# Organizational Climate and Employee Commitment of Telecommunication Companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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## Abstract
*This study examined the relationship between organizational climate and employee commitment in telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt. Autonomy was conceptualized as the dimension of organizational climate -the predictor variable. Affective and normative commitment as measures of employee commitment - criterion variable. The study adopted a cross-sectional research survey design in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured, self- administered questionnaire. The target population was 437 employees of the four General System of Mobile telecommunication (GSM) firms in Port Harcourt. The study sample was 208 employees calculated using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was also achieved through confirmatory tests using Crombach Alpha coefficient. Data generated were analyzed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman rank order correlation Coefficient .The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. Empirical findings revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational climate and employee commitment in telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt. The study concludes that organizational climate significantly influences employee commitment in telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt. One of the study recommendations was that management at work place should respect employees and treat them fairly by appreciating their input to ensure they feel valued by the organizations which they serve.*

*Key words: Organizational Climate, Employee Commitment, Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment*

## Introduction
Organizations in the 21stcentury are facing more challenges than ever before. These challenges are not unique to any specific organization or industry, but affect all organizations, regardless of their structure or size. Organizational climate in particular is constantly challenged by changes impacting organizations today (Nair, 2006). From human relations approach, employees have been accepted as the most important component of organizations. In order to make organizations much more effective and productive, perceptions of employees have become more important. As the concept is related to perceptions of employees, organizational Climate has been attracting many researchers (Arabaci, 2011).

The telecoms industry relies heavily on its employees for its success. The creation and provision of service to the customer is achieved through the employees. Being in a service industry, the ability of management to survive and compete is dependent on the quality of their

services. This labor intensive industry requires a highly skilled and trained workforce to provide the quality that would meet customer satisfaction. This means that the telecoms industry not only needs to acquire and train the right employees to carry out their roles effectively but should also be able to retain them (Davidson, 2003). No organization in today's competitive world can perform at peak levels unless each employee is committed to organization's objectives and works as an effective team member. One of the challenges facing modern organization involves maintaining employee commitment in the current working environment (Coetzee, 2005).

To survive and outdo their competitors, organizations are constantly seeking to improve their performance. Brown and Leigh (1996) opine that organizational climate is becoming more important than ever before because organizations need to ensure that those individuals who add value to the bottom line should stay in the organization and continue pouring their efforts into their work to benefit the organization. As today's businesses continue to struggle to survive or acquire sustainable competitive advantage, it is important for organizations to better understand the factors that influence employees and important employee-oriented work outcomes. The growing significance placed on understanding employees and their behavior within the organization has produced a great deal of interest in investigating employee perceptions of climate within the organization (Riggle, 2007)

Peters and Waterman (1982) suggest that effective organizational place high emphasis on their people and consider their most important asset in achieving their goals .Accepting this premises true has many consequences for organization and how it manages its human resource. Organization should pay attention to how employees perceive their organization practices, work environment and how such work environment elicits commitment to the organization given the fact that employees are the organizations 'most important asset . In addition to favorable organizational climate, Employees' commitment to the organization is a crucial issue in today's changing world and the level of employees 'organizational commitment is influenced by number of factors.

Employee commitment is becoming more important than ever before, because organizations need to ensure that those individuals who add value to their bottom line want to commit in the organization and want to continue pouring their effort into their work to the benefit of the organization (Brown & Leigh, 1996). Chughtai & Zafar (2006) explained that commitment is negatively related turnover, absenteeism, counterproductive and positively related to job satisfaction and motivations and non-committed employees may describe the organization in negative terms to outsiders As discussed above, organizational climate plays a very important role on employee's behavior and in enhancing organizational commitment of employees, inconsequence organizational climate affects organizational outcome positively as well negatively. Understanding that people are the greatest asset an organization has, management in an organization would be expected to take the time to investigate what may influence an employee or his or her behavior .Therefore organizations need to know how organizational climate affect employee commitment and which organizational climate has an impact on organizational commitment. Zhang and Liu (2010) also suggest that more investigation is needed about relationship between different dimensions of organizational climate and all organization commitment and which elements of organization climate have no significant on organization commitment? If organizational climate has such critical role in organization and on employee behavior, and if study is needed on the relationship between organization climate and organization commitments, the significance relationship of organization climate dimensions and organization commitment, organization climate study was limited, then the

study should be conducted in this area. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between organization climate and employee commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt in general and effects of organizational climate dimensions on employee commitment in particular.

This study will also be guided by the following research questions:
  **i.** What is the relationship between autonomy and affective commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt?
  **ii.** What is the relationship between autonomy and normative commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt?

