack
77 basic facilities to work. Therefore, a worker without enthusiasm for work, finding himself in an un-conducive
78 environment feel frustrated and demoralized such a worker can leave the office at any time and may possibly
79 turn his attention to other things (Ushie, et al, 2010). Environmental factors such as temperature, lighting and
80 ventilation can have direct impact on health. For example, Chandrasekar (2011) maintained that very high
81 temperature can lead to heat stress and heat exhaustion. Also, Physical factors in the work place such as poor
82 layout or overcrowding can lead to common types of accident such as tripping or striking objects

83 3) Work environment and employees' commitment

84 Commitment to the organization, profession and role has received wide attention in recent organizational
85 behaviour literature (Buchanan, 1974). Becker (1960) argues that commitment involves consistent lines of
86 activity in behaviours that are produced by exchange considerations. Commitment is a more active and positive
87 orientation towards the organization. It is an attitude or an orientation toward organizational goal or objectives.

88 Most organizations have realized that the performance of their workers plays a vital role in determining the
89 success of the organization. As such it is important for employers and managers alike to know how to get the
90 best of their workers. According to Awonusi (2004) one of the antecedent determinants of workers performance
91 is believed to be employees' commitment. Employees' commitment has become one of the most popular work
92 attitudes studied by practitioners and researchers. Akintayo (2010) noted that one of the reasons why commitment
93 has attracted research attention is that organizations depend on committed employees to create and maintain
94 competitive advantage and achieve superior performance.

95 Committed employees who are highly motivated in terms of conducive work environment contribute their time
96 and energy to the pursuit of organizational goals and are increasingly acknowledged to be the primary asset
97 available to an organization (Hienja, 2010). They provide the intellectual capital that for many organization,
98 has become their most critical asset. Furthermore, employees who share a commitment to the organization and
99 their collective wellbeing are more suitable to generate the social capitals that facilitate organization learning.
100 Ribelin (2003) noted that it is therefore, important for companies to know the aspects that play important
101 role or have big impact in boosting the commitment of their employees. The findings of Chuah (2012) suggest
102 that employees' commitment with an organization could be significantly increased by enhancing organizational
103 fairness, particularly conducive work environment in terms of job security, communication flow, manageable

104 workload which would consequently reduce employees' intention to leave. Ale (2011) found that there is positive
105 relationship between corporate social responsibility and employees' commitment and organizational performance.
106 He concluded that organization can improve their performance through employees' commitment by engaging in
107 social activities since such activities also include the welfare of employees and their families.

108 4 III.

109 5 Theoretical Framework

110 The theoretical framework adopted for this study is mainly based on the Human Relation School and Expectancy
111 Theory.

112 6 a) Human Relations Theory

113 This theory was developed by Elton Mayo and others. The theory believe in the importance of recognizing human
114 beings and their needs as paramount in achieving organizational commitment and According to Agba, Ushie &
115 Nkponyen (2010) the school contends that participative decision making is a veritable management tool. The
116 demands by employees to participate appear to be deeply rooted in the culture of freedom around the world
117 and are probably a basic drive in human beings. They want some control over things that affect them. Thus
118 employees' work environment affects commitment in organizational activities. Onuka (2012) asserts that human
119 relations school also believe that effective communication facilitates employees commitment and participation
120 in decisions that affect them in the work place. This is because people are the main factor of productions and
121 unless they have conducive work environment and employees' committed to their work, the organization will die
122 overtime.

123 While the Human Relations School revolutionized management theory, they are also quite problematic. Wilson
124 and Rosenfeild (2001) observed that for example, most of the major studies in this series consisted of very small
125 samples of workers (6 in the relay study, 13 in the bank wiring study), so the results are definitely suspect from
126 a scientific vantage point. Furthermore, some people would agree that Hawthorne effects were really the result
127 of workers who were more afraid of unemployment, rather than communication relationship.

128 7 b) Expectancy theory

129 Expectancy theory is a contingency model, which states that there is no universal method of motivating people
130 towards achieving organization objectives. This theory was propounded by Vroom (1964) in his study of "staff
131 motivation and job satisfaction". The major tenet of the theory is that whether a person works hard will depend
132 essentially upon what he expects to get out of the effort put into work. Ushie, et al, (2010) observed that the
133 basic tenet of the theory is that human behaviour in a given situation is a joint function of the degree to which
134 that behaviour is instrumental in attaining an outcome and the subjective probability that the outcome will be
135 forthcoming. Outcome may be positive such as good work environment, pay, security, manageable workload,
136 trust etc or negative such as harsh work environment, non-payment of salary, and threat of dismissal among
137 others.

138 The key to expectancy theory therefore, is th e understanding of an individual's goal and the linkage between
139 effort and performance; between rewards and individual goal satisfaction.

