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## **Autonomy and Organizational Commitment of Selected Manufacturing Firms in Nigeria**

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### ***Abstract:***

*This study using descriptive and inferential statistical methods empirically investigates the association between autonomy and organizational commitment. Data was generated from a sample of 137 respondents through personally administered questionnaire copies. Analysis entailed the descriptive illustration of sample characteristics using charts and frequency distributions. A total of three hypotheses are postulated and tested using the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient. The results revealed a significant relationship between autonomy and the measures of organizational commitment, namely: Affective commitment, Continuance commitment and Normative commitment. Based on the results, it is therefore recommended that organizations ensure that staffs are allowed the necessary autonomy and space in effectively and efficiently carrying out their roles within the organization since such actions have been revealed to endear commitment and satisfaction from the employees.*

**Keywords:** *Autonomy, organizational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment*

### **1. Introduction**

Business organizations in different environments are facing major challenges like rapid innovative technology changes, decreased number of skilled workforce, obsolescence of products and services thereby necessitating the need to continually reorient current personnel so as to subsist or contend. "A highly dedicated and committed workforce is essential for achieving organizational goals" (Locke et al., 1990 cited in Biwott, Kemboi and Gowen, 2015). Different schools of thought have debated on the perspective that workers who are empowered, are found to likely have better confidence and required competency to impact their performance and job environment in a more productive manner, and that they will likely be proactive and innovative. The continuous stress on management to cut costs and increase yield can be effectively achieved through a content and committed work force. Geisler (2009) holds that empowerment means injection of power to the employees. Organizations must empower employee's self-strength. When employees get more qualification and make use of it, manager's power is increased as well. Individual and organizational empowerment is achieved when employees can acquire their suitable higher positions.

Organizational commitment has been largely highlighted as the level of attachment an employee has towards an organization and his/her readiness to take responsibility for assigned tasks. The process of being a committed employee in an organization includes adopting the standards and ideals of that organization, and a readiness to ensure the organization realizes its objectives, and also a continued readiness to retain membership that organization. Organizational commitment has been operationally stated as Multi-dimensional and concerning a worker's allegiance to his organization, inclination to achieve organizational goals and wish to continue or discontinue membership of the organization. Cohen (2003; pg. 82-91) asserts "commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets". In agreement, Arnold (2005) defined it as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in an organization". In addition, Morrow (1993) describes "organizational commitment as characterized by attitude and behavior". Miller (2003) describes attitude as "evaluative statements or judgments - either favourable or unfavourable - concerning a phenomenon". Therefore, organizational commitment is "a state of being, in which organizational members are bound by their actions and beliefs that sustain their activities and their own involvement in the organization" (Miller & Lee, 2001). A committed and talented workforce is a valuable asset to the organization. Such employees are "psychologically attached to their job and less likely to leave the organization" (Kuo, 2009) thereby contributing greatly to organizational success. Allen and Meyer (1990) proposed three determinants of organizational commitment namely; Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment and Continuance Commitment).

Most of the previous studies seem to focus more on European countries; however, there is little research that directly addresses the case of developing countries. This is an important gap in the literature given the environmental and cultural differences that exist between developed and developing countries. In addition, there appear to be inconsistency in research results of these studies. This research therefore, aims to investigate empirically the extent organizational commitment is influenced by autonomy using some

measures of organizational commitment. It will examine the relationship between autonomy and affective continuance, continuance commitment and normative commitment.

### 1.1. Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the researcher's effort in achieving the objective of the study.

- i. To what extent does autonomy influence affective commitment in the Vegetable Oil and Soap manufacturing firms in Abia State, Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does autonomy influence continuance commitment in the Vegetable Oil and Soap manufacturing firms in Abia State, Nigeria?
- iii. To what extent does autonomy influence normative commitment in the Vegetable Oil and Soap manufacturing firms in Abia State, Nigeria?

### 1.2. Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are proposed based on the aforementioned purpose and research questions for this study;

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between autonomy and affective commitment in manufacturing organizations in the Vegetable Oil and Soap manufacturing firms in Abia State, Nigeria.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between autonomy and continuance commitment in manufacturing organizations in the Vegetable Oil and Soap manufacturing firms in Abia State, Nigeria.
- H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between autonomy and normative commitment in manufacturing organizations in the Vegetable Oil and Soap manufacturing firms in Abia State, Nigeria.

