



Employee dedication and Organizational Health of Construction Companies in Port Harcourt

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between employee dedication and organizational health of construction companies in Port Harcourt. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population of the study was 197 employees of six (6) construction companies in Port Harcourt. The sample size of 132 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The research instrument was validated through supervisor's vetting and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. Data generated were analyzed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. Empirical findings revealed that employee dedication significantly correlate with organizational health of construction companies in Port Harcourt. The study recommends that construction companies should promote activities and policies that will enhance employee dedication which will give them a sense of significance from work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about the given job, and feeling inspired and challenged by the job.

Keywords: Employee Dedication, Organizational Health, Goal Focus, Communication Adequacy, Autonomy

INTRODUCTION

Healthy companies, we know, dramatically outperform their peers. We think of organizational health as more than just culture or employee engagement. It's the organization's ability to align around a

common vision, execute that vision effectively, and renew itself through innovation and creative thinking. Put another way, health is how the ship is run, no matter who is at the helm and what waves rock the vessel. Given the economic volatility we anticipated in 2012, employee engagement is critical arguably more so than in more normal conditions. For large multinational employers operating in multiple regions, this means a one-size-fits-all strategy for engagement across the globe will not work. The employee engagement dynamics and resultant human capital interventions and outcomes may vary significantly depending on the industry or region of the model in which you operate. Regardless, one thing is certain employees and their behavior is at the center of organizations success or failure (Bockerman and Ilmakunnas, 2012).

Organizations with an inculcated employee engagement and by extension dedication philosophy within their work environment naturally become counted as best companies to work for since people are put at the heart of the corporate purpose (Gratton, 2000). It is for this reason that organizations spend, or should spend, a considerable amount of time in building the capacity and capability of their employees. Such investment would then contribute to the overall health of the organization. It has been well documented through various theories (Maslow's, Hertzberg, etc.) that motivation is a key driver to the performance of an employee. Both these theories contend that human beings have needs, and the more those needs are satisfied, the better an employee would perform. Such performance would also be affected by training and development, job security, organizational structure and compensation (Gratton, 2000).

In general, organization health is expressed as the capabilities possessed by an organization to adapt to its environment successfully, create cooperation between its members and achieve its targets (Altun, 2001). In particular, organizational health focuses on employee welfare and organization effectiveness together. According to another approach, organizational health is defined in connection with the health and wellbeing of the employee (Köseolu & Karayormuk, 2009). Put another way, a healthy organization is one that supports organizational success, the environment, employees' welfare and happiness with its authority structure, values system, norms, reward and sanction systems (Karagüzel, 2012). This success can be achieved by having a dedicated workforce.

Having a dedicated employee is considered an asset to the organization. Dedication is not the same thing as longevity because the fact that a certain employee is the oldest in the organization

or has worked for the organization all his or her life does not make him or her dedicated staff member. Dedication involves desire, commitment; ownership and a continual strive to improve (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Any employee who is dedicated to the organization will understand and support the values as well as go extra mile to protect the corporate image of the organization thereby facilitate value alignment and organizational commitment. An employer can arouse dedication according to Schaufeli & Bakker (2003), employers that show genuine interest and care for the customer and employees will create an atmosphere that encourages dedication.

According to Rayton and Yalabik (2014), dedication is about being inspired, enthusiastic and highly involved in your job. It is an individual deriving a sense of significance from work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about the given job, feeling inspired and challenged by the job (Song, Kolb, Lee & Kim, 2012). Mauno, Kinnunen & Ruokolainen (2007) observe that employee dedication has conceptual similarities with job involvement. According to the authors, employee dedication can be described as a strong psychological involvement or the sense of identification, which the worker feels for his or her work (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009).

This study therefore examined the relationship between employee dedication and organizational health of construction companies in Port Harcourt.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the degree of relationship between employee dedication and goal focus of employees of construction companies in Rivers State?
- ii. What is the degree of relationship between employee dedication and communication adequacy employees of construction companies in Rivers State?
- iii. What is the degree of relationship between employee dedication and autonomy of employees of construction companies in Rivers State?