**Literature Review**
**Organizational Climate**
Organizational climate is the set of measurable properties of the work environment that is either directly or indirectly perceived by the employees who work within the organizational environment that influences and motivates their behaviour (Holloway, 2012). Organizational climate is defined as the recurring patterns of behaviour, attitudes and feelings that characterize life in the organization more related to atmosphere and values (Aiswarya and Ramasundaram, 2012). An organizational climate refers to the values, beliefs that are not visible but exist within the employee's behaviour and action (Moghimi & Subramaniam, 2013). In literature, there is no generally accepted definition of organizational climate. Because it is a complex, multilevel, and multidimensional phenomenon derived from employees" perceptions of their experiences within an organization, stable over time and widely shared within an organizational unit (Dawson et al., 2008). Schneider and Reichers (1983) define organizational climate as a shared or summary perception that people attach to particular features of the work setting. According to Watkin and Hubbard (2003) organizational climate is ''how it feels to work in a particular environment and for a particular boss, more precisely it is a measure of employees' perception of those aspects of their environment that directly impact how well they can do their jobs.

Organizational climate is based on the premise that the overall health of an organization can be assessed by measuring individual employees" perceptions of their work environments. Together these individual observations serve as aggregate data describing how well the organization performs and how well it treats its employees (Giles, 2010). In other words, organizational climate represents how the employees feel about the atmosphere in the organization. For the development of an organization, it is necessary to make employees feel good, as employees are the key resources of an organization. With changing scenarios in the world economy, if companies want very smart, professional, innovative and positive team members, companies will promote a healthy work environment and organizational climate so that the employees feel free to exhibit positive behaviours (Choudhury, 2011).

In a fiercely competitive global setting, achieving organizational effectiveness and organizational survival is based on employee's attitudes and behaviours. For this reason, organizational climate has gained importance in organizational behaviour researches. Researches in this area have examined organizational climate in various organizational contexts and related it to several outcomes at an individual, group, and organizational level. In particular, researchers have found links with organizational climate and employee performance, organizational effectiveness, productivity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational justice, work motivation, organizational alienation, anxiety, propensity to leave (Dickson, Resick & Hanges, 2006; Bellou and Andronikidis, 2009). However, researchers suggest that organizational climate promotes positive behaviours in

organizations such as organizational citizenship behaviour, innovative behaviour, creative and proactive behaviours (Patterson et al., 2004; Lin and Lin, 2011). On the other hand, it triggers negative work behaviours such as absenteeism, lateness, putting little effort into work, taking excessive breaks, wasting resources, arguing workmates, acting rudely towards them etc. (Dawson, Gonzalez-Roma, Davis & West 2008).

**Autonomy as a Dimension of Organizational Climate**
It reflects the degree of liberty, freedom, independence, impartiality, objectivity and administrative ability the job holder has in accomplishing the task given to them. It can be pointed out that employee perform better when they have the freedom, autonomy and opportunity to decide what and how the job is to be performed and accomplished (Kotila, 2001).

Autonomy is seen as an integral aspect of motivating employees and giving them the sense to feel they are part of the organizational members and not just as a machine to be used and overhauled (Leach & Wall, 2004). Autonomy is the degree to which a job provides the worker with freedom in carrying out his duties.

According to Stamps and Pudmonte (1986) autonomy is defined as the amount of job-related independence, initiative and freedom either permitted or required in daily work activities. Autonomy has been consistently linked to employee satisfaction as a positive factor (Parker & Wall, 1998; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Given the unstructured nature of complex jobs, which require workers to exercise judgment, decision-making, creativity and other discretionary behaviour (Chung Yan, 2010), Frese and Zapf (1994) argued that those with discretion and control can more effectively resolve problems because they have the freedom to choose strategies to deal with the situation.

Researchers have recognized in general, two types of job autonomy that can positively influence job satisfaction;
        **i)**     Control of task
        **ii)**    Control of time

**Control of Task**: This can be further divided into the method of task being used and organizing the contents of work on a daily basis. Although autonomy regarding work method, which refers to the degree of freedom that workers have in going about their work, such as the kind of spreadsheet software an employee prefer to use, has been examined as a positive factor (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, Sims Szilagyi & Keller 1976).

**Control of Time**: Time management has received significantly less attention and has received mixed findings at best. Autonomy regarding work scheduling refers to the level of control employees have in scheduling, sequencing refers to the level of control employees have in scheduling, sequencing, or timing their work activities, such as a choice of working from home versus workplace attendance.

