
Ethical Leadership and Employee Commitment of Telecommunication Companies in Port Harcourt.

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between ethical leadership and employee commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. The cross-sectional survey was employed and a population of one hundred and seventy-four (174) employees from four (4) selected telecommunication companies was covered in the study. A sample size of one hundred and twenty (120) employees was drawn from the population. Copies of questionnaire were administered to respondents. The stratified random sampling technique was employed, and data were analyzed using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation and partial correlation. The findings revealed that the dimensions of ethical leadership (trustworthiness and transparency) were positively and significantly related with affective commitment and normative commitment. It was concluded that trustworthiness significantly influences employee commitment in the telecommunication companies and transparency significantly influences employee commitment in the telecommunication companies. The study recommended among others that the Management of telecommunication companies should create a very friendly environment to enable the employee develop trust in the management as it will go a long way to improve productivity. The study clearly proves that if trust is between management and employees are improved, then commitment will increase.

Keywords: Employee Commitment, Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment, Ethical Leadership, Transparency, Trustworthiness.

1.0 Introduction

Employees undertake a variety of duties in order to get the job done for an organisation. Therefore, employee dedication is vital to enhance the performance of companies since it boosts the productivity of individual workers. A company benefits greatly from having dedicated workers since such workers may require little to no supervision to do their work (Brown et al., 2011). According to John and Elyse's (2010) research, companies can't thrive in today's market without maximising their human resources. In order for an organisation to achieve its goals, each employee must demonstrate dedication to the company's mission and work productively within the team.

In order to achieve the organization's goals, staff members must work in tandem with management. This is because workers prefer to be employed by a thriving business that provides competitive pay, room for professional growth, and job stability (John & Elyse, 2010). Increased sales and decreased operating expenses are only two of the many benefits that accrue to shareholders when workers are invested in the success of their company. When workers are invested in their jobs, they are less likely to quit, search elsewhere for work, or call out sick (Robinson, 2006). To the extent that an employee stays dedicated to their company, it is because their needs are being met. When companies go above and above for their employees, they inspire loyalty in those workers. This means that dedication develops when an organisation provides the resources and support its employees need to reach their greatest potential, yielding tangible benefits for the business.

Employees in the telecom sector are crucial to the sector's success. Employees are responsible for both product development and customer support. Management is a service sector, thus its success and competitiveness depend on the calibre of their offerings. Workers in this field need extensive training and education to do work of a quality that will satisfy customers. This means that the telecommunications business must not only attract and hire talented people, but also provide them with the tools they need to succeed in their jobs (Davidson, 2003). In today's highly competitive environment, businesses struggle to succeed unless all of their employees are fully invested in the company's goals and actively contribute to achieving those goals as a cohesive one. Keeping employees invested in their jobs in the modern workplace is difficult for many companies (Coetzee, 2005). However, it has been noted that telecoms employees have complained about a variety of issues in the workplace, including a lack of support from management, a heavy workload, increased use of overtime, a lack of adequate support from staff, and inadequate wages (Strachota et al., 2003).

People obviously expect to receive something of value in return for their efforts, such as love, attention, recognition, rewards, and inspiration. Reciprocity influences the depth of commitment since, in modern businesses, workers are compensated for their dedication in many ways. Researchers have proposed that reciprocity is a mechanism underlying commitment, and that employees will offer their commitment to the organisation in return for the organisation fulfilling its psychological contract, such as in the form of fair pay, secure employment, and opportunities for advancement. Ethical leadership is a way of leading an organisation that emphasises a set of core values in order to shape the way its employees act and interact with one another (Piccolo & Green, 2003).

According to Ogbonna and Harris (2000), an organization's ethical leadership has an impact on worker productivity because it shapes how well the company is able to define its goals and procedures, establish controls, and concentrate its resources, all of which affect how well it can respond to shifts in the external business environment.

The current credit crisis, the worst global recession since the 1930s, and the multiple scandals in prominent multinational business organisations have all served as a clarion cry for ethical leadership. Pressures to accomplish, perform, and "win at all costs" may have contributed to the unethical failures of corporate executives at Enron, Arthur Andersen, WorldCom, Tyco, Parmalat, and HealthSouth, among other companies in the industrialised world. Berenbeim, 2009; O'Connell, & Bligh, 2009; Victor, & Soutar, 2005) all point to dishonest actions made by business leaders in order to fraudulently inflate earnings and so boost remuneration. Bribery, corruption, and facilitation payments; whistleblowing or speaking up; and discrimination, harassment, or bullying were found to be the most significant ethical issues for organisations in a 2010 survey of U.K. and some continental European businesses (Wesley et al., 2011). Texaco, for example, settled a racial discrimination case in 1996 for \$176 million; Mitsubishi Motor Corporation, following a government investigation into widespread sexual harassment, settled for \$34 million in 1998; and Louisiana-Pacific Corporation, for various unethical practises including customer and environmental fraud, paid a \$37 million fine in 1998.