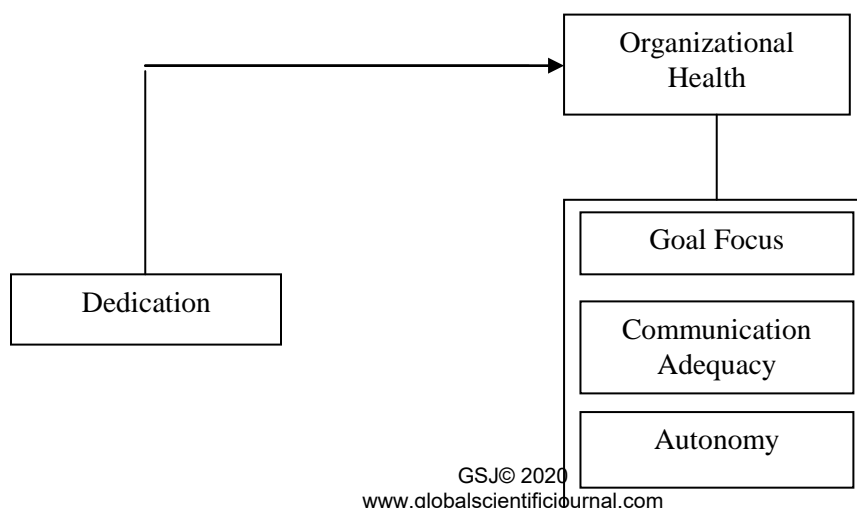


Fig.1 Conceptual framework for the relationship between employee dedication and organizational health

Source: Author's Desk Research, 2019

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Exchange Theory

Saks (2006) suggested a strong theoretical rationale for employee engagement is provided by social exchange theory. The theory argues that obligations are generated through a series of interactions between parties who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence. According to the theory, relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal and mutual commitments as long as parties abide by certain rules of exchange. It involves reciprocity or repayments rules such that the actions of one party lead to a response or actions by the other party (Armstrong, 2012). This is consistent with the description of engagement by (Robinson, Perryman & Hayday, 2004) as a reciprocal relationship of trust and respect between the employer and the employee. It requires an organization's executives and managers to communicate their expectations clearly and extensively, with the employees, empower them at the appropriate levels of their competence, and create a working environment and corporate culture in which engagement will thrive.

According to Balain and Sparrow (2009), social exchange theory best describes engagement because it sees feelings of loyalty, commitment, discretionary effort as forms of reciprocation by employees to a good employer. The exchange approach view of organizational commitment/engagement posits that individuals attach themselves to their organizations in return for certain rewards from the organizations. According to this view, employees enter the organization with specific skills, desires and goals, and expect to find an environment where they can use their skills, satisfy their desires and achieve their goals. Perception of favorable exchange/rewards from the employees' view point is expected to result in increased engagement to the organization. On the other hand, failure by the organization to provide sufficient rewards in exchange for employees' efforts is likely to result in decreased organizational engagement.

From this perspective, social exchange theory suggests that employees respond to perceived favorable working conditions by behaving in ways that benefit the organization and /or other employees. Equally, employees retaliate against dissatisfying conditions by engaging in negative work attitudes such as absenteeism, lateness, or turnover intentions (Crede, Chernyshenko, Stark, Dalal & Bashshur, 2007).

The exchange theory has also been used to explain the employees' attitudinal engagement to the organization. According to the exchange perspective, employees exchange their identification, loyalty and attachment to the organization, in return for incentives received from the organization. This implies that an individual's decision to become and remain a member of an organization is determined by their perception of the fairness of the balance of organizational inducements and the employee contribution. Meyer and Smith (2000) argue that unless employees believe they have been treated fairly, they may not be committed to the organization. The underlying conceptual foundations for performance management lie in motivation theory and, in particular, goal theory, control theory and social cognitive theory (Buchner, 2007).

Employee Dedication

The term employee dedication has no one distinct definition accepted by scholars in the field. But then, employee dedication simply refers to the type of engagement in which the employee engaged due to the feeling that his services are retained in the organization, and there will be no need to think of looking for job elsewhere (Williams, Maha & Zaki, 2010). Also, employee dedication is characterized by a strong psychological involvement in one's work, combined with a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Mauno, *et al.*, 2007, Schaufeli, *et al.*, 2002). Employee dedication is ones' sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. Employee dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Employee dedication is about being inspired, enthusiastic and highly involved in your job (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Employee dedication is an individual's ability to derive a sense of significance from work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about the given job, and feeling inspired and challenged by the job (Song et al., 2012). Employee dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Employee dedication refer to deriving a sense of significance from one's work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about one's job,

and feeling inspired and challenged by it. Employees who are seen to be high on employee dedication strongly identify with their work because it is experienced as meaningful, inspiring and challenging. Additionally, they usually feel enthusiastic and proud about their work. Employees who score low do not identify with their work because they do not experience it to be meaningful, inspiring or challenging; moreover, they feel neither enthusiastic nor proud about their work.