140 Motivation of staff to work is closely affected by the amount of rewards that people derive from jobs, while
141 their level of performance is closely affected by the basis for attainment of rewards. Individuals are satisfied with
142 their jobs and are ready to put in their best for the attainment of organizational objectives to the extent that
143 effective performance leads to the attainment of what they desire.

144 In summary, expectancy theory indicates only the conceptual determinants of motivation and how they are
145 related. It is however of value in understanding organizational behaviour and especially as will be applied in
146 this study. For instance, employees in formal organizations have their expectations. Therefore, in order to get
147 their necessary cooperation for the efficient administration of the organization, which will lead to the attainment
148 of organizational objectives, the manager should strive to create conducive work environment to discover the
149 workers' expectations such as conducive work environment that would enhance commitment and satisfy them
150 accordingly.

151 IV.

152 8 Methodology

153 The instrument used for data collection was the four point Likert scale questionnaire. The instrument had two
154 sections (A and B) made up of ten questions which deals with the substantive issue of the study. The psychometric
155 properties of the instrument was established through Cronbach alpha procedure and yielded coefficient of 0.89,
156 which implies that, the instrument is valid and can elicit reliable data. The instrument was administered to the
157 sampled respondents and analysed using Pearson Product moment correlation with SPSS version 20, the result
158 is presented in Tables 1 through 4.

159 V.

160 9 Results and Discussion a) Hypothesis one

161 There is no significant relationship between consistent communication and employees' commitment in Agro-based
162 Industries. Two variables were identified Volume XV Issue VI Version I here consistent communication is the
163 independent variable and employees' commitment as the dependent variable. The result is presented in Table 1.

164 The survey inferential method was employed. This method was preferred because it describes a phenomena
165 as it exist at the time of investigation and make inferences about the population under study using the sample
166 drawn from the population. Thirty six percent of the population formed the sample for the study selected based
167 on the size of each industry; for Pamol (Nig) Ltd 706 respondents were selected and for Real Plantation Ltd 488
168 respondents were selected randomly summing up to 1194 subjects. Pearson product moment correlation analysis
169 was conducted to investigate the relationship between consistent communication and employees' commitment.
170 As presented in Table 1, the calculated rvalue of 0.706 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 with 1192
171 degree of freedom, this result therefore implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. It therefore means that, there
172 is statistical significant relationship between the two variables. The result of the finding collaborate Akintayo
173 (2010) who posits that keeping employee happy and productive requires frequent and open communication and
174 therefore makes employees show commitment to their work. Also Onuka (2012) assertion confirm the present
175 study lending credence that human relations school also believe that effective communication facilitates employees
176 commitment and participation in decisions that affect them in the work place. The finding also confirms the result
177 of Chuah (2012) that employees' commitment with an organization could be significantly increased by enhancing
178 organizational fairness, particularly conducive work environment in terms of job security, communication flow,
179 manageable workload which would consequently reduce employees' intention to leave.

180 10 b) Hypothesis two

181 Manageable workload does not significantly affect employees' commitment in Agro-based Industries, Two variables
182 were identified here, manageable workload is the independent variable and employees' commitment as the
183 dependent variable. The result is presented in Table 2. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was
184 employed to investigate the relationship between manageable workload and employees' commitment. As presented
185 in Table 2 the calculated r-value of 0.811 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 with 1192 degree of freedom,
186 this result therefore implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. It therefore means that, when employees' are
187 assigned manageable workload there is reasonable commitment. The findings of this result confirmed Okoh (2003)
188 who asserted that where basic facilities are available and the work environment is conducive, the workers morale
189 and productivity may be positively affected. Unfortunately, Ushie, et al, (2010) lamented that many public and
190 private establishment in Nigeria lack basic facilities in the work place. Such a worker without enthusiasm for
191 work, finding himself in an environment that is not too conducive feel frustrated and demoralized. Such a worker
192 can leave the office at any time and may possibly turn his attention to other things. Also, Chandrasekar (2011)
193 maintained that very high temperature can lead to heat stress and heat exhaustion.

194 11 c) Hypothesis three

195 There is no significant relationship between availability of electricity and employees' commitment in Agro-based
196 Industries. Two variables were identified here; availability of electricity is the independent variable and employees'
197 commitment as the dependent variable. The result is presented in Table 3.

198 Pearson product moment correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between availability
199 of electricity and employees' commitment. As presented in Table 3, the calculated r-value of 0.743 is greater than
200 the critical r-value of 0.138 with 1192 degree of freedom, this result therefore implies that the null hypothesis
201 is rejected. It therefore means that, when electricity is made available employees' show commitment to their
202 job. However this result corroborated the findings of Anugwom (2004) who stated that un-conducive work
203 environment creates a feeling of un-fulfilment, inhuman treatment and neglect for the workers and with this
204 feeling, they cannot really put in their best. Also, Onogori (2007) asserts that when the worker fail to find his
205 work fulfilling and satisfying, it lead to boredom, reduced efficiency, fatigue, frustration and dependency.