Job autonomy is likely to provide employee the freedom of power over how they carry out their tasks in the organization and this enhance their generally satisfaction of employee in the organization.

## Concept of Workers Commitment

In recent time, several scholarly research works have been conducted in the area of employee and organization commitment. Commitment is a difficult concept to define (Meyer & Allen 1996; Meyer & Hercovitch, 2001). They defined commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target. Meyer & Maltin (2010) are of the opinion that the binding force can be experienced in different ways (i.e. can be accompanied by different mindsets), including an affective attachment and involvement with the target and an awareness of the cost associated with discontinuing involvement with the target and that in its pure form, these mindset are referred to as affective commitment (AC), normative commitment (NC) and continuance commitment (CC) respectively.

According to Akintayo (2010) employee commitment can be defined as the degree to which the employee feels devoted to their organization. In the view of Ongori (2007), employee commitment is described as an effective response to the whole organization and the degree of attachment or loyalty employee feels towards the organization.

In the same vein, Zheng (2010) saw employee commitment as simply employee attitude to organization. Therefore, employee loyalty to management is shown in how committed they are to their job in the organization. It shows identification with involvement in the day to day activities of the organization and management of organization should be concern with determining the level of commitment displayed by managers and would-be managers at all times.

## Measures of organizational performance
## Normative Commitment (NC)

According to Madi, et al (2012) normative commitment refers to an employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organization where it based on the employee having internalized the values and goals of the organization. Normative commitment is said to reflect a sense of obligation on the part of the employee to maintain membership in the organization (Meyer& Smith, 2000; Bal, Sullivan, & Harper, 2014). It has also been conceived that the potential antecedents for normative commitment include co-worker commitment where it includes affective and normative dimensions as well as commitment behaviour, organizational dependability and participatory management. And that coworkers' commitment is expected to provide normative signals that influence the development of normative commitment. It is worthy to mention that organizational dependability and participatory management are key issues that will foster and install a sense of moral obligation to reciprocate to the organization. Normative commitment is said to reflect a sense of obligation instilled in the employee to sustain membership in the organization (Bal, *et al,* 2014).

Unarguably, Meyer & Maltin (2010) opined that latter observation regarding normative commitment is consistent with recent findings; demonstrating that normative commitment can have two faces, one reflecting a moral imperative and the other reflecting indebted obligation (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). Firstly, the moral imperative mindset is experienced when normative commitment combines with strong affective commitment. Secondly, the indebted obligation mindset results from a combination of strong normative commitment and continuance with weak affective commitment. Also, Lee & Chen (2013) asserted that normative commitment relates to obligation employee may feel they owe the organization for being given a job when they need it most. That in no small measure will increase or boost the employee level of commitment especially in a society where there is an army of unemployed people. And in another view, normative commitment is said to develop as a junction of cultural and organizational socialization and the receipt of benefits that activate a need to reciprocate (Scholl, 1981). Meyer & Allen (1990) stated that the normative approach is a less common

approach to commitment. The internalized moral obligation is contributor behaviour and is therefore, prominent in the individuals terminating employment with the organization. But in this type of commitment the employee is expected to pledge unalloyed loyalty to the organization without opposing and criticizing the activities of the organization.

**Affective Commitment (AC)**
According to Meyer & Allen (1991) affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to identification with, and involvement in the organization based on positive feelings, or emotions, toward the organization.
The antecedent for affective commitment include perceived job characteristic where there is task autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety and supervisory feedback, organizational dependability that mean extent to which employees feel the organization can be counted on to look after their interest, and perceived participatory management that they can influence decisions on the work environment and other uses of concern to them (Madi et al, 2012). They further asserted that the use of these antecedents is consistent with the findings by Rowden (2002) that these factors all create rewarding situations, intrinsically conducive to development of affective commitment.

