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## **EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT AND CONTINUENCE COMMITMENT IN THE NIGERIAN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY**

## **UPODMIOTOWIENIE PRACOWNIKA ORAZ POTRZEBA KONTYNUOWANIA PRACY DLA ORGANIZACJI W NIGERYJSKIM PRZEMYSŁE WYTWÓRCZYM**

### **Abstract**

*Employee empowerment and continuance commitment are two concepts that are of significance to all modern corporate entities. A robust appreciation and application of employee empowerment will contribute in measurable respects to the growth and sustainability of various organizations and continuance commitment of their employees. This study is an assessment of the relationship and the effect of employee empowerment on continuance commitment in the Nigerian manufacturing industry. A cross-sectional survey design method was adopted and data was collected via a survey of three hundred and three (303) respondents randomly selected from a population of 1243 employees of 25 manufacturing companies in Delta State, Nigeria. Data collected were analyzed using Spearman's Rank Correlation and linear regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. The results of the study showed that there is significant relationship between employee empowerment and continuance commitment. As predicted, the study also revealed that employee empowerment exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on continuance commitment in manufacturing companies in Delta State, Nigeria. Based on these findings, we conclude that employee empowerment has significant influence on continuance commitment. The study therefore recommends among others that management of manufacturing companies in Nigeria should grant*

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*their employees power to initiate change, thereby encouraging them to take charge of their work tasks.*

**Keywords:** *Empowerment, continuance, commitment, motivation, manufacturing industry*

### **Streszczenie**

*Upodmiotowienie pracownika oraz potrzeba kontynuowania pracy dla organizacji są to dwie koncepcje, które mają duże znaczenie dla wszystkich współczesnych podmiotów korporacyjnych. Istotne uznanie i zastosowanie upodmiotowienia pracownika znacząco wpływa na wzrost i równowagę różnych organizacji oraz potrzebę kontynuowania pracy dla organizacji zatrudnionych tam pracowników. To badanie stanowi ocenę zależności i wpływu upodmiotowienia pracownika na potrzebę kontynuowania pracy dla organizacji w nigeryjskim przemyśle wytwórczym. Została wykorzystana metoda przekrojowego badania ankietowego. Dane zostały zebrane w badaniu sondażowym trzystu trzech respondentów dobranych losowo z populacji 1243 pracowników zatrudnionych w 25 zakładach produkcyjnych w Stanie Delta w Nigerii. Zebrane dane zostały przeanalizowane z wykorzystaniem korelacji Spearmana oraz regresji liniowej za pomocą SPSS 23 version. Wyniki badań wskazały istotną zależność między upodmiotowieniem pracownika i potrzebą kontynuowania pracy dla organizacji. Jak przewidywano badanie ujawniło również, że upodmiotowienie pracownika wywołuje pozytywny i znaczący statystycznie wpływ na potrzebę kontynuowania pracy dla organizacji w zakładach produkcyjnych w Stanie Delta w Nigerii. W oparciu o te wyniki można podsumować, że upodmiotowienie pracownika ma znaczący wpływ na potrzebę kontynuowania pracy dla organizacji. Zatem zalecenia to między innymi zapewnienie przez menedżerów zakładów produkcyjnych w Nigerii możliwości wykorzystania prawa do wprowadzania zmian, a tym samym umożliwienie pracownikom wzięcia odpowiedzialności za swoje zadania pracownicze.*

**Słowa kluczowe:** *Upodmiotowienie, kontynuacja, poświęcenie się, motywacja, przemysł produkcyjny*

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### **Statement of the problem in general outlook and its connection with important scientific and practical tasks.**

Employee empowerment is a technique of involving employees in their work through the process of inclusion. Empowerment encourages employees to become innovators and managers of their own jobs in ways that gives them more control and autonomous decision-making capabilities. An empowering work environment provides employees with information necessary for them to perform at their best, knowledge about how to use the information and how to do their work, power to make decisions that give them control over their work and the rewards they deserve for the contributions they make. Such an

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environment reduces costs because fewer people are needed to supervise, coordinate and monitor (Bateman & Snell, 2011).

According to Forrester (2000), empowerment programmes have been introduced in a number of organizations in order to improve productivity, increase customer satisfaction and enhance competitive advantage. However, Ameh, 2010 cited in Umoh, Amah and Wokocha (2014:69), observes that “high productivity in Nigerian manufacturing companies has been constrained by many factors. One of the main factors is high turnover of skill workers. Most of manufacturing companies in Nigeria are facing major challenges in preventing the loss of their employees to competitors, as well as changing technology in manufacturing processes. These challenges have therefore created the need to change the organizations to be more supportive to the newer technology, while at the same time, finding innovative ways of retaining talents. There is the need for manufacturing companies to ensure that the contribution of people to their organization is recognized by both financial and non-financial means, in order to spur, motivate and retain them”. A new management technique to address these challenges is employee empowerment that involves the individuals responsible for their work which in turn positively affects employee retention and commitment.

