Trust and Employees' Commitment to Supervisor: The Nigerian Experience

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ABSTRACT

There has been several research works on the concepts of trust and commitment to supervisor respectively. However, there is no known study on the relationship between trust and commitment to supervisor. To fill this gap in the management literature, this study examined empirically the relationship between trust and employees commitment to their supervisors. The sample for the study consisted of two hundred and forty five (245) academic members of staff (both teaching and non teaching) from the seven randomly selected universities in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. The study utilized the quasi-experimental research design as it is the most appropriate for the administrative sciences. The study also utilized both primary and secondary data. The spearman rank correlation coefficient and Multiple Regression Model using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15 were utilized for the analysis of data. The findings indicated the existence of a positive and significant relationship between trust and employees commitment to their supervisors. In view of the results, it behooves the management of Nigerian universities to continuously earn the trust of their employees as this is the foundation of every relationship and hence is capable of enhancing the employees' commitment to their supervisors. This is particularly so because relationships are formed and commitment to supervisor is enhanced as trust develops. Employees continuously make judgments about how trustworthy their managers or supervisors are based on their perception of what these managers or supervisors do, not on what they say, or what they intended to do. When trust diminishes, relationships become more distant, often leading to conflict. Other practical implications for promotion of trust and enhancing commitment to supervisor in the workplace are presented.

Keywords: Trust, Commitment to Supervisor, Nigerian Universities, Niger Delta Region, Nigeria

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

The operating environment of today's businesses is one that is driven by increased competition, emerging technology, knowledge and rapid innovation of the products and services offered. As the workforce become more sophisticated, so is the demand for more refined internal relationships amongst the various strata of the workforce if organisational objectives are to be achieved. These days, the effectiveness of most organisations is being judged by how smooth the relationships and interactions in the organisations have been reinforced. Knowledge has become key in moving organisations to the next level, thus placing huge responsibility on the organisation's people and how they are managed. According to Schockley-Zalabak, Ellis, and Winograd, (2011), one vital characteristic in achieving effectiveness is through the creation of a trusting environment in the workplace. In this respect, researchers have suggested that a critical factor in engendering the effectiveness of an organisation lies in the extent to which the workers are committed to their supervisors (Mullins, 2005; Riaz and Akbar, 2008).

With the increased popularity of the concept of commitment in recent years, researchers have turned their attention to multiple commitments (e.g. Morrow and McElroy, 1993; Reichers, 1985, 1986). In addition to the organization as a focus of commitment, some other foci have been suggested, which include commitment to profession or career, top management, supervisors, co-workers, unions, work group and customers. Among these foci of commitment, the supervisor could be said to be the most important for employees (Goliath, 2002). A supervisor is one who has authority over a subordinate. According to Nwachukwu (2007), a person has authority if he has the right to command and expect obedience from the subordinate. The relationship between the two parties and the kind of leadership offered by the supervisor affect the commitment of the subordinate to the supervisor (Riaz and Akbar, 2008). A supervisor should be a complete source of inspiration and serve as a role model, so that the subordinate may feel lasting commitment with the supervisor (Riaz and Akbar 2008). Supervisors influences and, in fact, determines the productivity of his subordinates, for he is the only one who directly oversees the work of non-management employees. In fact, employees view the organisation through the supervisor's actions and inactions. Acting as an agent of the organization, the supervisor often interacts with employees on a daily basis, enacting the formal and informal procedures of organized activities and, most importantly, serving as an administrator of rewards to subordinates.

A successful and effective organisation has often been likened to a football team that is committed to the team manager. Such a team exerts extra effort in every match to ensure success. As it is often said the entire team plays for the coach. Commitment, in general, portends a situation of attachment and loyalty. It connotes a constructive use of available resources to achieve particular goals (Martin and Nicholls, 1987). However, it is
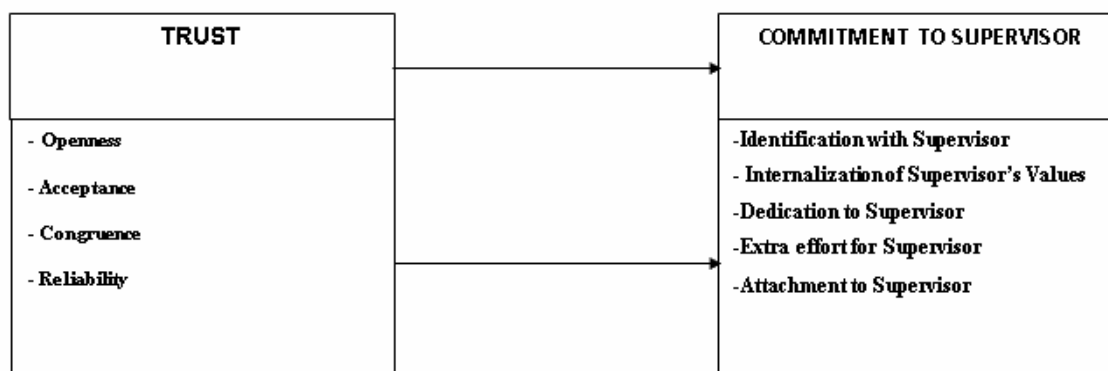
obvious that trust is the foundation of every relationship and relationships are formed as trust develops. When trust diminishes, relationships become more distant, often leading to conflict. Hence, getting employees that are passionate about work, engaged and committed to the organization's purpose, values and vision, requires a high level of trust.