There is evidence of unethical behaviour in both rich and poor countries. For example, in Nigeria, one of the emerging nations in sub-Saharan Africa, the rate of business failures has been on the rise. There have been reports of businesses failing in Nigeria due to unethical behaviour on the part of its CEOs. The Nigerian banking system nearly collapsed in 1997, when 26 commercial banks shut down owing to financial mismanagement. In 2006, a financial scandal rocked Cadbury Nigeria Plc, a major player in the Nigerian food and beverage industry. All parties were harmed by the manipulation of Cadbury Nigeria Plc's financial statements and records. In addition, three Nigerian banks—Afribank Plc., Spring Bank Plc., and Bank PHB—closed their doors in August 2011 owing to managerial financial mismanagement. In an effort to clean up the banking system, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) took control of eight banks in August 2009.

Honesty, integrity, fairness, and concern for others are cornerstones of ethical conduct. Toor and Ofori (2009) define this as the circumstance in which leaders do what is good for others and avoid doing what is bad for others. The lives of corporate leaders are often seen as unrelated to their jobs. Truthfully, morality needs to permeate the organisation from the top down. To be effective, official ethical standards and ethics training must be congruent with the ethical acts and conduct of top management, and leaders must never shirk from this responsibility. Whether an organisation achieves its goals or not depends on the actions of its leaders in areas such as recruitment, performance reviews, and overall strategy (Brown & Mitchell, 2010). Leaders in an organisation should provide a good example for their followers by defining the organization's norms and values, demonstrating those values in their own actions, and encouraging their subordinates to do the same. A cancer on ethical behaviour inside firms is provided by negative examples of immoral behaviour by corporate executives (Fisher & Lovell, 2003). Workers are prone to internalise a leader's ruthlessness and inconsideration if they see it modelled in their superiors (Crane & Matten, 2004). Kouzes and Posner (2007), referenced in Collins (2010), found that employees are more loyal to companies whose supervisors are honest, credible, polite, and fair. Employees are more likely to stay with a company if they feel they are making a difference (Bower, 2003, as cited in Upadhyay & Singh, 2010; Collins, 2011). Failing to lead effectively might result in higher staff turnover and make it harder to recruit new workers. Employee turnover costs may rise as a result, as well as the price of more management, lower morale, and lower output in the workplace. Bribery, corruption, facilitation payments, and prejudice are really pervasive in business structures. When not handled properly, unethical practises like these can have a

domino effect on employee dedication. As a result, problems with ethical leadership must be addressed immediately across the world.

In this analysis, the ethical atmosphere served as a moderator. The term "corporate culture" refers to the moral climate and ethical standards of an enterprise. Victor and Cullen (1987, 1988), the first to describe the thesis, proposed that the ethical climates observed inside organisations are context-specific. Nine distinct ethical work environments were produced using a two-dimensional matrix with three ethical criteria on the left and three loci of analysis on the right. Egoism, altruism, and principle are the three ethical standards, while the person, the community, and the world are the three loci of study (Simha & Cullen, 2012). This research expands upon the nine previously identified categories of ethical climates.

Nafei (2015) conducted research in Egypt to determine if and how much an ethical atmosphere in the workplace influences the connection between job satisfaction and employee commitment. The research found that employee commitment is severely lacking in businesses and that a deeper knowledge of the elements that affect work satisfaction and employee commitment is urgently required. The level of ethics in the workplace was shown to be significantly correlated with two measures of employee commitment and job satisfaction. Moreover, the ethical atmosphere had a sizeable and favourable effect on worker happiness and dedication. Therefore, the study centred on the need of seeing ethical climate as a strategic resource that businesses may exploit to gain an edge in the market. The study suggests that having a competitive edge may greatly increase worker happiness and loyalty to their employer. However, the study did not go into the relationship between ethical leadership and employee dedication.

Recent research by Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2016) provides support for this view, finding that when workers believed their leaders exhibited strong ethical leadership, they were more likely to engage in pro-social behaviours at work and show loyalty to the company. Research done on a railway firm in the DRC found that employees' organisational citizenship behaviours and organisational commitment may be explained by their leaders' ethical standards and principles. In this work setting, employees are more likely to go out of their way to help others, be more polite, and work hard with a high level of civic virtue. However, the study only looked at one subset of the transportation industry (railway), hence its sector-wide generalizability may be weak. According to other writers (Yeboah-Assiamah et al., 2015), an ethical lifecycle in an organisation may flourish when there are interactions between leaders and followers that are focused on ethics. Given the apparent link between ethical leadership, ethical behaviour in the workplace, and employee devotion to the company, the topic of ethical leadership in the private sector merits more investigation.