Commitment is “an attitude that reflects an employee’s loyalty to the organization and this is an ongoing process through which members of organization can express their concern for organization and its continued success and well-being” (Northcraft & Neale, 1996 cited in Khan, Tariq, Hamayoun & Bhutta, 2014:149). Commitment enables employees to release their creativity and to contribute towards organizational development initiatives (Walton & Mickersie, 1965). Thus, committed staffs are normally achievement and innovation orientation with the ultimate aim of engaging in an improving organizational performance (Morrow, 1993). Other positive effects of commitment include feelings of affiliation, attachment and citizenship behaviour, which tend to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Williams & Anderson, 1991; Umoh et al., 2014; Jomah, 2017).


Employee empowerment and its effect on continuance commitment has been subject of discourse among management and social scientists from a wide range of disciplines in the last three decades. But unfortunately, very insufficient number of empirical studies in this area has been conducted in Nigeria. To bridge this obvious research gap, this study examined the relationship and effect of employee empowerment on continuance commitment in manufacturing organizations in Delta State, Nigeria. By exploring the relationship and effect of employee empowerment on continuance commitment, organizations can enhance their performance, competitive advantage and effectiveness.

### **Analysis of latest research where the solution of the problem was initiated.**

The term ‘empowerment’ according to Obeta (2004), is derived from the word ‘power’. Thus, to empower means to give power to, to give authority to and to enable a person or group of persons gain power. Empowerment therefore implies that the person or group of persons being empowered has hitherto lacked power or authority by circumstances, denial or default. Describing empowerment as a concept that goes beyond participation, Gajanayake and Gajanayake (1993) stated that it implies enabling people to understand the reality of their environment, reflect on the factors shaping that environment and take steps

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to effect changes to improve the situation. Empowerment is “the process of sharing power with employees, thereby enhancing their confidence in their ability to perform their jobs and their belief that they are influential contributors to the organization” (Bateman & Snell, 2011:471). According to Hass, 2010 cited in Vorya, Mohammad and Mohamad (2013:863), empowerment is “a process of giving authority to the employees to make necessary important decisions on their own about their day to day activities”. Demirci and Erbas (2010) and Zaraket, Garios and Malek (2018) delineate empowerment as the combination of four components: Power, information, knowledge and rewards as shown in the table below.

**Table 1. Components of Empowerment.**

Empowerment = Power x Information x Knowledge x Rewards			
Power	Information	Knowledge	Rewards
Autonomy	Feedback	Training	Compensation
Authority	Role Clarification	Counselling	Career Planning
Delegation	Motivation	Appraisal	Job enrichment

Source: Decirci & Erbas, 2010 and Zaraket et al., 2018

Empowerment results in change in employees’ beliefs - from feeling powerless to believing strongly in their own personal effectiveness.

The result is that people take more initiative and persevere in achieving their goals and their leader’s vision even in the face of obstacles. Specifically, empowerment encourages the following beliefs among employees.

First, they perceive meaning in their work - their job fits their values.

Second, they feel competent or capable of performing their jobs with skill.

Third, they have a sense of self-determination, of having some choice in regard to the tasks, methods and pace of their work.

Fourth, they have an impact - that is they have some influence over important strategic, administrative, or operating decisions or outcomes on the job (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

In the view of Durai, 2010 cited in Khan et al., (2014:150), employee empowerment is “a technique adopted by the organizations to enable the employees to take independent decisions about the different aspects of their jobs. It enables the employees to plan and execute their own activities with complete responsibility for their performance and results”.

Unfortunately, empowerment does not always live up to its hype. One problem is that managers undermine it by sending mixed messages like ‘Do your own thing the way we tell you (Argyris, 1998; Bateman & Snell, 2011). But empowerment can be profoundly motivating when done properly (Forrester, 2000).

It is essential to give people clear strategic direction but to leave some room for flexibility and calculated risk taking.