Being committed to the supervisor therefore, presents a veritable ladder for reaching the top of the effectiveness rung. The supervisor in every organisation drives the work to be done and is the source through which management decisions are disseminated and through which management receives feelers from the lower echelons in the organisation. The supervisor can make or mar an organisation. Thus it is important that this group is strengthened and encouraged to be in a driving role. Where the supervisor is made to drive affairs, it is imperative that a commitment to him be encouraged for the overall benefit of the organisation. As Riaz and Akbar (2008) posited, the supervisor should be a complete source of inspiration and he should behave like a role model, so that the subordinate may feel lasting commitment with him. This underscores the importance of having a workforce that is committed to the supervisor.

From the discussion above, it is obvious that there have been various studies on the concept of employees' commitment and the multi-dimensional nature of this concept. However, despite the importance of the supervisor in employment settings, research on commitment to supervisor has begun only recently (e.g. Becker, 1992; Becker et al., 1996). This is in contrast with the large body of literature on organizational commitment dating back to the 1950s. Additionally, most of the research on commitment to supervisor has been conducted primarily in Western settings. However, the generalizability of these findings to an African and more specifically, Nigerian work setting has not been established. Hence, if the research findings are to become more valuable and relevant for Nigerian organizations, it is necessary for researchers to use Nigerian organizations for organizational research. Besides, even the few studies that have focused on the concept of commitment to supervisor have been concerned mainly with it conceptualisation at the expense of other important issues such as identifying those factors that may promote employees' commitment to their supervisors. It is obvious that among the many factors that can promote commitment to the supervisor is trust. This includes trust among employees, supervisors, departments and the whole organisation. The ability to create trusting relationships in the organisation is crucial to success. The employee may exhibit a commitment to the supervisor which in turn will promote the organisation's survival if the employee believes he has a fair relationship with an honest and competent supervisor that he can rely and depend upon in the organisation (Gilbert and Tang, 1998). Moreover, the overall environment of trust within the organisation, which develops from relationships, structures and systems within the organisation cannot be ignored, for a truly trusting atmosphere to persist (Bagraim and Hime, 2007).

To bridge this gap in the literature, this study seeks to examine how enterprise managers utilise trusting systems to promote commitment to the supervisor in the work environment. Haven established in earlier research that trust and organisational resilience are empirically related within the Nigerian work environment (Olu-Daniels and Nwibere, 2014), the assumption is that trust and organisational resilience may also be related. As such, the basic question guiding this study is:- Is there a relationship between trust and commitment to supervisor?

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework for Analysing the Relationship between Trust and Commitment to Supervisor

Source: Conceptualised by the researchers

1.1 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it offers a framework for creating a work environment that will engender commitment to the supervisor through an examination of the role of trust. This study is also significant as it attempts to localize the empirical research on the relationship between trust and employees' commitment to the

supervisor within the Nigerian work environment. In addition, studies on the role of trust in engendering commitment to supervisor are sparse in the management literature. In a relationship oriented society like Nigeria, this study will also contribute to the knowledge base on the concept of commitment to supervisor as an evolving dimension of employees' commitment.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 The Concept of Trust

The place of trust in the organisation was extolled by Mullins (2005) when he posited that forces of global competition and turbulent change make employment guarantees unfeasible and demand a new management philosophy based on trust and teamwork. In organisational relations, it is imperative that a trust culture be promoted. Lack of trust is probably one of the greatest time and resource wasters in the workplace. Trust within and across organizations is conceived by many to be directly related to the ability to form new associations and networks of trusting relationships to accomplish business transactions and, therefore, is predictive of whether or not an organization will remain viable (Fukuyama, 1995). To enhance this, it is imperative to continually explore the interactional capacity of trust on an employee's commitment to his supervisor.

Many researchers have put forward a number of definitions which can be captured in Mayer et al's (1995) definition. They described trust as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party". The various definitions reflect three basic facets of trust: (a) trust in another party reflects an expectation or belief that the other party will act benevolently; (b) a party cannot control or force another party to fulfil the expectation - that is, trust involves a willingness to be vulnerable and to assume risk; and (c) trust involves some level of dependency on the other party so that the outcomes of one party are influenced by the actions of another (Shockley-Zabalak et al, 2011). There are different approaches to trust among the social sciences. Some of them can claim to be theoretical (e.g.Luhmann, 1973), while others use a hypothetical construct to derive corresponding measures (e.g. Rotter, 1967). Despite this divergence, most of the approaches agree that trust is fundamentally a psychological state. Moreover, trust is supposed to be socially learned (e.g. Rotter, 1971) in institutions (family and school among others) and organisations (e.g. Luhmann, 1973), and trust is assumed to be fundamental to the existence of human lives (e.g. Wrightsman, 1964) and the formation of personality and identity during childhood and youth (e.g. Erickson, 1968). Within organisations, Houtari and Iivonen (2003) argued that trust is determined by the intensity, quality and durability of human interactions and is a function of the interactions between people in different organisational roles and positions and between employees and the organisation with its value system, structure and policies (Houtari and Iivonen, 2003).