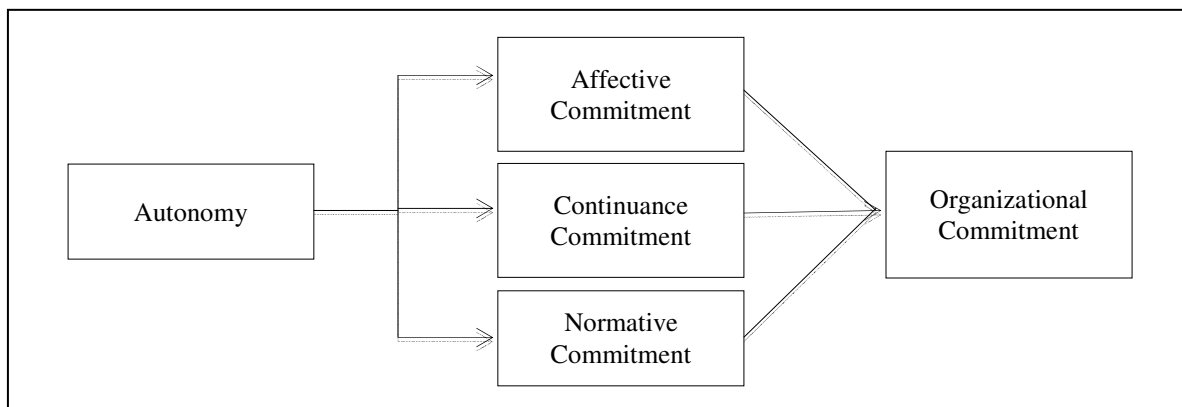


Figure 1: Operational framework for the study

## 2. Review of Related Literature

### 2.1. Autonomy

Bateman & Organ (1983) asserts that "task related job autonomy provide work-related emotional encouragement, which leads to more engagement of employees". Job autonomy has been known to "refer to the employees' self-rule and independence in conducting their tasks in terms of process, decision making, and time management" (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; cited in Wenjing et al, 2013). Turner and Lawrence (1965) defined autonomy as a "requisite task attribute found to promote job satisfaction and lower absenteeism among employees located in small towns". In addition to "giving front-line employees more decision-making autonomy was found to help the competitiveness of the firms" (Nielsen and Pedersen, 2003). Hackman and Oldham, 1976; cited in Wenjing et al, (2013) showed that "autonomy (along with other core job dimensions like task significance and feedback) promotes positive motivation, performance, satisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover outcomes". Sims et al. (1976) developed the Job Characteristics instrument and used it to study autonomy and other dimensions of job characteristics. For the reason that most knowledge workers engage in creative work with higher independence and strong self-motivations, they are prone to ask for the requirements of job autonomy strongly (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Beehr & Drexler, 1986; Man & Lam, 2003; Wang & Cheng, 2010). These characteristics embedded in knowledge workers suggest organizations to focus on job autonomy which can "maximize the effective practices of new concept development and innovation" (Vicari & Troilo, 2000) in order to contribute to creative performance of knowledge workers.

In contrast, when supervisors are controlling, the reduction in employees' intrinsic motivation is then expected to stifle individuals' creativity combining with lower creative performance (Oldham & Cummings, 1996). An empirical study, therefore, aiming at investigating job independence to clarify that knowledge workers' ingenuity is of significance. As an essential part of organizational climate, job autonomy, including work, content selection autonomy, decision making autonomy and process autonomy, cannot only impose a direct effect on individuals' innovation performance, but also play "mediating and moderating roles in ensuring psychological safety and emotional encouragement for team/group members, initiating more creative activities in the workplace"

(Dunbar, 1995, 1997; West, 2003; Song *et al.*, 2012). Consequently, it is necessary to consider the variable of job autonomy into the research of knowledge workers' creative performance. Job autonomy is important in growing innovation ideas among employees and helps promote organizational long-term success (Beehr & Drexler, 1986; Man & Lam, 2003; Wang & Cheng, 2010). Increased autonomy "will allow employees more chances for creation with a more flexible work process for conducting tasks through the task-related responsibility to define their roles and process to perform the tasks" (Troyer *et al.*, 2000; Song *et al.*, 2012).