To foster empowerment, management must create an environment in which all the employees feel they have real influence over performance standards and business effectiveness within their areas of responsibility. Bohlander and Snell (2007:157) argued that in order for empowerment to grow and thrive, organizations must encourage the following conditions:

- i. Participation: Employees must be encouraged to take control of their work tasks. Employees, in return, must care about improving their work process and interpersonal work relationship.
- ii. Innovation: The environment must be receptive to people with innovative ideas and encourage people to explore new paths and to take reasonable risk at reasonable costs. An empowered environment is created when curiosity is as highly regarded as is technical expertise.
- iii. Access to Information: Employees must have access to a wide range of information. Involved individuals decide what kind of information they need for performing their jobs.
- iv. Accountability: Empowerment does not involve being able to do whatever you want. Empowered employees should be held accountable for their behaviour towards others, producing agreed-on results, achieving credibility and operating with a positive approach.

### **Continuance Commitment**

Continuance commitment is “the investment of an employee to an organization in terms of time, effort, money and resources that he/she perceives would be lost or deemed worthless if he or she were to leave the organization” (Beck & Wilson, 2000 cited in Osagie, 2019:30). Continuance commitment is also regarded 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).

According to Meyer and Allen (1997:507), Continuance commitment is an “awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization”.

It is calculative in nature because of the individual’s perception of costs and risks associated with leaving the current organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Meyer and Allen (1991:62) further posit that “employees whose primary link to the organization is based on continuance commitment remain because they need to do so”.


This indicates the difference between continuance and affective commitment. The latter entails that employees’ stay in the organization because they want to. Thus, organizational members develop commitment to an organization because of the positive extrinsic rewards obtained through the effort-bargain without identifying with the organization’s goals and values.

The strength of continuance commitment, which implies the need to stay, is determined by the perceived costs of leaving the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1984). Best (1994:36) notes that “continuance commitment will therefore be the strongest, when availability of alternatives are very few and the number of investments are high”.

This argument supports the view that when given better alternatives, employees may leave the organization.

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Meyer, Allen and Gellatly (1990:712) hold that “accrued investments and poor employment alternatives tend to force employees to maintain their line of action and are responsible for these employees being committed because they need to”.

This implies that employees stay in the organization because they are lured by other accumulated investment which they could lose, such as pension plans, seniority or organization’s specific skills. Thus, the need to stay is ‘profit’ associated with continued participation and termination of service is a ‘cost’ associated with leaving the organization. Tetrick, 1995 cited in Umoh et al. (2014:71) support the profit notion by describing continuance commitment as “an exchange framework whereby performance and loyalty are offered in return for material benefits and rewards”. Alluto, Hebiniak and Alonso, 1973 cited in Umoh et al. (2014:71) maintain that “employees are committed to the organization as far as they hold their positions, irrespective of the stressful conditions they experience”. Therefore, in order to retain employees who are continuance committed, the organization needs to give more attention and recognition to those fundamental elements that boost the employees’ morale to be affectively committed.

Similarly, Reichers, 1985 cited in Vorga et al. (2013:862) described continuance commitment as “the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has with ‘nontransferable investments.

Nontransferable investments include retirement benefits or investments, acquired job skills which are unique to a particular form or organization, years of employment in a particular “organization, involvement in the host community in which the company or the organization is situated and other benefits that make it too costly for one to leave and seek employment elsewhere”. Employees with strong continuance commitment maintain their current employment because it provides them with desirable personal outcomes that they are unwilling to forego or because they perceive a talk of employment opportunities elsewhere. However, Meyer and Allen (1997) argued that a committed employee goes to his/her work frequently, he/she is productive and effective during the entire working day, stays with the organization through ups and downs, cares for the organizations assets and ultimately shares the goals and values of the organization.

They further explain that employees who share continuance commitment with their employer often find it difficult to leave the organization.

#### **Empirical Review of Employee Empowerment and Continuance Commitment**

A workforce that is empowered and committed is considered essentials for the effective running of modern organizations (Jomah, 2017) in today’s highly competitive and dynamic business environment. Empowerment provides employees access to information, support, opportunity and resources that make it easier for them to carry out their work effectively (Leiter &Laschinger, 2006).

Empowerment is a way of enhancing an employee’s commitment to the organization because it enhances the match between employee’s work roles and the individual values system; confidence in an individual’s ability to carry out task effectively, which encourages employee to make more efforts for the benefits of the organization and to engage in decision-making (Abdul, Tareq& Ying-Leh, 2015).

Thus, it is obvious that continuance commitment is an important outcome of employee empowerment in the organization.

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The results of different studies on the relationship between employee empowerment and continuance commitment in different sectors are consistent. For example, Vorga et al. (2013) conducted their study in Kurdistan Province, Iran and found that there is a positive relationship between employee empowerment and continuance commitment. Khan et al. (2014) conducted their study in Telecon sector and found a significant positive correlation between employee empowerment and continuance commitment. Joman (2017) conducted similar study in Saudi among academics and found a significant positive relationship between psychological empowerment and continuance commitment and Zaraket et al. (2018) examined the impact of employee empowerment on the organizational commitment in USA and they found that employee empowerment (job autonomy, motivation, training and compensation) have a positive relationship with organizational commitment.