Developing a setting of trust in an organisation demands concerted effort on the part of all organisation members. The six perspectives of the Organizational Trust Index can help managers evaluate the level of trust in their organization, determine the degree to which their culture is either *motivated* by trust or *driven* by fear, and provide a step-by-step process for building a culture that is based on trust. The Organizational Trust Index, according to Bodnarczuk's (2008) review consists of six perspectives: Truth, Integrity, Power, Competency, Values, and Recognition. However, trust is a multidimensional construct involving interpersonal trust (e.g. Gomez and Rosen, 2001; Omodei and McLennan, 2000; Schindler, P. L. and Thomas, 1993), dyadic trust (Gurtman, 1992; Larzelere and Huston, 1980), and organizational trust (Shockley-Zalabak et al., 2011; Nyhan and Marlowe, 1997). This was adopted in this study with the use of the Organisational Trust Inventory developed by Nyhan and Marlowe`s (1997), as instrument. The trust scale makes provision for measuring two dimensions of trust: interpersonal and organizational/system trust.

2.2 Commitment to Supervisor

The subject of employee commitment has assumed a place of prominence in behavioural sciences and a great deal of research has been carried out on the subject in the past decade. This, in part, stems from the demanding nature of today's businesses and the need to remain competitive in the face of challenges posed by globalization. The concept of commitment itself, and the manner in which it is actually created, is not easy to describe. However, the most widely accepted definition of organizational commitment proposed by Meyer and Allen, (1991) and Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) viewed the concept of organisational commitment as employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement with the organization. Based on this definition, Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) suggested that organisational commitment included three components: acceptance of organizational goals and values, extra effort on behalf of the organization, and desire to remain with the employer. On their part, Meyer, Becker, and Vandenberghe, (2004) argued that commitment binds an individual to an organization and thereby reduces the likelihood of turnover. The main differences were in the mindsets presumed to characterize the commitment. These mindsets reflected three distinguishable themes: affective attachment to the organization, obligation to remain, and perceived cost of leaving. To

distinguish among commitments characterized by these different mindsets, Meyer and Allen labelled them "affective commitment," "normative commitment," and "continuance commitment," respectively. This labelling is generally agreed in the literature on employee commitment. (See Nwibere, 2007; Baridam and Nwibere 2008; Van Rensburg, 2004; and Brown, 2003). Based on this definition, various instruments for collecting empirical data for research ((e.g Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, or OCQ) have also been suggested (Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979; Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian, 1974).

The second major development in commitment theory has been the recognition that commitment can be directed toward various targets, or foci, of relevance to workplace behaviour, apart from the organisation. The concept of employee commitment was initially conceptualised as a unidimensional concept (e.g Kelman, 1958). However, the overwhelming contemporary empirical evidence today suggests that employee commitment is a multi-dimensional concept. For example, following Kelman (1958), O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) attempted to clarify the construct of organizational commitment, focusing on the bases of the employee's psychological attachment to the organization. O'Reilly and Chatman (1986: 493), distinguished three bases of commitment— compliance, identification and internalization—and suggested that these three bases of commitment 'may represent separate dimensions of commitment'. *The empirical evidence suggests that other areas of foci or targets include profession, supervisor, work group, team, program, customer, and union. Commitments to these foci have all been the subjects of empirical investigation, either alone or in combination (e.g Nwibere, 2007).* It is generally believed that these commitments have the potential to both complement and conflict with one another, although when, why, and how these opposing effects can be expected is still not well understood (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Thus, taking a cue the results of earlier empirical studies (some of which has been discussed above e.g Meyer et al. 2004), it would be safe to say that, perhaps the most significant developments in commitment theory over the past two decades have been the recognition that commitment: (i) can take different forms [e.g. Becker and Billings (1993); Jaros et al (1993); O'Reilly and Chatman (1986)]; and (ii) can be directed toward various targets, or foci [e.g. Becker et al (1996); Cohen (2003); Reichers (1985).

