

## Transportation Facilities and Employee Engagement of Commercial Banks in the South-South, Nigeria

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### Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between transportation facilities and employee engagement in commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was sourced through structured questionnaire. The population for the study was four hundred and forty (440) employees of five (5) commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size of 210 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The research instrument was validated through by experts as provided by supervisors vetting and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring coefficients above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. The findings emanating from the tested hypotheses revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between transportation facilities and employee engagement in commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria. The study recommends that management of commercial banks should issue car loans or provide official cars, staff buses and monitoring vehicles to ensure the safety and transit security of their staff as well as cater for their transportation costs to give them a sense of belonging.

**Keywords:** *Organization, Transportation Facilities, Employee Engagement, Vigor, Dedication, Absorption*

### Introduction

In today competitive world, every organization be it public or private wants to build and maintain environmental culture that encourages employees to be actively involved in its business activities through total employee engagement, which helps to deliver a tangible improvement to organizational performance. For organizations to promote employee engagement, they need to see their employees as key players in the business growth and profitability of its business. Employee engagement is the emotional commitment and attachment that employees have towards their organization and the actions they take to ensure the organization's success (Men, 2015). The key benefits of employee engagement to organization includes, improved employee tenure, minimum degree of turnover, low cost of training, higher job satisfaction, attainment of organizational objectives, and optimum product and services quality (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Therefore, engaged employees demonstrate care, dedication, enthusiasm, accountability and are results focused.

According to Epie (2011), the Nigerian banking sector is known for its long hour culture, and high work load of employees. Bank employees in Nigeria are most likely to be faced with issue of work life balance, due to the nature of the work environment. Policies are being made regarding work life balance, but its implementation has become an issue that needs to be looked into. Ensuring effective delivery of service to customers may be achieved by the ability of the management of these banks to maintain policies that promote work life balance. The reform in the banking sector made it mandatory for commercial banks to have a minimum of 25-billion-naira capital base to continue their operations. Consequently, commercial banks had to go into strategic alliance with other banks, by merger and acquisition. This has changed the focus of many banks to form new strategy that entails expansion, increasing capital base and customer base. All these have led to managers having higher expectation of employees' performance. It is most likely that there will be a misplacement of priority of interest by the employees trying to meet up with the target of the banks, which may affect their personal life.

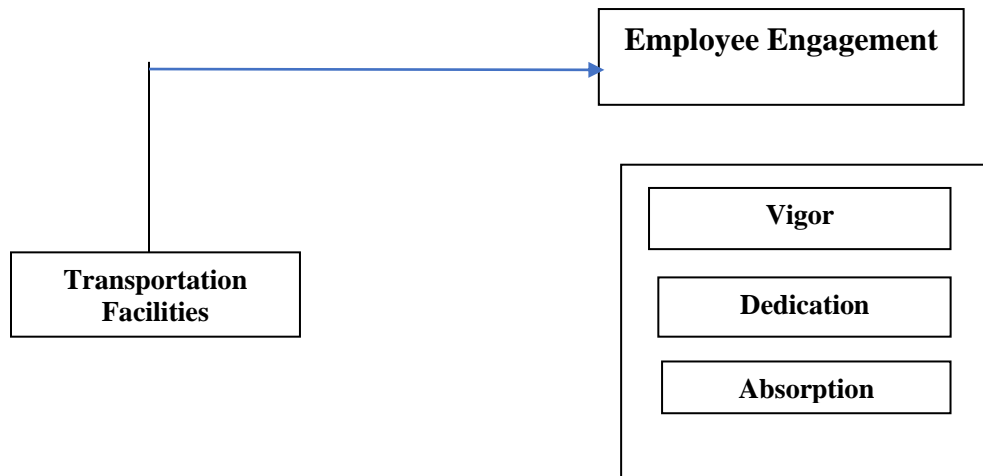
Therefore, in this era that the Nigeria's banking industry has grown rapidly and become more highly competitive than it was few decades ago; for any bank to remain relevant and attain sustainable competitive advantage especially in the long term, it has to factor into its policy and strategy formulation the post-globalisation effects of the rise of knowledge worker and the changing nature of work performance from emphasising the physical work environment that has to

do with issues such as temperature, ventilation, office layout, systems, processes, structures, office building, noise level, and tools among others, to start emphasising more on what Chandrasekar (2011) called the human work environment, which in the views of Temkin-Greener, Zheng, Katz, Zhao and Mukamel (2009) has to do with leadership style, communication and coordination, conflict management, and staff cohesion. Since banks employees are expected to report to work early and close late it becomes imperative that transportation facilities need to be put in place to facilitate commuting.