Organizational Health

In the business management literature, the concepts such as organization culture, organizational stress, organizational commitment, business ethics and business satisfaction, etc. were concentrated on, but the necessary importance was not attached to the concept of “Organization Health”. This prevented the concept of organization health from being known and recognized concept. Despite all these, when reviewed the concept of organization health, it is seen to incorporate all the concepts mentioned above and to provide a more holistic perspective (Lyden & Klingele, 2000). Accordingly, the concept of organizational health, first put forward in 1969 by Matthew Miles, is a simulation developed on the climate of schools (Miles, 1969). The relations between the students, teachers and managers in school were defined by this simulation (Polatc, *et al.*, 2008).

In this context, Miles suggested a model for organization health analysis of organizations, and defined the healthy organization as follows. Healthy organization is one that does not survive only in the environment it exists, but also constantly develops in the long term, improves its coping and surviving skills (Miles, 1969). The researchers attribute use of this concept in organizations for two reasons: The first is that school is regarded as a social system in which the managers, workers and clients take part. Thus, organization health should reflect the social interaction between these key representatives. The second is that organization health is necessary for healthy schools for the purpose of efficiency in performance of certain functions. While it is thought that the concept of organization health cannot be used in other organizations due to these two reasons, it can be suggested that they may be applicable for other organization structures, too. Thus, this approach of Miles was adopted also in the field of organizational behavior.

However, like many other management concepts, the concept of organizational health does not have a clear definition agreed on. Many researchers exhibited their own approaches in terms of

both its definition and determination of its dimensions. In general, organization health is expressed as the capabilities possessed by an organization to adapt to its environment successfully, create cooperation between its members and achieve its targets (Altun, 2001). In more particular, organizational health, addressed as a concept that studies the employee welfare and organization effectiveness together (Ardçve & Polatc, 2007). According to another approach, organization health is defined in connection with the health and wellbeing of the employee (Köseolu & Karayormuk, 2009).

Measures of Organizational Health

Goal Focus

Goal commitment is higher when individuals fully understand their goals, feel pressure from peers to perform well, perceive that they can attain their goals, and believe that they will be recognized for their accomplishments. The relationship between organizational work settings and behaviour was reconnoitred by Robbins, (1997), by examining three work setting features with regards to their relationships with a set of employee behaviors relevant to planned organizational change and potential, organizational performance. From the organization's perspective, a career goal can promote effective job performance and can help in human-resource planning (Greenhaus, 1998). To this effect, employees should be aware of the firm's mission, vision, strategy, structure and culture. Merritt and Berger (1998) established a system of goals in their study to enable managers to manage themselves and others. They emphasized that managers must know how to perform a multitude of functions to produce desired goals effectively.

The concepts of goal setting, optimism, and employee involvement as mechanisms to improving employee performance have all been discussed fairly extensively in the management literature. Goal setting has been explored in terms of both motivational impact toward improving performance and as being integral parts of management systems or processes designed to improve performance (Zabaracki, 1998; Locke, 2002). Goal Focus is the ability of individuals, groups, or organizations to have clear understanding of, accept, support, and advocate on organization-wide goals and objectives. The objectives are easily understandable, acceptable and achievable by the organization members. Goals designed properly and pursued consistently move the life of the business forward in concrete measurable ways. Leaders need to

communicate organizational goals clearly and often to everyone involved in reaching those goals. Aligning tasks, resources and motivations with your most essential goals both at the organizational or personal levels, is critical in attaining success. Goals are the detailed results management of organizations desire to achieve for the success of the business, their efforts are geared towards it. They need to be challenging but not unreachable. They need to be written and communicated so as to describe the end result pursued and the points that enhance progress along the way. Goals can be short and long-term, short-term goals can be designed to be pursued on their own merits or serve as milestones on the way to achieving long-term goals.