Haven established the multi-dimensional nature of employees' commitment, researchers turned their attention to the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the other facets of organisational commitment. One of such foci of employees' commitment is commitment to the supervisor. As with the other facets of commitment, the existing conceptualisation and operationalisation of commitment to supervisor was derived from the original definition of the concept of organisational commitment. Following O'Reilly and Chatman, Becker *et al.* (1996) and Gregersen (1993) conceptualised commitment to supervisor as consisting of two dimensions: identification with supervisor and internalization of supervisor's values. An employee is said to identify with his/her supervisor, according to Becker *et al.* (1996) and Gregersen (1993), when the employee admires certain attributes of the supervisor, such as the supervisor's attitudes and behaviour, personality or accomplishments. The employee may feel proud to be associated with the supervisor who has these admired attributes (hence loyalty). The subordinate, however, may or may not adopt the supervisor's attributes as his or her own (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986: 493). On the other hand, an employee is said to internalize the supervisor's values, according to Becker *et al.* (1996) and Gregersen (1993), when the subordinate adopts the attitudes and behaviours of the supervisor because the supervisor's attitudes and behaviours are congruent with the subordinate's value systems. In other words, the values of the subordinate and those of his/her supervisor are similar. In both cases described above, the commitment to the supervisor is enhanced. Similarly, Zhou (1983), in an empirical study involving the use of interview approach, found that the concept of loyalty to the boss involved identifying with the boss's goals/values and doing one's job conscientiously. On his part, Cheng (1995) described loyalty to the boss as accepting the boss's goals/values, being faithful, willing to exert extra effort, and demonstrating unreserved dedication.

While the conceptualisation of commitment to supervisor described above is commendable, one needs to quickly add that loyalty to supervisor may extend beyond these two dimensions (identification with supervisor and internalization of supervisor's values), especially in a highly relationship-oriented context. Based on the above, it can be argued that in a high relationship-oriented society such as Africa in general and Nigeria to be particular, loyalty to another individual may be manifested in more ways than mere identification with the individual or internalization of the other's values. To further buttress this point, Tsui, Egan, and O'Reilly, (1992) argued that attachment may arise out of attraction based on familiarity, frequent interactions or common identity. On their part, Farh and Cheng, (2000); Hwang, (1987); and Yang, (1993) that loyalty in the Chinese context, may also be associated with indebtedness toward another individual for favours granted or role obligation to an authority figure because of social norms. Because of the unique characteristics of the relationship-oriented Chinese society, loyalty to another individual, particularly one's superior, may take on special meaning and importance.

The results of these studies highlighted above (e.g Tsui, Egan, and O'Reilly, 1992; Farh and Cheng, 2000; Hwang, (1987; and Yang, 1993) suggest that the conceptualisation of commitment to the supervisor goes beyond employees identification with supervisor and internalization of the supervisor's values and is expected to

include the employee's behavioural tendency to exert extra effort, to be dedicated and to be faithful. Such a broadened conceptualisation is congruent with the original formulation of organizational commitment by Mowday, Porter, and Steers, (1982) and *Meyer et al (2004)*.

Clugston *et al*. (2000) introduced a new measure of supervisor commitment by extending the three dimensions of organizational commitment by Meyer and Allen (1991) to two other foci: supervisor and work-group. The three dimensions are affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement with the organization (or supervisor). This is similar to the identification and internalization dimensions in Becker's (1992) scale of commitment to supervisor. Continuance commitment refers to the costs associated with leaving the organization (or supervisor). This is not consistent with the loyalty idea since it is calculative rather than affective or obligatory. Normative commitment refers to an employee's desire to stay with the organization (or supervisor) based on a sense of duty, loyalty or obligation. This is most consistent with the idea of loyalty in a relation-oriented society like Nigeria.

Based on the above review and in line with the earlier study of Cheng, Tsui, and Farh, (2002) we broaden the conceptualisation of commitment or loyalty to supervisor to include both the relative strength of a subordinate's identification with the supervisor and his or her attachment and dedication to the particular supervisor. This proposal gives rise to five major dimensions to capture the concept of commitment to supervisor. They are: (a) **Identification with the supervisor's character and accomplishments** describes a subordinate's respect for the accomplishments of the supervisor, and a feeling of pride in being a subordinate to that supervisor. (b) **Internalization of supervisor's values** describes a state of value congruence between the subordinate and the supervisor; (c) **Dedication to supervisor** describes a subordinate's willingness to dedicate himself/ herself to the supervisor and to protect the supervisor's welfare even at the expense of personal interests; (d) **Extra effort for supervisor** indicates a subordinate's willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the supervisor; and (e) **Attachment to supervisor** describes a subordinate's desire to be attached to and follow the supervisor desire to be attached to or follow the supervisor.

Among the five dimensions of Commitment to Supervisor listed above, Identification with supervisor and internalization of supervisor's values are labelled as original dimensions because they were taken from Becker *et al*.'s (1996) scale while dedication to supervisor, extra effort for supervisor and attachment to supervisor are labelled as extended dimensions because they were taken from Chen et al (2002) scale which is an extension Becker *et al*.'s (1996) original scale or dimensions of commitment to supervisor.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Operational measures of variables:

3.1.1 Independent Variable: The independent variable in this study is trust. The dimensions of trust adopt in this study are: openness, acceptance, congruence, and reliability. The statements employees respond to for each of the eight values are: Sample items for measuring **Acceptance** (2 items) include: "In this organisation, people are valued for who they are (Respect) and "In this organisation, people get the recognition they deserve (Recognition). Sample items for measuring **Openness** (2 items) include: "This organisation emphasises giving new ideas and methods a fair hearing (Receptivity)" and "In this organisation, employees are given the opportunity of communicating openly one's own ideas and opinions (Disclosure)." Sample items for measuring **Congruence** (2 items) include: "In this organisation, people are clear about what is expected of them (Straightforwardness)" and "In this organisation, the emphasis is on having high standards of honesty in everything we do (Honesty). Sample items for measuring **Reliability** (2 items) include: "In this organisation, people follow through on their responsibilities (Keeps Commitments)" and "This organisation emphasises striving to do our best in everything we do (Seeks Excellence)." Employees are asked two set of questions about each of these statements: firstly, how important is this to you personally? Secondly, how well does your organization operate by this value? Employees do not see the elements of trust or the name of the value, just the description. The Trust Values Gap Score is the sum of all of the gaps.