## 2.2. Organizational Commitment

Previous works viewed organizational commitment as a concept based on "an attitudinal perspective, embracing identification, involvement and loyalty" (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974). In reference to Porter et al (1974) "an attitudinal perspective refers to the psychological attachment or affective commitment formed by an employee in relation to his identification and involvement with the respective organization". Porter et al (1974) further defines it as "an attachment to the organization, characterized by an intention to remain in it; an identification with the values and goals of the organization; and a willingness to exert extra effort on its behalf". Employees relates their own individual beliefs and aspirations to the goals and values of the organization making organizational commitment to serve as a bridge between the worker and the organization. O'Reilly (1989) sees organizational commitment as "an individual's psychological bond to the organization, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the values of the organization". It is "characterized by employee's acceptance of organizational goals and their willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization" (Miller & Lee, 2001).

Common to all three dimensions is the opinion that "organizational commitment is a psychological state that characterizes organizational members' relationship with the organization and has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Cohen (2003) asserts that "commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets". In agreement, Arnold (2005) states that "it is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in an organization". Miller (2003) opined that "organizational commitment is a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organization". Miller (2003) sees attitude as "evaluative statements or judgements - either favourable or unfavourable - concerning a phenomenon". Continuing, Morrow (1993) states that "organizational commitment as an attitude reflects feelings such as attachment, identification and loyalty to the organization as an object of commitment". In addition, Meyer et al (1990) suggested that "organizational commitment as an attitude is characterised by a favourable positive cognitive and affective components about the organization". Behaviour is another characteristic that is used to describe the concept organizational commitment. In addition, Best (1994) showed that "committed individuals enact specific behaviours due to the belief that it is morally correct rather than personally beneficial". Reichers (1985) opined that "organizational commitment as behaviour is visible when organizational members are committed to existing groups within the organization".

The definition that best fits this study coincides with definitions by Meyer and Allen (1991) on organizational commitment given above, that it is "is a psychological state that characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization, and has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization".

### 2.2.1. Measures of Organizational Commitment

The concept of organizational commitment is conceptualized effectively using the tri-dimensional model. Three different dimensions namely, affective, normative and continuance commitments are implored by the model to illustrate the different ways of organizational commitment and the implications for employees' attitude.

1. Affective Commitment: This dimension is represented by the worker's emotional connection to the organization. It has been defined as "the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization". It was also seen that "organizational members who are committed to an organization on an affective basis, continue working for the organization because they want to" (Meyer & Allen, 1991). "Members who are committed on an affective level stay with the organization because they view their personal employment relationship as congruent to the goals and values of the organization" (Beck & Wilson, 2000). Sheldon (1971, p 148) believes that such is "an orientation towards the organization, which links or attaches the identity of the person to the organization". Consenting "affective commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday et al, 1982). The model indicates that "affective commitment is influenced by factors such as job challenge, role clarity, goal clarity, and goal difficulty, receptiveness by management, peer cohesion, equity, personal importance, feedback, participation, and dependability". An employee's orientation towards their organization is first and foremost linked to identification with the zeal to create a rewarding association with an organization. Secondly, through internalization, this refers to congruent goals and values held by individuals and the organization. In general, "affective organizational commitment is concerned with the extent to which an individual identifies with the organization" (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

2. Continuance Commitment: Continuance commitment has been defined as "awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization". They went on to observe that "it is calculative in nature because of the individual's perception or weighing of costs and risks associated with leaving the current organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1997). They further emphasize that "employees whose primary link to the organization is based on continuance commitment remain because they need to do so". Continuance commitment has been defined as "an instrumental attachment to the organization, where the individual's association with the organization is based on an assessment of economic benefits gained" (Beck & Wilson, 2000). The level of continuance commitment, can determine by the perceived costs of leaving the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Best (1994) indicates that "continuance organizational commitment will therefore be the strongest when availability of alternatives is few and the number of investments are high". This

argument supports the view that when given better alternatives, employees may leave the organization. Meyer et al (1990) also maintain that "accrued investments and poor employment alternatives tend to force individuals to maintain their line of action and are responsible for these individuals being committed because they need to". The need to stay is "profit" associated with continued membership and termination of service is a "cost" associated with quitting. Tetrick (1995) in agreement to the profit view support the profit view by describing the concept continuance organizational commitment as "an exchange framework, whereby performance and loyalty are offered in return for material benefits and rewards" positing that in order to maintain a workforce that are continuance committed, the organization should lay more emphasis on features that enhances the worker's determination to remain committed.