Employers who grant transportation benefits for members of their workforce gain several advantages for their company. Granting these benefits can help your company by: Attracting and retaining workers, minimizing payroll taxes, enhancing customer access to services and goods, expanding service hours, minimizing gas emissions and conserving energy, demonstrating company support of work-life balance, helping public transit, developing your corporate reputation as an environmentally and worker-friendly company.

Transport benefits can be in the form of monthly transport allowance, car allowance, company car or van pooling. Transport and car allowance are fixed monthly benefit which enable employees to meet their house to office transport costs fairly comfortably. A company car is probably the most valued of transport benefits because of its emotive impact since a car is a very visible and prestigious benefit. The financial and social benefits of using a company car are enormous as far as the employee is concerned. Van pooling; Is a situation where an organization buy vans which can be used by a number of employees at the same time. The kind of method of transport chosen by an organization should be based on its financial ability and the intended impact of the method on employee motivation and reduced turnover (Okumbe, 2010). Employer provided transportation benefits have been and continue to be very popular. Employers may give their employees a choice between receiving (taxable) cash or (tax-free) transportation benefits. Limits on the value of the transportation benefits allow employees to exclude certain amounts from income. A qualified transportation benefit plan may provide a tax-saving opportunity for both employers and employees (Fiore, 2009). Transport benefits ease movement among the employees leading to job satisfaction and better job performance. This study therefore examines the relationship between transportation facilities and employee engagement in commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework for operations sensitivity and service innovation

**Source:** Researchers desk (2020) with measures adapted from Wang and Ahmed (2004)

### Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between availability of transportation facilities and vigor in commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the relationship between availability of transportation facilities and dedication in commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the relationship between availability of transportation facilities and absorption in commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria?

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between transportation facilities and employee engagement of commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria.

The objectives are as follows:

- i. To determine the relationship between transportation facilities and vigor worker of commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria.
- ii. To understand the relationship between transportation facilities and dedication of commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria.
- iii. To identify the relationship between transportation facilities and absorption of commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria.

### Theoretical Foundation

#### The Attitude Theory

The study derives its theoretical significance from the attitude theory of Ajzen (2001). This theory proposes that attitudes are formed after an evaluation of an object and once formed they serve to guide and drive behavior towards the object. Employees' beliefs and emotions shape their attitudes and these beliefs and emotions are influenced by their direct experience with the object or the information they receive about the object (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The main idea of this theory is relevant to this study as it would help in gaining insight into the motives, feelings and beliefs of individuals that shape their emotions and can either facilitate engagement to employees in the organization or hinder it.

### Conceptual Review

#### Concept of Transportation Facilities

The term transportation facilities as used in this work refer to provisions made by organizations to cater for the movement of their staff from one place to another. Employees are one of the most important assets for an organization and providing them with transportation facilities such as official cars for senior colleagues, staff buses for junior staff, and monitoring or enforcement vehicles is very important. Transloc (2014) found that the provision of transportation facilities such as free shuttles and monitoring vehicles makes it possible for employees to know one another better, including co-workers outside their normal work sphere, helping them feel more connected and fostering a sense of teamwork. Clement (2013) believe that corporate transport facilities reduce the stress resulting from driving in peak hour traffic, reduce the cost of daily travel including fuel, car maintenance and parking; and bring about bonding amongst colleagues.

The essence of this set of transportation facilities is to guarantee security and adequate mobility of staff in the performance of their duty outside the office premises (Moneke 2012). When transportation facilities are provided for employees in an organization, it will ease the movement of the workers, and make them to be in the office on time. This will make the employees to be engaged and committed to the organization.