How to Read and Interpret the Graph: The graph shows a comparison between the importance of each of the Values that build trust to employees shown by the dots, and the average score for employees' perceptions of the organization's performance on each value. The graph gives you an overall picture of the comparison, and the following graphics show your actual scores on a ten point scale.

Interpretation of the Trust Scale: The difference between "personal importance" and "organizational performance" can have a significant impact on employee engagement and commitment. If employees indicate that these values are "important" to "very important" to them and then rate the "organization's performance" significantly lower, what they are saying is: "This is important to me but my organization does not operate this way." When looking at the scores for each of the items measuring the eight v**alues that build trust,** it may be helpful to ask the following questions: firstly, w*hat does this tell me about our strengths and weaknesses in*

building trust with others? And secondly, where are the biggest gaps between importance to employees and organizational performance?

The Cronbach alpha for the dimensions of trust are as follows: openness (0. 76); acceptance (0. 74); congruence (0.79); and reliability (0.81).

3.1.2 Dependent Variable: The dependent variable for this study is commitment to Supervisor**.** The measures of Commitment to Supervisor adopted for this study are based on the earlier study of Chen, et al. (2002) and include: Dedication to supervisor (Ded.), Extra effort for supervisor (Effort), Attachment to supervisor (Attach.), Identification with supervisor (Iden.), and Internalization of supervisor's values (Intern.). Sample items for measuring each of these measures of Commitment to Supervisor are indicated in the appendix. It is relevant to note that all items for measuring identification with supervisor and internalization of supervisor's values were adapted from the earlier study of Becker *et al*.'s (1996) scale while all items for measuring dedication to supervisor, extra effort for supervisor and attachment to supervisor were adapted from the earlier study of Chen et al (2002) scale which is an extension Becker *et al*.'s (1996) original scale or dimensions of commitment to supervisor. It is also relevant to note that these instruments (or questions) were modified to suit the purpose of this study and our peculiar Nigerian environmental circumstance.

The Cronbach alpha for the measures of commitment to supervisor are as follows: Dedication to supervisor (.72), Extra effort for supervisor (.79), Attachment to supervisor (76), Identification with supervisor (.71), and Internalization of supervisor's values (.70).

4.   RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Correlation of the Survey Variables

The measures of the dependent variable in this study, commitment to supervisor, were dedication to supervisor, extra effort for supervisor, attachment to supervisor, identification with supervisor and internalisation of supervisor's values. The dimensions of the independent variable, trust, on the other hand, were acceptance, openness, congruence and reliability. To determine the relationship between these variables, a correlation matrix, using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Statistic, was obtained with the SPSS, version 17. A matrix depicting the relationships among the variables is shown in Table 2 above. The means and standard deviations of the responses to these measures by our respondents have also been included in the matrix.

From the table, we observe that the respondents believed that attachment to supervisor (M=4.5895, SD=0.56699) was the most highly rated measure of commitment to supervisor (M=4.2495, SD=0.30902) while internalisation of supervisor's values (M=3.9729, SD=0.46922) was the least rated. Similarly, our respondents considered congruence (M=4.6709, SD=0.51652) as the most highly rated dimension of trust (M=4.4308, SD=0.33081), while reliability was the least (M=4.3047, SD=0.47351).

The correlation among the measures of commitment to supervisor has coefficients ranging between 0.028 and 0.749. Of the ten (10) correlations, eight (8) were significant (6 x $p<0.01$ and 2 x $p<0.05$) while two were not. On an aggregate scale, commitment to supervisor exhibited significant relationships with all its measures (5 x $p<0.01$). With respect to the independent variable, six correlation coefficients ranging between 0.254 and 0.759 were obtained among the four dimensions of trust and all the correlations were significant (4 x $p<0.01$ and 2 x $p<0.05$). The aggregate measure of trust also exhibited significant relationships with all its dimensions (3 x $p<0.01$ and 1 x $p<0.05$).

The twenty correlations between the measures of commitment to supervisor and the dimensions of trust had coefficients ranging from 0.223 to 0.808. These correlations were all statistically significant (13 x $p<0.01$ and 7 x $p<0.05$). The highest correlation coefficient was obtained between reliability dimension of trust and attachment to supervisor measure of commitment to supervisor (0.808) while the least was between acceptance dimension of trust and extra effort for supervisor measure of commitment to supervisor (0.223). On an aggregate scale, a significant correlation coefficient of 0.442 ($p<0.01$) was obtained between trust and commitment to supervisor.