3. Normative Commitment: The second dimension of the organizational commitment model is normative commitment. Meyer and Allen (1997) define normative commitment as "a feeling of obligation to continue employment". They went on to say that "its internalized normative beliefs of duty and obligation make individuals obliged to sustain membership in the organization" (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In a later work, they assert that "employees with normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organization". The employees feel that continuing their membership of the organization is the right thing to do and expected. Further studies suggest that "the strength of normative organizational commitment is influenced by accepted rules about reciprocal obligation between the organization and its members" (Suliman & Iles, 2000). This is as "the reciprocal obligation is based on the social exchange theory, which suggests that a person receiving a benefit is under a strong normative obligation or rule to repay the benefit in some way" (McDonald & Makin, 2000). More often than not, employees begin to feel that the organization deserves their continued stay as repayment for investments the organization has made on them probably through training. Meyer and Allen (1991) showed that "this moral obligation arises either through the process of socialization within the society or the organization". Whatever the case, the need to reciprocate arises as the employee receives any form of benefit.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

This research was investigative in that it strived to empirically examine the influence of autonomy on organizational commitment. The procedure of data collection was cross-sectional field survey design. The cross-sectional survey was preferred in this study because it enabled the researcher to have a wide knowledge on the phenomenon being studied since data is being collected from a very wide range of study element. Secondly, the survey design was employed because the variables were outside the control of the researcher. In this approach, questionnaires were administered to respondents, collected and analyzed against the research questions stated earlier.

#### 3.2. Population of the Study

The population for the study was drawn from 43 manufacturing companies registered with the Aba Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, Abia State Chapter, Nigeria (ACCIMA). The accessible population for this study consisted of all the ten Vegetable oil and Soap manufacturing firms registered with ACCIMA.

#### 3.3. Sampling Procedures and Sample Size Determination

Since the unit of analysis carried out was done at the individual level, the stratified random sampling and purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents which comprised the employees of the chosen companies. The Taro Yamen's (1967) formula for sample size determination was used to determine the sample size for this study. The formula is as follows:

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

Where; n = sample size sought; e = level of significant (0.05); N = population size; Applying the above formula

$$n = \frac{240}{1 + 240(0.05)^2} = \frac{240}{1.6} = 150$$

The sample size for this study therefore consist of 150 management team including supervisors and unit heads in the ten vegetable oil and soap manufacturing firms in Abia State, Nigeria were issued copies of the questionnaire.

#### 3.4. Data Collection Methods

The quantitative method of data collection was utilized by the researcher with the sole aim of generating relevant data as it relates directly to the subject matter of the study; thus, using a structured questionnaire as the principal instrument for primary data collection. The essence of the questionnaire is to enable the researcher find out the opinion, attitude, belief and feelings of the respondents as regards the subject matter of the study and for its flexibility in data collection.

#### 3.5. Test of Reliability

Reliability measures the extent to which the survey instrument is consistent. The internal reliability of the survey instrument was assessed again by means of Cronbach alpha coefficients, using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). However, only the items that returns alpha values of 0.7 and above were considered in this study.

#### 3.6. Operational Measures of Variables

This study comprises of two distinct variables; the Predictor variable and criterion variable. While the predictor variable is pro-activeness, the criterion variable is organizational sustainability. The operational definition of these variables will help indicate the

meaning of the variables, as it is functionally applied in this study and how numerical values were assigned to them. Baridam (2001) observed that no single operationalization of research production will satisfy everyone. Inevitably matters of judgment and preference often intrude so as to compound the problem of measurement. For the purpose of this study therefore, only measuring instruments with confirmed validity and reliability will be used to measure the different variables included in the study. The variables are operationalized as follows:

### 3.6.1. Predictor Variables

The predictor variable for this study is Autonomy: the extent to which the organizations allow employees to carry out tasks independently, freely and self-directing. Three items were implored to measure this dimension on the 5-point likert scale with degree of affirmation as strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and strongly agree denoted by the numbers 1,2,3,4,5 respectively.