Also, Meyer & Herscovitch (2001) argued that the primary basis for the development of affective commitment are personal involvement, identification with the relevant target, and value congruence (Meyer, *et' al*, 2004). As a result of the above view of Meyer & Herscovitch (2001), which states that when there is a high level of affective commitment, employees will be willing to remain in that organization, otherwise the reverse will be displayed. It has also been seen in the view of Bal, *et al*, (2014) that affective commitment reflects an emotional attachment and involvement in the organization. But earlier, Alien & Meyer (1991) defined affective component as an emotional attachment to the organization via identification, involvement and enjoyed membership. It has also been said that affective commitment shows commitment that depends on emotional ties the employee develops with the organization through work experiences that are positioned. The 'work experience relates to the boss-driven development as a dimension in management development.
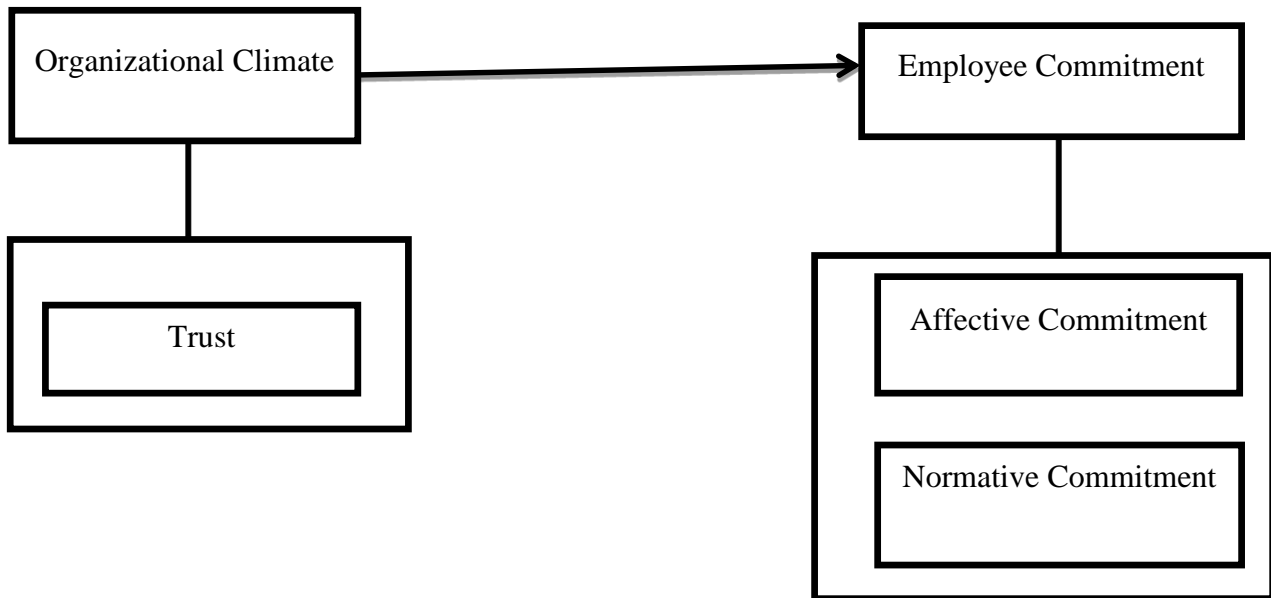
**Relationship between Organizational Climate and Employee Commitment**
Past research findings have indicated that there exist relationships between the dimensions of organizational climate and organizational commitment. For example, Spector (1997) cites that job satisfaction is a correlate and predictor of organizational commitment; Gregersen and Black (1996) posited that work process would enhance a sense of felt responsibility that led to an increase in commitment among employees; Varona (2002) found that there is a relationship between communication and organizational commitment in terms of feedback and responses from both upper level and employees; Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski & Erez, (2001), Osbourn, Moran, Musselwhite & Zenger (1990), and Wellins, Byham, and Wilson (1991) indicate that teams contribute to better outcomes for business organization due to employees commitment to the organizations; and Angle and Perry (1981) posit that proper leadership and motivation influence commitment and would result in organizational effectiveness. In addition, Steel et al (1992) found that employee perception of decision-making influence was positively correlated with organizational commitment of employees. Finally, organizational commitment has been often cited in the literature to be both a dependent variable as well as variable for antecedents such as age, tenure, and education (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Fauziah 2008).

Organizational climate affects the way in which employee consciously or unconsciously thinks, make decisions and ultimately the way they perceive, feel and act. This view was corroborated

by researchers who intimated that, employees elect to commit their work- life to an organization psychologically and physically especially when the values of the organization are in alignment with theirs. Thus, culture is the most important hallmark of excellent companies (Petres and Waterman, 2006). Organizational culture is a combination of value system and assumptions which lead an organization to run its business (Zahoor, 2015).

From the foregoing point of view, we hereby hypothesized thus:

**Ho₁:**    There is no significant relationship between autonomy and affective commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt?

**Ho₂:**    There is no significant relationship between autonomy and normative commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt.