TABLE 4.1: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation between Trust (and its dimensions) and Commitment to Supervisor (and its measures)

VARIABLES	MEAN	SD	DEDICATION TO SUPERVISOR	EXTRA EFFORT FOR SUPERVISOR	ATTACHMENT TO SUPERVISOR	IDENTIFICATION WITH SUPERVISOR	INTERNALISATION OF SUPERVISOR'S VALUES	COMMITMENT TO SUPERVISOR - AGGREGATE	TRUST – ACCEPTANCE	TRUST - OPENNESS	TRUST – CONGRUENCE	TRUST – RELIABILITY	TRUST - AGGREGATE
DEDICATION TO SUPERVISOR	4.3849	.28223	1.000										
EXTRA EFFORT FOR SUPERVISOR	4.2459	.47305	.311(**)	1.000									
ATTACHMENT TO SUPERVISOR	4.5895	.56699	.379(**)	.028	1.000								
IDENTIFICATION WITH SUPERVISOR	4.0543	.51095	.749(**)	.239(*)	.314(**)	1.000							
INTERNALISATION OF SUPERVISOR'S VALUES	3.9729	.46922	.391(**)	.099	.239(*)	.411(**)	1.000						
COMMITMENT TO SUPERVISOR – AGGREGATE	4.2495	.30902	.758(**)	.452(**)	.699(**)	.750(**)	.576(**)	1.000					
TRUST – ACCEPTANCE	4.3605	.46432	.412(*)	.223(*)	.637(**)	.662(*)	.437(**)	.257(*)	1.000				
TRUST - OPENNESS	4.3872	.58507	.562(**)	.358(**)	.373(**)	.536(**)	.687(*)	.463(**)	.506(**)	1.000			
TRUST – CONGRUENCE	4.6709	.51652	.314(*)	.583(*)	.628(**)	.591(*)	.417(*)	.757(**)	.254(*)	.339(*)	1.000		
TRUST - RELIABILITY	4.3047	.47351	.629(**)	.426(**)	.808(**)	.658(**)	.311(**)	.242(*)	.613(**)	.337(**)	.759(**)	1.000	
TRUST – AGGREGATE	4.4308	.33081	.411(*)	.122(*)	.268(*)	.522(**)	.275(*)	.442(**)	.716(**)	.561(**)	.591(**)	.345(*)	1.000

Source: Survey Data, 2013

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

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

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The underlying issue in employee commitment rests with the emotional feeling of belonging that spurs the employee to want to go the extra mile and out of the zone of comfort to ensure the achievement of organisational objectives. It is well grounded that underlying all the policies of commitment strategy is a management philosophy at the centre of which "is a belief that eliciting employee commitment will lead to enhanced performance" (Walton, 1991). But whether one's commitment level to the job translates in some way into business profit return is something that has not been explicitly addressed yet. But according to De la Vergne (2010), it is hard to imagine that it would not. Disenfranchised, suspicious, discontented employees who resent the time they spend at the *"salt mines"* can not be as productive and conscientious as those who love what they do and respect why they do it (De la Vergne, 2010). This underscores the importance of the subject of "Employee Commitment" in contemporary times.

The positive and significant relationship between trust and commitment to supervisor can be explained by the fact that when subordinates perceive that their supervisors are trust worthy (i.e the supervisors are open to them; they are being accepted by their supervisor, their values and those of the supervisors are congruent, and the supervisors are perceived or considered reliable), they may consider this as the supervisor being committed to them and naturally may reciprocate this genuine gesture with a corresponding emotional attachment or commitment to the supervisor. Such emotional attachment or commitment to the supervisor may become manifest in several ways including: firstly, the subordinate may begin to admire certain attributes of the supervisor, such as the supervisor's attitudes and behaviour, personality or accomplishments; and may feel proud to be associated with the supervisor who has these admired attributes; although the subordinate, however, may or may not adopt the supervisor's attributes as his or her own (herein referred to as identification with the supervisor's character and accomplishments). Secondly, the subordinate may psychologically adopt most of the attitudes and behaviours of the supervisor because the supervisor's attitudes and behaviours are congruent with the subordinate's value systems and thus, considers his/her values and those of the supervisor as similar (herein referred to as internalization of supervisor's values); thirdly, the subordinate may develop a willingness to dedicate himself/ herself to the supervisor and to protect the supervisor's welfare even at the expense of personal interests (herein referred to as dedication to supervisor). Fourthly, the subordinate may develop the willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the supervisor to ensure that the supervisor succeeds (herein referred to as extra effort for supervisor); and lastly, the subordinate may develop a desire to be attached to and follow the supervisor desire to be attached to or follow the supervisor (herein referred to as attachment to supervisor).