Siegel (2013) argued that there is a need to strengthen organisational ethics in the wake of well known ethical malpractices throughout the world at the turn of the twenty-first century. Scientists now have a responsibility to investigate ethical leadership in order to better understand its causes and effects. The value of employee dedication to a company as a whole has grown in recent years in the management literature. Employee commitment has been associated to a number of favourable organisational outcomes, including decreased turnover intentions (Jehanzeb et al., 2013). High levels of supervisory ethical leadership have been found to correlate positively with staff commitment, as has been shown in prior studies.

Many studies have used numerous predictor factors to empirically investigate the idea of employee commitment. Kamua (2015) used the Kenya Airports Authority as a case to research what elements affect employee engagement and how it affects an organization's

performance. The organisational culture and staff dedication of Port Harcourt's deposit money banks were investigated by Oboh (2017).

When workers resort to strike action, it's an indication that morale is low and loyalty is in question. Policymakers and telecoms company managers should be concerned about the claimed current state of affairs in the telecommunications sector since employee commitment predicts organisational outcomes like productivity and turnover intentions. However, there is a dearth of hard data outlining how ethical leadership may help businesses win over their staff. This study experimentally addressed this gap by examining the connection between ethical leadership and employee engagement in the Port Harcourt telecommunications industry.

Statement of the Problem

As the war for talent heats up, ensuring that your staff is happy is becoming increasingly crucial. It is not hard for a rival to undercut you on specifics of employment, such pay or perks. The reasons why employees leave a firm are discussed in Boyens (2007). These include involuntary turnover, voluntary turnover, and promotion. In addition, he claims that these two forms of employee turnover are the most harmful to businesses. Performance, knowledge, experience, connections, time, and money invested in training are all negatively impacted by employees leaving voluntarily. Constant interruption of services and too much change leads to a feeling of uncertainty and impairs the performance of the remaining employees, which in turn impacts the overall performance of the company.

In the last decade, high rates of employee commitment have spread across the country like wildfire. Telecommunications workers have lost all allegiance to their employer. Employees have been left feeling disengaged from the firms they serve and tormented by worries about their own job security as a result of the rising frequency of corporate mergers and acquisitions. As a result, staff members have prioritised finding new employment opportunities above doing their jobs, which has had a negative impact on the business as a whole. Job satisfaction is currently relatively low in the telecoms industry as a whole. This is evidenced by the present picketing of MTN Nigeria by the Nigeria Labour Congress against the company's hostile and anti-labor practises, such as its widespread use of casualization across all job functions, its use of fixed-term contracts for Nigerian employees, its promotion of the worst forms of insecure employment, etc. Changes in ownership and management bring with them a plethora of new ways of doing things. However, most of these strategies have failed in the market because employees do not believe in them and will not work to their full potential to achieve these goals. This study will therefore fill the existing gap in literature on the relationship between ethical leadership and employee commitment of telecommunications companies in Rivers State.

Hypotheses

Based on above research questions the following null hypotheses are drawn.

- H₀1:** There is no significant relationship between trustworthiness and employee affective commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt
- H₀2:** There is no significant relationship between trustworthiness and employee normative commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between transparency and employee affective commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between transparency and employee normative commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory

Bandura's (1977) social learning theory proposes that managers have an impact on staff through demonstrating strategies for facilitating the dissemination of new beliefs, norms, and practises. By seeing their leaders' actions and the results of those actions, employees may learn what to do and what not to do. In this way, moral leaders are likely to be role models of excellence in terms of their assigned responsibilities, their standing and achievements within the business, and their capacity to affect the outcomes of workers. However, leaders who engage in dishonest practises together foster an environment conducive to such aberrations, and followers learn through seeing and mimicking their actions. In the same way that followers may learn to be moral by observing their leaders do the right thing, followers of ethical leaders can learn to do the right thing themselves. Trevio (1992) emphasised the importance of social learning suggestion in organisations, noting that it loves to educate and sends signal flags about the value of authoritative norms and the commitment of pioneers to upholding them. Accordingly, representatives who are practising the best thing predict that poor behaviour would be spurned harshly, and they are disappointed if it does not.