### 3.6.2. Criterion Variable

The criterion variable for this study is Organizational Commitment. The measures used are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. The extent to which employees are willing to continue with an organization because of their emotional attachment, investments or feel obligated to respectively. Three items were implored to measure this variable on the 5-point likert scale with degree of affirmation as strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and strongly agree denoted by the numbers 1,2,3,4,5 respectively.

## 4. Data Results

### 4.1. Field Survey

The study being predominantly quantitative, generated data using the structured questionnaire; a total of 150 (which is the actual sample size obtained for the study using the Taro Yamen formula) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to target manufacturing companies within a specified time-frame; copies were manually distributed through established contacts in the selected companies, thereafter retrieval was also accomplished through same contacts in the companies. Retrieval of distributed copies recorded a success of 144 copies, thus accounting for 96% of the total number intended for the study; thereafter, copies were examined and cleaned for errors, missing values and blank sections.

### 4.2. Demographic Data

1. Gender of the respondents: The classification according to gender reveals that a majority of the participants are of the male gender category (67%) as compared to the female gender category (33%). The results imply a greater proportion of the workers and elements in the target organization are male, probably as a result of the industry (manufacturing) and the nature of work carried out which may emphasize on strength.

2. Educational qualification of the respondents: The classification of participants based on their distribution according to educational qualification reveals that most of the participants have obtained first (bachelors) degrees (58%); while the category with the least frequency percentage is attributed to participants with doctoral degrees (1%). This result of the analysis implies an overall moderate level of education given the category (bachelors) which has the highest frequency.

3. Work experience of the respondents: The classification of participants based on their work experience reveals that the category of participants who have worked between 5 – 10 years has the highest frequency percentage (64%) while the category with the least frequency percentage distribution is the category for those who have worked for less than 2 years (2%); this implies that most of the participants have working durations spanning between 5 – 10 years with their organization, also a reflection of the stability of work, however, the years and establishment of the organization itself could also be a factor.

### 4.3. Univariate Data Analyses

The analysis in this section examines the distribution of the variables based on the central tendencies and dispersion of each data. The major tools for analysis in this section are the mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) and standard deviation (SD).

Dimensions of the Predictor	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation
Autonomy $\bar{x} = 3.9903$ SD = 1.06791	My organization encourages me to work with little or no supervision.	3.8905	1.12902
	My organization allows me make decisions that promote and enhance team work and productivity.	4.0219	1.14704
	My organization encourages individual initiative and creativity.	4.0584	1.12306

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for autonomy

Source: Research data, 2016

The data (table 1) reveals the distribution of autonomy; the predictor variable. Empowerment activities is operationalized using three indicators reflecting supervision level, decision making and individual initiative and creativity in terms of task performance. All three indicators carry high mean values ( $\bar{x} > 2.50$ ) and low standard deviation (SD < 2.0) coefficients which indicate average levels of affirmation to the variables.

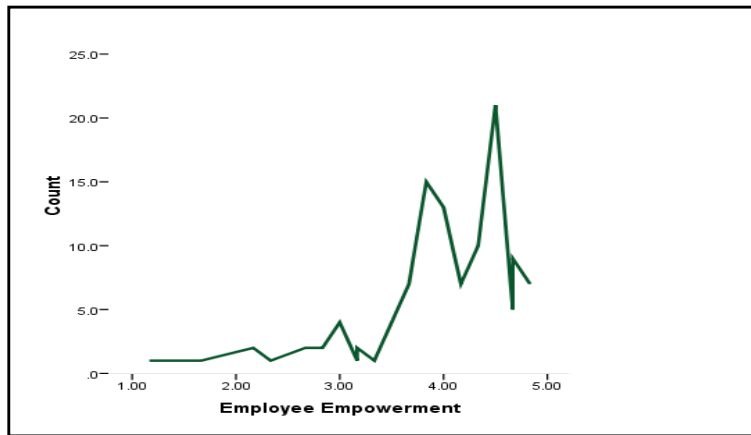


Figure 2: graphical representations for distribution of autonomy

The summary of the descriptive statistics on the predictor variable which is employee empowerment (figure 2) has a high mean score ( $x = 3.9611$  and  $SD = .77049$ ) which indicates that a majority of the participants affirm to characteristics such as autonomy and information flow within their respective organization and thus affirm to the practice of employee empowerment in their organizations.