The findings of this study further buttresses the fact earlier emphasised that trust is the foundation of every relationship and that relationships are formed as trust develops. When subordinates perceive their supervisors as being trust worthy, the relationship between them and these supervisors become increasingly strengthened rather than being distant, often leading to increasing commitment to the supervisor as revealed in this study rather than conflict. Taken together, on the basis of the findings in this study, it may be safe to say that getting employees that are passionate about work, engaged and committed to the organization's purpose, values and vision in general and those of the supervisor in particular, requires the development of a high level of trust.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the discussion of findings and conclusion above, it is recommended that in order to enhance commitment to supervisor(s) within Nigerian Universities, the management of Nigerian universities must create an environment of trust. If the management of Nigerian universities wish to develop employees commitment to their supervisor(s) and maintain trust, they should be seen to be doing whatever they say they will do (walk-the-talk), be consistent, maintain confidence, be a role model of behaviour, have a bias for action, encourage employee involvement and act on suggestions, allow people to make mistakes without fear of being ridiculed or abused, encourage an environment where people learn from mistakes rather than crucifying scapegoats. Employees need to know they can trust the organization's or university's management team, and their immediate manager or supervisor. However, boasting about being trustworthy is just not enough. Each and every one of us understands that trust is important in every human relationship, but what many enterprise managers and leaders do not understand is that being trustworthy does not necessarily build trust. It is only natural for employees to continuously make judgments about how trustworthy their managers or supervisors are based on their perception of what these managers or supervisors do, not on what they say, or what they intended to do. Given that it is observed behaviour that builds trust, enterprise managers or supervisors can be trustworthy, honest and ethical, and yet have employees not trust them. Based on the above, to increase effectiveness in building trust, enterprise managers or supervisors at all levels of the organization in general and the Nigerian University system to be specific, need to take personal responsibility for their behaviour and understand how it can affect the levels of trust employees have for them as this is capable of enhancing or diminishing the employees commitment to them.

Some prescriptions for building a trusting relationship between the subordinates and their supervisors that will promote commitment to the supervisors as have been revealed in this study include: firstly, enterprise

managers and supervisors need to recognise the fact that every subordinate want to be **accepted** and respected for who they are and/or what they are at every point in time rather than being judged, criticized, made to feel inferior, or less than a human being. When subordinates perceive that they are being accepted by their supervisors and colleagues and that what they say or do is not going to be unfairly judged, they can focus on being the best they can be or go beyond their usual call of duty. The feeling of acceptance among subordinates eliminates the fear people have about speaking up, being open and telling the truth. Perhaps, it is relevant to note that the starting point for increasing the perception and/or feeling of acceptance among the employees is to embrace the values of **respect** and **recognition**. Enterprise managers that seek to promote an atmosphere of trust needs to respect the subordinates, and educate them to know through appropriate, genuine recognition.

Secondly, it only natural for subordinates to respect enterprise managers who are perceived and seen to be **open** to them at all times, even if the news is bad or against the subordinates interests. No subordinate would like to operate in the dark or being given relevant information relating to their jobs in piece-meal, or selective basis. Employees naturally want and, in most cases, need to know how well they are performing the job for which they were hired and on which basis their pay cheque depends. In other words, employees naturally appreciate genuine feedback on their work related performance. The extents to which organisations are open with their employees defer. While some organisations encourage the sharing of ideas, feelings, emotions, and concerns others are the complete opposite of this value. Discussions with some of the respondents revealed the fact that the culture of openness in an organisation engages the employees as they want to know more about what is going on. Commenting on the importance of openness within the work environment, one respondent had this to say "when you (referring to self) work with those managers and supervisors that you perceive to be open, you naturally become more interested in the job and how well the organization is doing. But if you consider them as not being open to you, you will have no choice but to help them get buried in their grave of secrecy." Enterprise managers who intend to increase their level of '**openness**', needs to firstly, embrace the values of **receptivity and disclosure.** Within the work environment, receptivity occurs when the supervisor or manager is receptive to what employees have to say or where they invite feedbacks from the subordinates. On the other hand, supervisors or managers promote full disclosure among the employees when they encourage an atmosphere where their subordinates are encouraged to disclose whatever is on their minds, and share their ideas on how results can be improved.

Thirdly, a trusting relationship between the subordinates and their supervisors can also be built when the subordinate perceive **congruence** between what their supervisor say and what they really mean to do. Congruence means "the same as" – what you say is the same as what you really mean – being straightforward. When subordinates perceive their supervisors as not being straightforward, they tend to pick up on it and spread the news to everyone that cares to listen via rumour mills, grapevine or gossip. Subordinates assess their extent to which their supervisors are straight forward from their body language, their facial expressions (e.g blinking of the eyes or lack of eye contact), in the inconsistency in the tone of their voice (e.g stammering) or even their usual body movement (nervousness or shaking of the hand). Congruence is also about walking–the-talk or practicing what you preach. It is about principles – being honest and ethical. It is through the supervisor's congruent behavior or lack of it that their subordinates, peers, and superiors learn about their honesty and integrity. To enhance congruence as a basis for building trust worthiness, enterprise managers need to embrace the values of honesty and straightforwardness. It is not easy to deliver bad news or say something that would not be popular, but in the long run, people trust their leaders more when they know they can count on them to say it the way it is no matter whose ox is gored.