### **Theoretical Framework**

While there are several theories which might prove appropriate for a discourse of this nature, the equity theory present us with a heuristic tool for interrogating the central issue of the study. Based upon the work of Adam (1965), equity theory rests on the assumption that an employee's behavioural outcome is influenced by constantly comparing his/her inputs (contributions to the organization) and outcomes (rewards perceived in return from the organization) with that of the inputs and outcomes of other employees in similar status. Interestingly, Beck and Wilson (2000) argued that employees show concern for their organization only when the organization has been able to meet their financial and social needs of belongingness with the organization.

This view can also be found in the concept of the social market economy (Bokajlo & Dahl, 2018; Dahl, 2018; Dahl 2017). Thus, equity theory purposes that when people assess how fairly they are treated, they consider two key factors: Outcomes and inputs.

Outcomes, as in expectancy theory, referred to the various things the employee receives on the job such as recognition, pay, benefits, security, satisfaction, job assignments and punishments. Inputs referred to the contributions the employee makes to the organization such as effort, time, talent, performance, extra commitment and good citizenship.

Thus, inequity causes dissatisfaction and leads to an attempt to restore balance to the relationship. If inequity is perceived, the employee may experience emotional reactions (such as anger) that will eventually affect productivity and employee's commitment to the organization. The degree of discrepancy is said to be equals to the degree of dissonance the employee experiences; the degree of dissonance also corresponds to the degree of energy an employee expends to reduce the discrepancy.


In the final analysis, the relevance of the equity theory to this study is based on its ability to justify that a balance between inputs and outcomes can influence attitudes and behaviour for good, which in turn will have effect on employees' continuance commitment, performance and organizational effectiveness.

Therefore, employees' commitment can be achieved through balance in power, information, knowledge and rewards between the employees and their employer.

In line with the literature review, the following objectives and null hypotheses were formulated for the study.

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## **Aims of paper. Methods**

### **Objectives of the Study:**

- i. To assess the relationship between employee empowerment and continuance commitment in manufacturing companies in Delta State, Nigeria.
- ii. To investigate the effect of employee empowerment on continuance commitment in manufacturing companies in Delta State, Nigeria.

### **Hypotheses of the Study:**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between employee empowerment and continuance commitment in manufacturing companies in Delta State, Nigeria.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Employee empowerment does not have a significant effect on continuance commitment in manufacturing companies in Delta State, Nigeria.

### **Research Methodology**

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design.

The study units for data generation were employees in twenty five (25) registered and functional manufacturing companies in Delta State, Nigeria. A sample size of three hundred and three (303) was drawn from a population of 1243 employees using Yaro Yaman's (1967) sampling formula.

The formula was given thus:

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

Where: n = sample size,

N = Target population 91243),

e = Level of significant (0.05 or 5%)

Out of the 303 copies of questionnaire administered, 277 were retrieved and analysed given us a response rate of 91%. Out of the 277 respondents, 168 were male employees and 109 were female employees. The research instrument used for the study was the structured questionnaire. This was a modified form of the research instrument used by Meyer and Allen (1997); Taing, Groff, Granger, Jackson and Johnson (2011); Khan et al. (2014) and Zaraket et al. (2018).

This was necessary to better address the new respondents in a different environment. The items of measurement were rated on 5-points likert types scale which ranks responses on scale of (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agreed.

### **Model Specification**

The model has the following mathematical functions:

CC = f(EE)

Econometrically, the model was specified as:



$$CC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 EE + \sum t$$

Where:

CC = Continuance commitment,

EE = Employee empowerment,

$\beta_0$  = Intercept,

$\beta_1 < 0$  = Coefficient and a priori signs of the independent variables

$\sum t$  = Error term

From the above, the a priori expectation of the model will be:

Model:  $\beta_1 < 0$

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Data collected were analyzed using Spearman's Rank correlation and linear regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. A pilot study to determine the level of reliability was carried out on 63 employees who were part of the study within a time interval of three weeks.

Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument as shown in the table below.

**Table 2. Reliability Statistical of Variable.**

Scale	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee empowerment	8	0.039
Continuance commitment	6	0.861

Source: researchers' computation, 2020

The results yield a coefficient of 0.839 and 0.861, which satisfied the general recommended bench mark of 0.70 for the research indicators (Cronbach, 1951). Also, the questionnaire was validated by experts in the faculty of management sciences. Hence, researchers satisfied both reliability and validity of the instrument.