***Fig.1 Conceptual Framework for the hypothesized relationship between organizational performance and employee commitment***
***Source: Author's Desk Research, 2018***

**Methodology**
The study adopted a cross-sectional research survey design in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through structured, self- administered questionnaire. The target population was 437 employees of the four General System of Mobile telecommunication (GSM) firms in Port Harcourt. The study sample was 208 employees calculated using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was also achieved through confirmatory tests using Crombach Alpha coefficient. Data generated were analyzed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman rank order correlation Coefficient .The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

**Results and Discussions**
**Hypotheses Tests**
Data analysis was carried out using the Spearman rank order correlation tool at a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the tests cover a Ho1 hypothesis that was bivariate and declared in the null form. We have based on the statistic of Spearman Rank (rho) to carry out the analysis. The level of significance 0.05 is adopted as a criterion for the probability of

accepting the null hypothesis in (p> 0.05) or rejecting the null hypothesis in (p <0.05). We will begin by presenting first a test of existing relationships.

*Table 1 Correlations for Autonomy and the Measures of* **Employee Commitment**

| | | | Autonomy | Affective commitment | Normative commitment | Continuance commitment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Autonomy | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .563** | .687** | .786** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | Affective commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .563** | 1.000 | .914** | .820** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . | .000 | .000 |
| | | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | Normative commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .687** | .914** | 1.000 | .863** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | . | .000 |
| | | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | Continuance commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .786** | .820** | .863** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | . |
| | | N | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

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

*Source: Research Data 2018, (SPSS output version 23.0)*

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

### $Ho_1$:     *There is no significant relationship between autonomy and affective commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt?*

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a positive relationship between trust and affective commitment.  The *correlation coefficient* 0.563 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and statistically significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represents a moderate correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between trust and affective commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt.

### $Ho_2$:     *There is no significant relationship between autonomy and normative commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt?*

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a positive relationship between autonomy and normative commitment.  The *correlation coefficient* 0.687 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and statistically significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represents a high correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted. Thus, there is a significant relationship between autonomy and normative commitment of telecommunications companies in Port Harcourt.

## Discussion of Findings

This study using descriptive and inferential statistical methods investigated the relationship between organizational climate and employee commitment in telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between Organizational Climate and Employee Commitment of telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. This reinforces previous studies by Watkin and Hubbard (2003) who stated that organizational climate is ''how it feels to work in a particular environment and for a particular boss, more precisely it is a measure of employees' perception of those aspects of their environment that directly impact how well they can do their jobs. Organizational climate has therefore been seen to be a vital instrument in employee commitment. This is because if the organization has a favorable organizational climate the employee is thus encouraged to work harder and better knowing that their well-being is taken seriously by their employers, and that their career and self-development are also being taken care of by their company thus increasing employee commitment (Gregersen and Black 1996).

Furthermore, Petres and Waterman, 2006 argued that organizational climate affects the way in which employee consciously or unconsciously thinks, make decisions and ultimately the way they perceive, feel and act. This view was corroborated by researchers who intimated that, employees elect to commit their work- life to an organization psychologically and physically especially when the values of the organization are in alignment with theirs. As indicated by Makhlouk and Shevchuk (2008), organizational climate impacts on the performance of an organization, since it determines the way the organization handles issues and inquiries, individuals' attitude to changes, the way individuals collaborate with one another, the way the organization communicates with partners and individuals' commitment to strategy.

This finding confirms previous findings of Kotila, (2001) who assert that autonomy reflects the degree of liberty, freedom, independence, impartiality, objectivity and administrative ability the job holder has in accomplishing the task given to them. It can be pointed out that employee perform better when they have the freedom, autonomy and opportunity to decide what and how the job is to be performed and accomplished. Further more autonomy is seen as an integral aspect of motivating employees and giving them the sense to feel they are part of the organizational members and not just as a machine to be used and overhauled (Leach & Wall, 2004). Autonomy is the degree to which a job provides the worker with freedom in carrying out his duties.

Stamps and Pudmonte (1986) argued that autonomy is the amount of job-related independence, initiative and freedom either permitted or required in daily work activities. Autonomy has been consistently linked to employee commitment as a positive factor (Parker & Wall, 1998; Hackman & Oldham, 1980, Neuman, Edwards & Raju, 1989). Given the unstructured nature of complex jobs, which require workers to exercise judgment, decision-making, creativity and other discretionary behaviour (Chung Yan, 2010), Frese and Zapf (1994) argued that those with discretion and control can more effectively resolve problems because they have the freedom to choose strategies to deal with the situation.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

From the summary of the result it can be concluded that as organizational climate is improved it brings about an increase in employee commitment. Based on the findings obtained from summary of discussion and empirical findings, the study concludes specifically concludes that autonomy has a positive significant influence on customer loyalty in telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt.

The study recommends that management at work place should respect employees and treat them fairly by appreciating their input to ensure they feel valued by the organizations which they serve.

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