Measures of the Criterion	Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>Affective Commitment</b> $x = 3.7859$ $SD = .83447$	I am very happy being a member of this organization.	3.4526	1.01590
	This organization’s problems are my own.	3.8248	.88199
	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	4.1003	1.02711
<b>Continuance Commitment</b> $x = 3.7640$ $SD = .83447$	I am loyal to this organization because I have invested a lot in it, emotionally, socially, and economically.	3.4891	1.00086
	If I wasn’t a member of this organization, I would be sad because my life would be disrupted.	4.2303	1.05444
	I am dedicated to this organization because I fear what I have to lose in it.	3.5766	.95273
<b>Normative Commitment</b> $x = 4.0535$ $SD = .87563$	I owe this organization quite a bit because of what it has done for me.	4.0220	1.04004
	My organization deserves my loyalty because of its treatment towards me.	4.0584	1.12306
	I would be letting my co-workers down if I wasn’t a member of this Organization.	4.0800	1.05015

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on organizational commitment  
Where  $x$  = mean;  $SD$  = standard deviation;  
Source: Data output, 2016

Table 2, which is illustrated above, presents the result for the data distribution for the measures of organizational commitment which is the criterion variable in the study. The results of the analysis indicate that the measures of organizational commitment comprising affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment all bear high and substantial mean values, resulting from the high mean scores for each of their indicators. As revealed, the indicator with the highest mean is ascertains as follows: If I wasn’t a member of this organization, I would be sad because my life would be disrupted ( $x = 4.2303$  and  $SD = 1.05444$ ) which corresponds to the continuance commitment measure, while the indicator with the lowest mean score value ascertains as follows: I am very happy being a member of this organization ( $x = 3.4526$  and  $SD = 1.01590$ ) which corresponds to the affective commitment measure. On the average the three measures also have substantial mean values (affective commitment:  $x = 3.7859$  and  $SD = .83447$ ; continuance commitment:  $x = 3.7640$  and  $SD = .83447$ ; normative commitment:  $x = 4.0535$  and  $SD = .87563$ ) reflecting affirmation to the participants’ feelings and expressions of such within the target organizations of the study.

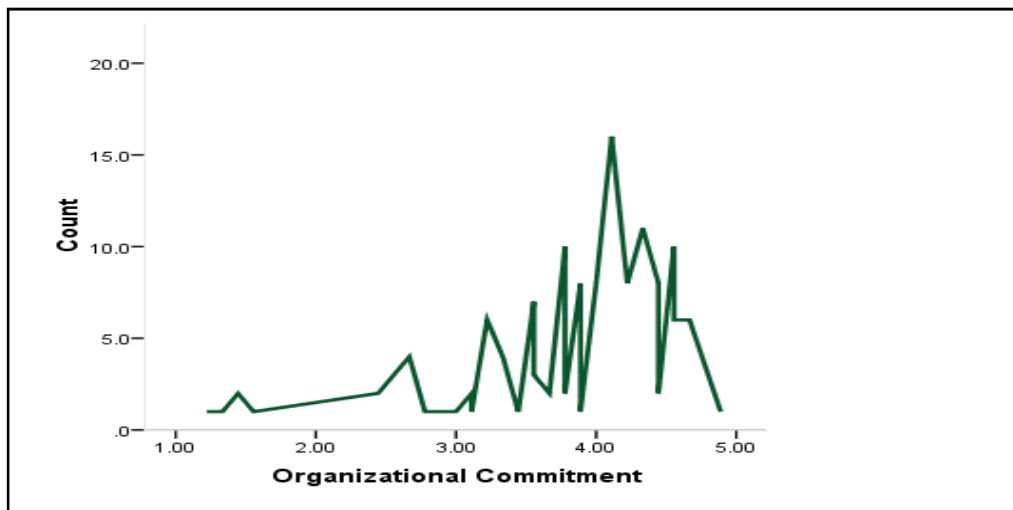


Figure 3: Summary of distribution for organizational commitment (criterion)

The summary of the descriptive statistics on the criterion variable which is organizational commitment (figure 3) has a high mean score ( $\bar{x} = 3.8678$  and  $SD = .71433$ ) which indicates that a majority of the participants affirm to organizational commitment practice in their organizations.