### **Operationalization of Variables**

The variables (dependent and independent) for this study are operationalized as presented in the table below.

**Table 3. Operationalization Model.**

S/N	Variable	Code	Operational Definition	Question
<b>Dependent Variable</b>				
1	Continuance commitment	CC	It is an attitude that reflects an employee's loyalty and faithfulness, the willingness to exert strong efforts for and the firm intention in the organization till retirement.	6
<b>Independent variable</b>				
2	Employee empowerment	EE	It is a process of granting employees power to initiate change thereby encouraging them to take charge of what they do in the organization	8

Source: Researcher's Construction, 2020

**Exposition of main material of research with complete substantiation of obtained scientific results. Discussion Result**

**Table 4: Correlation Matric**

Variables		Employee empowerment	Continuance commitment
<b>Employee empowerment</b>	Pearson correlation sig. (2-tailed)	1	0.738
	N	277	277
<b>Continuance commitment</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.738	1
	N	277	277

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

Source: researchers' computation, 2020

Table 4 shows the correlation coefficient between employee empowerment and continuance commitment. There exists is significant positive high correlation between the independent and dependent variables ( $r = 0.738$ ,  $n = 277$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This implies that employee

empowerment has a strong and positive relationship with continuance commitment. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

### **Linear Regression Analysis**

**Table 5. Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj-R <sup>2</sup>	Std Error of the Estimate
1	0.613	0.574	0.494	0.268

a. Predictors: (Constant), employee empowerment

b. Dependent variable: Continuance commitment

Source: researchers' computation, 2020

**Table 6. ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of square	Df	Mean	F	Sig.	Remark
	Regression	9.607	3	3.545	19.693	0.003 <sup>6</sup>	Sig.
1	Residual	5.392	271	0.217			
	Total	14.999	274				

a. Dependent variable: Continuance commitment

b. Predictors: (constant), employee empowerment

Source: researchers' computation, 2020

The linear regression results shows (R<sup>2</sup>) value of 0.574 which revealed that employee empowerment independently accounted for 57.4% of the variation in continuance commitment in manufacturing companies in Delta State, Nigeria. The F. statistics of 19.693 revealed that the model is statistically significant at 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The results of the study showed that employee empowerment have strong and positive relationship with continuance commitment in manufacturing companies in Delta State, Nigeria. The finding is in agreement with previous studies (Vorga et al., 2013; Khan et al., 2014; Abdul et al., 2015; Jomah, 2017 & Zaraket et al., 2018).

Also, based on the results of linear regression analysis, employee empowerment has significantly explained 57.4% of variation in continuance commitment in manufacturing companies in Delta State, Nigeria. Thus, the study has shown that employee empowerment exerts a positive and statistically significant effect on continuance commitment.

The finding is in agreement with the views of Bohlander and Snell's (2007); Bateman and Snell's (2011); that an empowering work environment provides employees with power, information, knowledge and rewards which improve productivity, continuance commitment, job satisfaction, increase customer satisfaction and enhance competitive advantage. Therefore, empowerment is an organizational processes and structures that enhance employee participation and improve goal achievement for the organization and improve goal achievement for the organization (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995).

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## Conclusions

The study have revealed through it perceived findings that employee empowerment have a strong and positive relationship with continuance commitment and that employee empowerment has a positive effect on continuance commitment based on the findings of this study, we concludes that employee empowerment has significant influence on continuance commitment. However, employee empowerment succeeds when the culture of the organization is open and receptive change.

An organization's culture is largely created through the philosophies of senior managers and their leadership traits and behaviours.

Effective leadership in an empowered organization is highlighted by managers who are honest, caring and receptive to new ideas and who exhibit dignity and respect for employees as partners in organizational success.

Based on the findings and conclusion reached in this study, the following recommendations were made to ensure continuance commitment of employees in organizations:

1. Management of manufacturing companies in Nigeria should grant their employees power to initiate change, thereby encouraging them to take charge of their work task.
2. Management of manufacturing companies in Nigeria and other organizations should provide their employees more job autonomy, offering praise for good performance and being supportive, training and information and create a more relaxed work environment for them. This will go a long way to improve productivity, job satisfaction, continuance commitment, display of organizational citizenship behaviour.
3. Organizations should provide opportunities for professional growth, allowed employees try new things and even fail without fear of the consequences and climate of expression should also be provided to the employees where their efforts and contributions would be recognized.  
Thus, putting importance on values such as tolerance, fairness and being people oriented.
4. Further studies are recommended to investigate the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between employee benefits and continuance commitment in Nigeria manufacturing industry.

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