Concept of Ethical Leadership

According to Oates and Dalmau (2013), stakeholders in a company need to have ethical leadership in order to realise the company's overarching aim without compromising the norms by which the company operates. They mesh corporate objectives with those of employees and stakeholders. According to Brown (2014), an organization's ethical leadership may be shown in how its executives act towards their staff. The definition of ethical leadership is setting a good example in one's interactions with others and encouraging others to do the same through positive reinforcement and clear, open lines of communication. This suggests that leaders should be examples of moral excellence. It goes on to say that morally upstanding managers should be conscientious in their pursuit of business objectives. Ethical leaders, as argued by Brown and Trevino (2013), provide a good example in their management style and make workers feel responsible for their actions. Leaders with an ethical demeanour are held in high esteem by members of the public, businesses, and other institutions. Some of their characteristics include things like honesty and reliability. Such heads of state are full of fairness and always weigh ethical considerations carefully before making judgements. Their actions, convictions, and ideals are all governed by a set of guiding moral principles. Good moral principles serve as the basis for the vision of ethical leaders. According to Piccolo et al. (2010), there are three essential features of ethical leadership: congruence with other standards, visionary communication that takes into account both the present and the future, and the achievement of set objectives.

Trust

According to Darcy (2010), trust is "a sacred and passionate relationship between individuals and the desire for confidence that people have in the association and administration." This exemplifies trust as the desire of others shown via words, deeds, or decisions. Collins (2010)

argues that trust is the foundation for "productive conflict," "objective duty," "individual responsibility," and the realisation of collective goals. Two types of trust were proposed by Andrews et al. (2011): conditional and unconditional trust. The limiting trust is a situation in which the parties will carry out each act for varied durations while employing a consistent interpretative strategy. Common values shape social contexts and become the primary medium through which individuals experience trust, but this does not mean that they paint an accurate picture.

When trying to recover from a severe economic slump, Fulmer (2004) observed that morality, values, and trust are crucial challenges for administrators. When employees perceive a morally upright hierarchy in place, there is significantly more trust in the organisation as a whole. When there is trust between managers and employees, the organisation as a whole may function more efficiently (Leo, 2006). When interacting with employees, authoritative actions that build trust tend to pay dividends in the long run. Since trust is so important to businesses, it stands to reason that moral pioneers will model ethical behaviour by being consistent in their words and deeds and by treating their employees with respect and dignity and never violating their human rights. The authoritative trust model is concerned with representative influence and association structure (McAllister & Bies, 1998). Indeed, employees with abnormal levels of hierarchical trust are more likely to take risks, share ideas, and participate in practises for the association, while representatives with elevated quantities of association trust may foresee what practises will go well.

Transparency

Open communication and conduct are hallmarks of transparency. It is the method of making available, observable, and appropriate information about current situations, options, and actions (Bacon, 2003). According to Avolio and Gardner (2005), transparency refers to "the extent to which an individual sets an example of openness and clarity in his or her conduct towards others by sharing the data required to decide, tolerating others' information sources, and uncovering his or her own qualities, thought processes, and feelings". This means that openness in communication between leaders and their followers is valued and fostered when both parties are willing to disclose information about their true feelings and priorities.

In order to ensure accountability for the actions of the people and the organisation responsible for the care of the assets, a transparent organisation must have open procedures and systems and provide easy access to employee data for ethical awareness within the organisation. In the banking industry, candour is the standard, and it is a symbol of the unrestricted disclosure of information, policies, and practises. Companies that are honest with their employees encourage their employees to follow company policies and procedures and perform up to the standards established for them. Employees who work for such companies have higher expectations for their working conditions, recognition, treatment, career advancement, and participation in company leadership. Therefore, open communication encourages employees to take an active interest in their job and to become more invested in its success. It also keeps and adjusts the organization's ethical leadership's course, calibre, and fervour.

Concept of Employee Commitment

Several academic studies have been undertaken in the field of employee and organisational commitment in recent years. Attempts to pin down the nature of commitment have proven fruitless (Meyer & Allen, 1996; Meyer & Hercovitch, 2001). The term "commitment" was used by them to describe the emotional bond one feels to an action that has meaning for a

certain goal. Affective attachment and involvement with the target, as well as an awareness of the cost associated with disengaging from the target, are two ways in which Meyer & Maltin (2010) argue the binding force can be experienced (i.e., can be accompanied by different mindsets). Each of these ways of thinking has its own name: "affective commitment" (AC), "normative commitment" (NC), and "continuance commitment" (CC).

Employee commitment, as described by Akintayo (2010), is the extent to which an individual is loyal to his or her employer. Ongori (2007) defines employee commitment as "an employee's emotional investment in and dedication to the success of the organisation as a whole." Similarly, Zheng (2010) defined employee commitment as an individual's outlook on the company. Employees' dedication to their work demonstrates their commitment to management. A company's management should care about measuring the degree of dedication always demonstrated by managers and would-be managers since it demonstrates identification with engagement in the day-to-day activities of the company. Employee commitment is multifaceted, including workers' loyalty, their readiness to put in extra effort on the company's behalf, their adherence to the company's ideals, and their desire to continue in the company, as stated by Meyer & Allen (1997).