Lastly, subordinates generally avoid supervisors who are considered unreliable and would do everything humanly possible to avoid working with such supervisors. Reliability as used here means 'promise keeping.' It is not usual to see subordinates protesting a genuine posting just to avoid working with a manager or supervisor that is perceived to be unreliable. It is difficult to have confidence in people who make promises and does not keep them, or who regularly fail to meet their deadlines. Organization's success is to a large extent dependent on how well supervisors can rely on their employees to deliver the results that is expected from them, and in turn, that the employees can expect the same of their supervisors or managers. To increase reliability, enterprise managers and supervisors needs to embrace the values of keeping commitments and seeking excellence. Managers and supervisors should desist from making promises they are not sure they can keep, and when they say they will do something, efforts should be made to ensure that they do it to the best of their ability.

Taken together, as the empirical research evidence indicates it is obvious that there are four "elements" of trust that must be present for trust to develop, nurtured and be sustained. However, each "element" is supported by two values. This implies that when people believe in the "values that build trust" they will behave in trust building ways. The elements and their supporting values are indicated in the table below for ease of understanding:

Table 6.1: The Elements of Trust

	Element of Trust	Supporting Values
1	Acceptance	Respect and Recognition
2	Openness	Receptivity and Disclosure
3	Congruence	Straightforwardness and Honesty
4	Reliability	Keeps Commitments and Seeks Excellence

It is also relevant to note that trust, just like respect, is earned and not just given to people on a platter of gold. Earning trust is by no means easy nor is it a one way traffick. While it may be easy to earn trust (especially in a working environment), sustaining it is another issue altogether. Perhaps, the starting point may be to develop the determination to travel the road to trust no matter how bumpy it may be eventually.

7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is important to observe that given the multidimensional nature of the concept of employee commitment, identifying areas of possible commitment in the work environment can be cumbersome as there are various items that could catch the fancy of an average employee deserving his commitment. These areas of focus can however be accommodated within bigger umbrellas of similar characteristics. For example, Morrow (1993) identified 25 facets of commitment. These were however, later reduced to five major facets or foci; a value, career, job, workgroup, organisation or union focus. It is also relevant to note that even under each area of focus, various alternative angles on employee commitment can be nominated (Dex and Smith, 2001). Another limitation of this study is that although a direct relationship is assumed between trust and commitment to supervisor, this relationship may in fact be indirect if contextual or moderating variables are introduced. Further studies needs to consider the effect of moderating variables such as corporate culture and organisational structure on the relationship between trust and commitment to supervisor.

APPENDIX A

TRUST SCALE

Acceptance (2 items)
  i.   In this organisation, people are valued for who they are (Respect)
  ii. In this organisation, people get the recognition they deserve (Recognition).

Openness (2 items)
  i.   This organisation emphasises giving new ideas and methods a fair hearing (Receptivity) and
  ii. In this organisation, employees are given the opportunity of communicating openly one's own ideas and opinions (Disclosure).

Congruence (2 items)
  i.   In this organisation, people are clear about what is expected of them (Straightforwardness) and
  ii. In this organisation, the emphasis is on having high standards of honesty in everything we do (Honesty).

Reliability (2 items)
  i.   In this organisation, people follow through on their responsibilities (Keeps Commitments) and
  ii. This organisation emphasises striving to do our best in everything we do (Seeks Excellence).

Note: Employees are asked two set of questions about each of these statements: How important is this to you personally? And how well does your organization operate by this value? Employees do not see the elements of trust or the name of the value, just the description. The Trust Values Gap Score is the sum of all of the gaps.

COMMITMENT TO SUPERVISOR SCALE

Dedication To Supervisor (4 Items). Sample items include:
  i.   When my supervisor is treated unfairly, I will defend him/her;
  ii.   When somebody speaks ill of my supervisor, I will defend him/her immediately;
  iii. I will put myself in my supervisor's position to consider his/her interests; and
  iv.   I would support my supervisor under all circumstances.

Extra Effort for Supervisor (3 items). Sample items include:
  i.   Even if my supervisor is not present,
  ii.   I will try my best to do the job assigned by him/her well;
  iii. I will try my best to accomplish the job assigned by my supervisor; and

iv. I will do my job conscientiously so that my supervisor will not worry about it.

Attachment to Supervisor (4 items). Sample items include:
  i. Even if there may be better alternatives, I will still remain to work under my supervisor;
  ii. I would feel satisfied as long as I can work under my supervisor;
  iii. No matter whether it will benefit me or not, I will be willing to continue working under my supervisor.; and
  iv. If it is possible, I would like to work under my supervisor for a long time.

Identification with Supervisor (3 Items). Sample items include:
  i. When someone praises my supervisor, I take it as a personal compliment;
  ii. When someone criticizes my supervisor, I take it as a personal insult; and
  iii. my supervisor's successes are my successes.

Internalization of Supervisor's Values (3 Items). Sample items include:
  i. My attachment to my supervisor is primarily based on the similarity of my values and those represented by my supervisor;
  ii. the reason I prefer my supervisor than another is because of what he/she stands for, that is, his/her values; and
  iii. since starting this job, my personal values and those of my supervisor have become more similar.

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