Communication Adequacy

Communication adequacy is that state when information is relatively distortion free and travels both vertically and horizontally across the boundaries of an organization. An internal communication mechanism preventing misunderstandings should be developed and made available to all employees to help boost communication effectiveness. Thus, it enables employees to access correct information and increase organization's efficiency. A healthy employee relationship ensures a positive environment at work and also helps the employees to achieve their targets at a much faster rate. It helps employees to be more focused, pay better attention to their assignments and hence the output increases. To this effect, employees are made not to become engaged in constant grievances and conflicts, are eager to help each other and do not see work as a burden. They enjoy each and every moment at work and do not take leaves often. Communication is not only important in our daily lives but also plays a crucial role in engendering effective work behaviour at workplace. It is one of the most significant factors which either enhances or spoils the relationship among employees (Kovach, 1995). The communication has to be transparent and precise for a warm relationship among employees. Thus, clarity in communication has become very important in encouraging or fostering better relation between all stakeholders. Do not assume that the other person will come to know on his own what is going on in your mind. The thoughts must be converted sensibly into relevant words such that the other person is able to understand you well. The employees must be very clear about what is being expected from them. Their key responsibility areas, roles and responsibilities must be communicated to them in the desired form for them to perform their level best. Do not play with words. Be straightforward and precise in what you expect from your team members.

Do not blame them later. Haphazard thoughts and abstract ideas only lead to confusions and spoil the relationship among the employees (Hood, 1991).

Autonomy

Autonomy is the state in which a person, group, or organization have the freedom to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Autonomy may be defined as the degree to which one may make significant decisions without the consent of others. At various levels of analysis, we may look at the autonomy of individuals within an organization or the autonomy of organizations or subunits thereof. Beginning with the individual level, a manager or any other organizational member for instance is relatively autonomous if she can make most of the important decisions relevant to her job without requiring permission from other people in the organization. An individual's autonomy is typically reduced when one requires consent from superiors, supervisors and the likes. However, it is also possible that consent may be needed from specialists, colleagues at the same organizational level, a committee anywhere in the organization, and even operators at a lower level. So autonomy may be impacted from many directions around a person or organization. Although autonomy has not been a commonly used structural variable in organizational research, publications in the past few decades have certainly reflected its use from time to time. Studies have also shown that autonomy may have desirable outcomes in the right context. Hackman and Oldham (1976) showed that autonomy (along with other core job dimensions like task significance and feedback) promotes positive motivation, performance, satisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover outcomes. White (1986) found that certain strategies that require high levels of control produce better results with low rather than with high autonomy.

Autonomy is a critical psychological need; it denotes the experience of volition and self-direction in thought, feeling, and action. Autonomy refers to the perception of being self-governed rather than controlled by external or superior forces. Human beings want to make their own decisions, pursue their own goals, and come up with their own ideas. In other words, they want to feel autonomous. According to self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), which is a broad theory of human motivation and personality, autonomy is one of the three basic psychological needs along with competence and relatedness, which are necessary for optimal growth and well-being of individuals both at home and in the workplace. When people feel autonomous, they perceive their needs, motivations, preferences, and behaviors to be aligned and

congruent with one another. In other words, they feel like the directors of their own lives and live according to their own interests and values. Thus, autonomous individuals endorse their own feelings and actions at the highest order of reflection (Ryan & Deci, 2004). This desire to feel self-directed and self-endorsed is mostly innate. All individuals will naturally strive to have this need fulfilled, as long as their environment facilitates and supports this striving. This implies that the individual is continually involved in an interaction with his or her environment, and while the need for autonomy is present in all individuals regardless of background or culture (Chen et al. 2015; Chirkov et al. 2010), it requires nutrients from the environment in order to flourish.

Employee Dedication and Organizational Health

Employee dedication is characterized by a strong psychological involvement in one's work, combined with a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Mauno, *et al.*, 2007, Schaufeli, *et al.*, 2002). The term employee dedication has no one distinct definition accepted by scholars in the field. But then, employee dedication simply refers to the type of engagement in which the employee engaged due to the feeling that his services are retained in the organization, and there will be no need to think of looking for job elsewhere (Williams, Maha&Zaki, 2010). Employee dedication is ones' sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. Employee dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Employee dedication is about being inspired, enthusiastic and highly involved in your job (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Employee dedication is an individual's ability to derive a sense of significance from work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about the given job, and feeling inspired and challenged by the job (Song et al., 2012). Employee dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge.