Affective Commitment (AC)

Affective commitment, as defined by Meyer and Allen (1991), is an employee's positive identification with and participation in the company as a result of such good sentiments. Some of the factors that contribute to workers feeling emotionally invested in their jobs are: job autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety, and supervisory feedback; organisational dependability, or the degree to which workers believe their employer will look out for their best interests; and participative management, or the extent to which they feel they have a voice in workplace decisions that affect them (Madi, Hamilton). They also claimed that Rowden's (2002) research showing that these antecedents all produce rewarding settings naturally favourable to the formation of emotional commitment is consistent with their own.

In addition, Meyer et al. (2004) and Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) claimed that personal participation, identification with the relevant objective, and value congruence are the key underpinning for the formation of emotional commitment. It has been seen in the view of Bal et al. (2014) that affective commitment reflects an emotional attachment and involvement in the organisation, which supports the view of Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) that when there is a high level of affective commitment, employees will be willing to remain in that organisation, otherwise the reverse will be displayed. The affective factor, however, was previously characterised by Allen and Meyer (1991) as an identification with, participation in, and satisfaction with the organisation.

Normative Commitment (NC)

Normative commitment, as defined by Madi et al. (2012), occurs when an employee internalises the organization's values and aims and therefore feels obligated to stay with the company. According to research (Meyer & Smith, 1993; Bal et al., 2014), employees that have a normative commitment to their firm are more likely to remain loyal to it. Coworker commitment, with its affective and normative components, as well as commitment behaviour, organisational dependability, and participative management, has been regarded as a potential antecedent for normative commitment. Furthermore, the dedication of one's coworkers is assumed to send normative signals that shape the growth of normative commitment.

Important factors that promote and instill a sense of moral duty to reciprocate with the organisation include dependability of the organisation and participative management. According to the literature (Meyer & Smith, 1993; Bal et al., 2014), normative commitment reflects an implanted sense of duty in the employee to maintain membership in the organisation.

Recent research has shown that normative commitment has two sides, one reflecting a moral imperative and the other reflecting an indebted obligation (Gelta et al., 2006; Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010), and this second observation is consistent with these findings, as noted by Meyer and Maltin (2010). The moral imperative mindset is characterised, first, by a powerful combination of normative and emotional commitment. Second, the owed responsibility attitude develops when there is a disproportion between one's normative and emotional commitments. According to Lee and Chen (2013), normative commitment is connected to a sense of duty; workers may feel indebted to the company for providing employment during a difficult time in their lives. Especially in a culture with a large number of jobless individuals, that will go a long way towards boosting employee dedication.

Empirical Review

Peggy, (2013) carried out a study on ethical leadership and organizational commitment in the Canadian Armed Forces. The current study investigated these relationships using a sample size of 468 consisting of Canadian Armed Forces Army personnel. Perceived supervisor/ethical leadership was found to be directly and positively correlated with employee affective and normative commitment, and not correlated with employee continuance commitment. As well, no difference was found in the perceptions of supervisor ethical leadership for female military personnel as compared to male military personnel. The hypotheses that employee education level would be positively related to perceptions of ethical leadership and that employee age and rank would moderate the relationship between perceived supervisor ethical leadership and employee affective commitment were not supported.

Zain, Mula and Rizwan, (2016) investigated the nature of the relationship among organizational commitment, ethical leadership, and leadership effectiveness, work related stress and turnover intention in the banking sector of Lahore and RenalaKhurd (Punjab) Pakistan. The data was collected from the 200 managerial and non-managerial employees from the banking sector in the region of Lahore and Renalakhurd. The results show that the ethical leadership and leadership effectiveness positively affect organizational commitment of the employees and also have highly positive significant relation with the work related stress and turnover intention. The ethical leadership and leadership effectiveness at the mean time helps to reduce both work related stress and turnover intention and increase organizational commitment. However, the study helps the corporate managers in making the optimal decisions.

Naile and Selesho, (2014) conducted a study to establish the role of ethical leadership style in motivation of teaching staff towards commitment to their work. A total of 184 teachers were sampled from high schools in South Africa. Convenient sampling was used among 13 schools with sub-optimal performance of below 70 percent for three successive years in a provincial jurisdiction. A 59% response rate was achieved using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. Quantitative methodology was applied on the data set and inferences made through descriptive and correlational analyses. The study revealed that there was a strong relationship between ethical leadership behaviors and all three constructs of employee commitment. The study suggested that leadership behaviors that involve trust building, inspiring a shared

vision, encouraging innovation and emphasizing development, have positive correlation with employee commitment. These behaviors align well with the trustworthiness dimension of ethical leadership.