206 12 d) Hypothesis four

207 Safe environment has no significant relationship with employees' commitment in Agro-based Industries. Two
208 variables were identified here; Safe environment is the independent variable and employees' commitment as
209 the dependent variable. The result is presented in Table 4. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was
210 conducted to investigate the relationship between safe environment and employees' commitment. As presented
211 in Table 4, the calculated r-value of 0.591 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.138 with 1192 degree of freedom,
212 this result therefore implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. It therefore means that an employee who perceive
213 his/her work place as being free from known danger is likely to show commitment towards his job. This result
214 is well corroborated with the assertion of Ali and Zia (2010) who noted that a positive work environment makes
215 employees' feel good about coming to work and this provides the motivation to sustain and increase productivity.

216 **13 VI.**

217 **14 Conclusion**

218 The pattern of relationship between the variables investigated shows that the contributions of each factor
219 (consistent communication, Safe environment, availability of electricity and manageable workload) correlate
220 significantly with employees' commitment. This seems to be the scenario in the Nigeria work environment
221 where either employees are denied these privileges or administrators/employers of labour don't give considerable
222 attention to them. This suggests the importance of employers of labour to give premium attention to these
223 areas since it affect employees' commitment. This is because the work environment is very vital and can greatly
224 affect employees' morale and therefore commitment. Management should therefore make the workplace look
225 attractive in terms of good office space, ventilation and furnishing. In addition, and in line with the human
226 relation prescription, management should assign a manageable workload to its workers and also encourage open
227 communication system. It would therefore be expected that employees would show enough commitment to their
228 work without any formal monitoring and supervision mechanism if they perceive their work environment as being
supportive of their overall aim and objectives.



1

Figure 1: Figure 1 :

229

commitment in agro-based industries in cross River State. Arising from this broad objective, the following research hypotheses are considered.

i. There is no significant relationship between consistent commitment in Agro-based Industries.

ii. Manageable workload does not significantly affect employees' commitment in Agro-based Industries.

iii. There is no significant relationship between availability of electricity and commitment in Agro-based Industries.

iv. Safe environment has no significant relationship with employees' commitment in Agro-based Industries.

b) Study area

The state is made up of three ethnic groups; Efik, the Ejagham and the Bekwarra. Cross River State epitomizes the nations linguistic and cultural plurality and it is important to note that, inspite of the diversity of dialects, all the indigenious languages in the state have common linguistic root as Niger Congo languages. Besides, the state boasts of being the venue for the largest Carnival in Africa. The state is divided into eighteen local government areas (Wikipedia, 2014) with a population of 2,892,988 (NPC, 2006).

i. Pamol Nigeria Ltd

Pamol (Nig) Ltd is a private limited liability company and has rubber plantations in Cross River, Delta and Edo States. The company's headquarters is situated in Calabar. In 1936 Pamol (Nig) Ltd, a direct subsidiary of Unilever Plc was formed to take over the Natural Rubber and oil plantations owned by the Niger Company Ltd and the Eastern Trade Cooperation Ltd in Nigeria and the then Southern Cameroon. The company has a staff strength of 1,960 employees (Pamol Annual Report, 2011). The company has oil palm (about 6,000htrs.) and natural rubber (about 3,000htrs).

ii. Real Plantations Ltd

Real Plantation Ltd is a subsidiary of Real Oil Mills Ltd with headquarters at Lagos. It is the major producer of vegetable oil and fuels in Nigeria. It is an agro-based industry engaged in the production of crude palm oil and palm kernel from its estate in Cross River State. The company has staff strength of 1358 employees (Real plantations Annual Report, 2013). The choice of Pamol Nigeria Limited and Real Plantations Limited is due to proximity, accessibility and willingness of the subjects to participate in the study and they are amongst the major agro-based industries in the state.

Physical environment
 Communication flow
 Employees commitment
 Work equipment
 Year 2015
 Personal protective equipment
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 Volume XV Issue VI Version I
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Figure 3:

1

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.
Consistent communication	1194	15.89	2.08	0.706	.002
Employees' commitment	1194	16.73	2.34		

Figure 4: Table 1 :

2

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.
Manageable workload	1194	15.92	2.15	0.811	.000
Employees' commitment	1194	16.73	2.34		

Figure 5: Table 2 :

3

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.
Availability of electricity	1194	16.28	2.20	0.374*	.000
Employees' commitment	1194	16.73	2.34		

Figure 6: Table 3 :

4

	Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	Sig.
14	Safe environment	1194	16.89	2.01	0.591**	.000
Volume XV Issue VI Version I	Employees' commitment	1194	16.73	2.34		

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[Note: © 2015 Global Journals Inc. (US) -Year 2015 *significant at $P < .05$; critical r -value = 0.138; $df = 1192$
Source: Data from fieldwork, 2015]

Figure 7: Table 4 :

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