4.4. Bivariate Data Analysis

This section is concerned with the tests for the assumed bivariate null hypotheses using the Spearman’s rank order correlation coefficient at a 95% confidence interval and at a 0.05 level of significance (2-tailed). A total of 7 hypothetical assumptions are postulated with 6 being bivariate in nature and thus tested herein. The decision rule for the adoption or rejection of the hypothetical statements is set at a  $P < 0.05$  for the rejection of the null hypotheses and a  $P > 0.05$  for the acceptance of the null hypotheses.

			<b>Autonomy</b>	<b>Affective</b>	<b>Continuance</b>	<b>Normative</b>
Spearman's rho	Autonomy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.221**	.282**	.794**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.010	.001	.000
		N	137	137	137	137
	Affective	Correlation Coefficient	.221**	1.000	.527**	.514**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.	.000	.000
		N	137	137	137	137
	Continuance	Correlation Coefficient	.282**	.527**	1.000	.332**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.	.000
		N	137	137	137	137
	Normative	Correlation Coefficient	.794**	.514**	.332**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	137	137	137	137

Table 3: Spearman’s correlation of autonomy and measures of Organizational Commitment

Source: Data output, 2016

The data (table 3) reveals a significant relationship between autonomy, which is a dimension of employee empowerment and the measures of organizational commitment. The result is interpreted as follows:

- Autonomy and affective commitment: The results of the analysis reveal that there is a significant relationship between autonomy and affective commitment which is a dimension of organizational commitment. This is as the rho value = .221 and level of significance where  $P = 0.010$  indicate a substantial level of association between both variables; hence base on the decision rule of  $P < 0.05$  for the tests, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected as the result shows a significant relationship between autonomy and affective commitment.
- Autonomy and continuance commitment: The results of the analysis reveal that there is a significant relationship between autonomy and continuance commitment which is a dimension of organizational commitment. This is as the rho value = .282 and level of significance where  $P = 0.001$  indicate a substantial level of association between both variables; hence base on

the decision rule of  $P < 0.05$  for the tests, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected as the result shows a significant relationship between autonomy and continuance commitment.

- Autonomy and normative commitment: The results of the analysis reveal that there is a significant relationship between autonomy and normative commitment which is a dimension of organizational commitment. This is as the rho value = .794 and level of significance where  $P = 0.000$  indicate a high level of association between both variables; hence base on the decision rule of  $P < 0.05$  for the tests, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected as the result shows a significant relationship between autonomy and normative commitment.

#### 4.5. Discussion and Conclusion of the Results

The result of the analysis revealed that autonomy is significantly associated with organizational commitment; this implies that autonomy is considerably important in enhancing employee behaviour and expressions towards work in the organization. This argument shares a similar view with that of Jansen (2004) in which aspects of empowerment which reflect autonomy and information sharing for actions linked to outcomes of commitment. Furthermore, the results also offer an insight into the role concepts such as autonomy play in enhancing organizational commitment and employee work involvement; this is as the empirical study conducted by Nabila (2008), lends credence to this assertion by examining the autonomy of 133 professionals in their work places and its relative impact on their commitment levels. The study revealed a higher level of commitment and responsibility by the professionals especially when supervision was less and each was made solely accountable for the outcome or result of his role or position.

#### 4.6. Recommendations for the Study

The study, based on its results and conclusions, proffers the following solutions:

- That certain measures of autonomy be allowed the employee with regards his or her role expectations as this has been revealed to facilitate increased responsibility and accountability hence a decrease in blame shifts in the case of poor outcomes.
- An emphasis on employee autonomy will also enable the aspects of employee innovativeness and creativity on the job as a result of work flexibility and less supervisory constraints due to excessive monitoring and control.
- That autonomy, which is a dimension of employee empowerment, is observed to influence and enhance organizational commitment levels in the organization.
- That aspects of autonomy be allowed such as encouragement to work with little or no supervision, freedom to make decisions with regards to specific role expectations and organizational support for individual initiative and creativity as they were observed to be associated with instances of affective, continuance and normative commitment.

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