Among the employee commitment types, affective commitment has been found to have the highest effect on employee productivity compared to the other types of commitment. Riaz, Akram and Ijaz (2011) conducted a study to examine the impact of the transparent leadership style on employee affective commitment in the banking sector of Pakistan. Simple random sampling from 4 banks enlisted a sample size of 293 participants. The multi-factor leadership questionnaire was used to measure transformational leadership while affective commitment was measured using items from the Organization Commitment Questionnaire. With a 72% response rate, the study used descriptive statistics to analyze collected data, and correlation and regression analysis to test the hypotheses. Findings of the study revealed a significant and positive relationship between transparent leadership and affective commitment among the banking staff. According to Poon (2010), affective commitment is positively associated with other positive employee outcomes such as work engagement.

Thamrin (2012) analyzed the influence of transparent leadership and employee commitment on job satisfaction and organizational performance among maritime workers in Indonesia. A sample size of 110 participants was selected through simple random sampling and achieved a 95% return rate. Structural equation modelling was used to analyze that data. The following inferences were made from the results of the study: transparent leadership showed a significant and positive correlation with organizational commitment; transparent leadership positively and significantly influenced employees' performance; transparent leadership had no significant influence on job satisfaction; organizational commitment had a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction and employees' performance; job satisfaction positively and significantly influenced employees' performance.

Obalola, Aduloju and Olowokudejo (2012) explored the impact of corporate ethical values on employee commitment in Nigeria. Multi-stage cluster sampling was used to select respondents of the study from a list of managers in the insurance industry of Nigeria to yield a sample size of 415 respondents, from whom data was collected using the Corporate Ethical Value and Organizational Commitment scales. The study proposed a significant relationship between the two constructs, with corporate ethical values being hypothesized as an important determinant of employee commitment. Linear regression results indicated that both dimensions of corporate ethical values significantly predicted employee commitment, hence fully supporting the proposition that corporate ethical values would be significant determinants of employee commitment. So far, results of several studies point towards the positive effect of codes of conduct upon employee commitment. A balanced approach would be to examine their negative effect if any, on employee outcomes.

Anwar, Islam, Khan and Ungku, (2012) investigated the mediating role of affective commitment on the relationship between the supervisor's ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behaviors among banking and insurance companies in Malaysia. A sample size of 400 employees were used. The survey distributed questionnaires to 400 respondents with a response rate of 70%. The study findings revealed a positive correlation between supervisor ethical leadership and affective commitment, $r(279) = 0.45, p < .001$, and organizational citizenship behavior, $r(279) = 0.27, p < .001$. Supervisor ethical leadership was found to have a stronger effect on affective commitment, compared to organizational citizenship behavior. Affective commitment was also found to positively affect organizational citizenship behavior, $r = 0.49, p < .001$. The study concluded that affective

commitment positively influenced the relationship between supervisor ethical leadership and organizational citizenship behavior.

Xiong, Lin, Li and Wang (2016) conducted two studies to examine the relationship between followers' trust in their leader and their levels of affective commitment with authentic leadership as the moderating variable. In the first study, 224 participants from 14 Chinese companies were randomly selected. The cross-sectional study achieved a 60.53% return rate. Results revealed a positive relationship between trust in supervisor and affective commitment. Authentic leadership was also found to moderate this relationship. In the second study, 168 participants were randomly recruited from 13 Chinese companies. The study which achieved a 91.7% return rate used a lagged 2-wave design to reduce common-method bias. Authentic leadership was found to moderate the relationship between trust in supervisor and affective commitment. The study recommended that organizations should cultivate authentic leadership.

Disorbo, (2017) conducted quantitative research in all public and private colleges and universities in Maryland, USA, to examine the relationship between job satisfaction, employee commitment, and ethical climate among college administrators. A total of 278 college administrators in the state of Maryland completed an online survey in the fall semester of 2016. Findings indicated that ethical climate perceptions differed significantly by gender, administrative position and job satisfaction. Benevolent ethical climate was found to be significantly associated with job satisfaction while egoism had significant association with organizational commitment because an egoistic ethical climate was favored by respondents with high organizational commitment. In relation to ethical climate and gender, male respondents were found to significantly favor principled ethical climate more than females. Significant differences were also found in ethical climate responses by administrative position where principled ethical climate was favored by deans and directors in comparison to Vice Presidents.