The concepts of goal setting, optimism, and employee involvement as mechanisms to improving employee performance have all been discussed fairly extensively in the management literature. Goal setting has been explored in terms of both motivational impact toward improving performance and as being integral parts of management systems or processes designed to improve performance (Zabaracki, 1998; Locke, 2002). Goal Focus is the ability of individuals, groups, or organizations to have clear understanding of, accept, support, and advocate on organization-wide goals and objectives. The objectives are easily understandable, acceptable and

achievable by the organization members. Goals designed properly and pursued consistently move the life of the business forward in concrete measurable ways. Leaders need to communicate organizational goals clearly and often to everyone involved in reaching those goals. Aligning tasks, resources and motivations with your most essential goals both at the organizational or personal levels, is critical in attaining success. Within the knowledge view of the researcher, there is no study within our clime that studied the relationship between employee dedication and goal focus in construction firms, in lieu of the foregoing, this study examines the relationship between absorption and autonomy in construction firms in Port Harcourt.

From the foregoing point of view, the study hereby hypothesized that:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant relationship between employee dedication and goal focus of employees of construction companies in Rivers State.
- H₀₂** There is no significant relationship between employee dedication and communication adequacy of employees of construction companies in Rivers State.
- H₀₃** There is no significant relationship between employee dedication and autonomy of employees of construction companies in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self- administered questionnaire. The population of the study was 197 employees of six (6) construction companies in Port Harcourt. The sample size of 132 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The research instrument was validated through supervisor's vetting and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. Data generated were analyzed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1 Correlations Matrix Between Employee dedication and Organizational Health

			Employee dedication	Goal Focus	Communication Adequacy	Autonomy
Spearman's rho	Employee dedication	Correlation	1.000	.845**	.967**	.846**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
	Goal Focus	N	86	86	86	86
		Correlation	.845**	1.000	.916**	.999**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
	Communication Adequacy	N	86	86	86	86
		Correlation	.967**	.916**	1.000	.915**
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
	Autonomy	N	86	86	86	86
		Correlation	.846**	.999**	.915**	1.000
		Coefficient				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	86	86	86	86

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

Source: Research Data 2019 and SPSS output version 23.0

Table 1 illustrates the test for the first three previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements. The results show that for

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between employee dedication and goal focus of employees of construction companies in Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between employee dedication and goal focus. The *rho* value 0.845 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a high correlation indicating a strong relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between employee dedication and goal focus of employees of construction companies in Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between employee dedication and communication adequacy of employees of construction companies in Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between employee dedication and communication adequacy. The ρ value 0.967 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a high correlation indicating a strong relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between employee dedication and communication adequacy of employees of construction companies in Rivers State.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between employee dedication and autonomy of employees of construction companies in Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between employee dedication and autonomy. The ρ value 0.846 indicates this relationship and it is significant at $p\ 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a high correlation indicating a strong relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between employee dedication and autonomy of employees of construction companies in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Data analysis revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between employee dedication and the measures of organizational health – goal focus, communication adequacy and autonomy. This finding is in line with earlier findings of Rayton and Yalabik (2014) who stated that Employee dedication is ones' sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. Employee dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Employee dedication is about being inspired, enthusiastic and highly involved in your job. Employee dedication is an individual's deriving a sense of significance from work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about the given job, and feeling inspired and challenged by the job (Song et al., 2012).

Mowday, Porter, and Dubin (1974) suggest that high committed employees may perform better than less committed ones. Schein (2011) and Steers (1975) suggested that commitment may represent one useful indicator of the effectiveness of an organization. Employee Commitment is important because high levels of commitment lead to several favorable organizational outcomes.

It reflects the extent to which employees identify with an organization and is committed to its goals. Biljana Dordevic (2004) stated that the commitment of employees is an important issue because it may be used to predict employees' performance, absenteeism and other behaviors.

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

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Dedication involves desire, commitment; ownership and a continual strive to improve (Schaufeli & Bakker 2003). Any employee who is dedicated to the organization will understand and support the values as well as go extra mile to protect the corporate image of the organization thereby facilitate value alignment and organizational commitment. This study therefore concludes that employee dedication significantly influences organizational health of construction companies in Rivers State.

The study recommends that construction companies should promote activities and policies that will enhance employee dedication which will give them a sense of significance from work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about the given job, and feeling inspired and challenged by the job.

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