Facets of job satisfaction for example supervision, wages and benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures and the nature of work have been found to be positively related to normative commitment (Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). Thus, job satisfaction is an important antecedent for employee commitment. A study to examine the relationship between ethical climate type and job satisfaction was performed by Eddy et al., (2010). Using an online survey, data was collected from alumni of a small private college in the Northeastern region of the United States. The email invitation included a request to forward the invitation to other individuals, i.e., following a snowball sampling process. A total of 154 responses were received of which 87 were useable after data cleaning. Results found that job satisfaction, a pre-cursor of employee commitment, had a positive correlation with caring/benevolent climates ($r = .539, p < .01$).

Dinc and Plakalovic, (2016) examined the effect of caring climate, affective commitment and job satisfaction, on job performance among banking sector employees in Bosnia. The survey targeted 6677 employees in 16 private and 1 public bank in Sarajevo. A sample size of 200 participants was derived from 1 public and 3 private banks to which questionnaires were distributed. A response rate of 76% was achieved with 152 usable questionnaires. The following hypotheses were supported by the study results; caring/benevolence climate has a significant direct impact on overall job satisfaction; caring/benevolence climate has a significant direct impact on affective commitment; job satisfaction has a significant direct impact on affective commitment and caring/benevolence climate has a significant direct impact on job performance. The study also found that affective commitment mediated the

relationship between overall job satisfaction and performance. However, the study's small sample size may hinder generalization of its results.

A Malaysian study undertaken by Ahmad et al., (2014) investigated the influence of three types of ethical climate dimensions, viz., egoism, benevolence, and principle, on three types of wrongdoing, in examining individuals' whistleblowing behavior. It was found that, depending on types of wrongdoing, principle ethical climate can predict whistleblowing intentions. Ismail's, (2015) study, mentioned above, also realized a significant positive association between the law and code ethical climate and professional commitment. On the other hand, however, the study revealed that the instrumental ethical climate type had a significant negative relationship with both organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Significant negative relationships were also revealed between the independent ethical climate type and organizational and professional commitment, and between the rule's ethical climate and job satisfaction. Borhani, (2014) undertook a descriptive analytical study to determine the correlation between nurses' perception of ethical climate and organizational commitment. A total of 275 nurses were sampled from four hospitals in the south-eastern region of Iran. The data collection instrument was a combination of demographic items and, the Ethical Climate and Organizational Commitment Questionnaires. A positive correlation was identified between caring or benevolent climate and organizational commitment; similarly, a positive correlation was discovered between organizational commitment and the subtypes of principle climate, i.e., professionalism, rules, and independence climates.

3.0 Methodology

This study used a cross-sectional survey, and the target population was one hundred and seventy-four (174) staff strength of four (4) telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. The sample size was determined using The Fisher's (1998) formula for sample size determination. As a result, 120 questionnaires were distributed to employees at the four selected companies. In this study, the stratified random sampling technique was applied. This method was chosen because it ensures that all the study units are well represented in the sample case selection. Ethical leadership (independent variable) was measured using trustworthiness and transparency. Four (4) items were used in measuring trustworthiness (e.g. trusting the organization leadership to resolve conflicts without bias and favoritism among the staff when a misunderstanding arise) and four (4) items were used in measuring transparency (e.g. Due to their transparency, the top leadership of the organization shares information on existing business conditions, decisions and actions is the same that is shared to all the concerned staff). Employee commitment (dependent variable) was measured using affective commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment was measured using a set of four (4) items (e.g. Employees stay with our organization because they are affectively committed to the organization) and four (4) items were used in measuring normative commitment (e.g. I picture allegiance as essential, hence I feel a sense of moral duty to stay put in this telecommunication firm). Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement, 2 indicating disagreement, 3 indicating agreement, and 4 indicating strong agreement. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 aided the analyses of the bivariate hypotheses using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient statistical tool.

4.0 Result

A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to respondent, however, only 110 (91.67%) copies were returned and 95 (86.37%) used for the study. The hypotheses test was undertaken

at a 95% confidence interval implying a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule is set at a critical region of $p > 0.05$ for acceptance of the null hypothesis and $p < 0.05$ for rejection of the null hypothesis.

Table 4.1: Correlations Matrix between Trustworthiness and Employee Commitment

			Trustworthi ness	Affective Commitme nt	Normative Commitm ent
Spearman's rho	Trustworthi ness	Correlatio n Coefficient	1.000	.742*	.545
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.	.018	.664
		N	95	95	95
	Affective Commitmen t	Correlatio n Coefficient	.742*	1.000	.524**
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.018	.	.000
		N	95	95	95
	Normative Commitmen t	Correlatio n Coefficient	.545	.524**	1.000
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.664	.000	.
		N	95	95	95

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data 2022

Ho₁ There is no significant relationship between trustworthiness and affective commitment among employees in the telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between trustworthiness and affective commitment. The *rho* value 0.742 indicates this relationship 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 trustworthiness and affective commitment among employees in the telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

Ho₂ There is no significant relationship between trustworthiness and normative commitment among employees in the telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between trustworthiness and normative commitment. The *rho* value 0.545 indicates this

relationship is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a moderate correlation. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between trustworthiness and normative commitment among employees in the telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

Table 4.2: Correlations matrix between Transparency and Employee Commitment

			Transparen cy	Affective Commitme nt	Normativ e Commit ment
Spearman's rho	Transparency	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.653*	.787
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.013	.402
		N	95	95	95
	Affective Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.653*	1.000	.524**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.	.000
		N	95	95	95
	Normative Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.787	.524**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.402	.000	.
		N	95	95	95

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data 2020 and SPSS output version 23.0

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between transparency and affective commitment among employees in the telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between transparency and affective commitment. The rho value 0.653 indicates that this relationship 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 transparency and affective commitment among employees in the telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

Ho₄ There is no significant relationship between transparency and normative commitment among employees in the telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between transparency and affective commitment. The ρ value 0.787 indicates that this relationship is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.05$. The correlation coefficient represents a strong correlation. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between transparency and normative commitment among employees in the telecommunication companies in Rivers State.

5.0 Discussion of Findings

Trustworthiness and affective commitment: The findings show that there is a significant and positive relationship between trustworthiness and affective commitment. This is in agreement with the findings of Clinebell, Trijonyte and Reardon (2013), performed a study to examine the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment. Affective forms of employee commitment were the dependent variables tested through a survey in two subsidiaries of a multinational organization. The study findings revealed that trustworthiness had the strongest positive impact on affective commitment. It was also shown to have significant and positive outcomes on normative commitment.

Trustworthiness and normative commitment: The study shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between trustworthiness and normative commitment among employees in the telecommunication companies in Rivers State. This is in agreement with the findings of a recent findings of (Mitonga-Monga & Cilliers, 2016) study, examining how employee perception of ethical leadership moderates employee commitment and organizational citizenship behavior found that trustworthiness had a high positive relationship towards normative commitment among employees who had high ethical perceptions of their leadership.

Transparency and affective commitment: The study shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between transparency and affective commitment. Furthermore, in agreement to the findings of this study, Roman and Munuera (2005) stated that a transparent organization implies an openness of the association framework through clear procedures and systems and simple access to workers data for moral mindfulness in the association through data sharing, which at last guarantees responsibility for the execution of the people and association taking care of assets. Additionally, straightforwardness is a normal for business banks business and representative of being open free revelation of data principles, arrangements, procedures, and actions.

Transparency and normative commitment: The study findings also show that there is a significant and positive relationship between transparency and normative commitment. This agree with Zaptcioglu, Ada, Gunay and Katrinli, (2013) study conducted among nursing staff in France to determine the relationship between ethical leadership and normative organizational commitment. Results of the survey revealed a positive relationship between transparency and normative commitment.

Finally, it can also be said that the works of Beer, (2004) agrees with the findings from this report when he stated that organizations with straightforwardness empowers workers to take after the guidelines and controls, work as per the benchmarks set for them; the representatives

expect great working conditions, acknowledgment, reasonable treatment, vocation development, and inclusion in basic leadership.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

Today ethical leadership is undeniably one of the requirements for most managers so that they could increase their capabilities of retaining their employees through the acquisition and analysis of data, as well as increased knowledge and awareness. A good leader has an idea of goodness and respective goals and is willing to hold on to these goals even in difficult times. A good leader is authentic, cares strongly about certain ideas that deserve robust concern and is a person of prudence. This study therefore concludes that ethical leadership significantly influences employee commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. The study specifically concludes that: Trustworthiness significantly influences employee commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt and Transparency significantly influences employee commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. Based on the discussion and conclusions above, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. Management of telecommunication companies should create a very friendly environment to enable the employee develop trust in the management as it will go a long way to improve productivity. The study clearly proves that if trust is between management and employees are improved, then commitment will increase.
- ii. Management of telecommunication companies should create an atmosphere that guaranty reliability and honesty as it will lead to employees' emotional attachment to organizational value. The study proves that if trust is upheld, employee affective commitment is bound to be improved.
- iii. Management of telecommunication companies should stick to their words in discharge of their duties, as this will lead to employees' willingness to remain with the organization. The study proves that trustworthiness has significant and positive effect on employee normative commitment.
- iv. Management of telecommunication companies should develop a plain and transparent leadership style as this will arouse commitment of the employees. The study also recommends a plain and transparent leadership style to help build employee commitment.
- v. Management of telecommunication companies should share information and act in an open-mindedness as this will lead to employees' willingness to remain with the organization.

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