### **Concept of Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement is the emotional commitment and attachment that employees have towards their organization and the actions they take to ensure the success of organization Men, (2015). Employee engagement is crucial for an organization. Engaged employees are involved in their work, and they are loyal to the organization. They are willing to put extra efforts, which results in growth and development of the organization. The positive result of employee engagement is: employees are satisfied with their work. They appreciate the organization and want to stay with the organization for a longer period of time. Employees help the organization to generate patronage and customer loyalty. Employees who are engaged stay behind to get a job done because they are committed and feel accountable. They stand up for their company because they are proud to be a part of it. They find solutions to problems facing the organization and create ideas to improve the organization.

In general, low levels or lack of engagement have negative outcomes for organization including leaving service, high absenteeism, lack of willingness to stay, poor quality of work, lack of loyalty to the organization, reproach to organization, reduced consumer confidence and etc., for employees and the organization. So for successful performance, an organization needs to increase employees who are engaged to the organization and its goals. Gibbons (2006) postulated employee engagement to be a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his or her organization, manager, or coworkers that, in turn, influences him or her to apply additional discretionary effort to his /her work.

### **Measures of Employee Engagement**

#### **Vigor**

Macey and Schneider, (2008), Schaufeli et al., (2002) viewed vigor as employee work situations that are characterized by high level of physical, mental energies and resilience exerted on the job. Vigor is refers to energy, mental resilience, determination and investing consistent effort in job (Rayton and Yalabik, 2014). Vigor is one of the aspects of work engagement that implies high levels of energy and mental resilience when working. There is also a determined investment in the actual work, together with high levels of persistence even when faced with difficulties. Employees who exhibit vigor at work are self-driven, result focus, and determined to complete given tasks within the specified time frame.

The enthusiasm can be felt from the high level of energy and endurance of the mind while working, the willingness to give the best in a job, and perseverance when facing a problem (Schaufeli, et. al. 2017). Employees who are engaged stay behind to get a job done because they are committed and feel accountable. They stand up for their company because they are proud to be a part of it. They find solutions to problems facing the organization and create ideas to improve the organization.

According to Bakker and Schaufeli (2002), organizations need employees who feel vigor and are dedicated to their work. Engaged employees is described as the one who show positive attitude towards the organization. Truly speaking, employees who are engaged to their organization generally feel a connection with their organization, feel that they fit in and, feel they understand the goals of the organization. The added value of such employees is that they tend to be done determined in their work, show relatively high productivity and are more proactive in offering their support.

### **Dedication**

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and Schaufeli et al., (2002), employee dedication reflects employees' sense of significance, passion, motivation and pride. Employees feel dedicated when they are inspired by challenges on the job. Dedication is about employees' persistence, consistency and continuity on the job aimed towards organizational goals. Employees who display high levels of dedication are believed to be highly involved on their job roles and are seen to exert positive feelings towards the job and the organization. It therefore, means that dedication is about employees being deeply devoted to their jobs as well as the goals and objectives of the organization.

Dedication refers to the strength of engage in a job and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenges (Schaufeli, et al. 2017). Engaged employees are involved in their work, and are loyal to the organization. Employee loyalty is a psychological attachment or commitment to the organization and develops as a result of increased job satisfaction (Rajput, Singhal & Tiwari, 2016). Igbal et al., (2018) saw employee loyalty as employee commitment to the success of the organization which is their only best option. Employees that are loyal in most cases trust the organization they find themselves and also trust organizational leadership to do the right thing. They are willing to put extra efforts, which results in growth and development of the organization. Employees are said to be engaged to the organization when their goals are congruent with those of the organization, when they are willing to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and when they desire to maintain their connection with the organization.

### **Absorption**

This is characterized by being totally and happily immersed in one's work and having difficulties detaching oneself from it. It involves high levels of concentration, and assimilation at work to the extent that one finds it difficult to separate from the work. Schaufeli et al., (2002) and Castellano (2015) noted that absorption is about how much an employee is engrossed in a role and the intensity of his/her focus. Absorption is characterized by full concentration and happily doing the work. Employees are engaged to have an energetic and effective relationship with their work activities, and they see themselves able to deal well with the demands of their work (Schaufeli, et al. 2017). Absorption implied of being engrossed in a role. Engaged employees are full of positive energy. They are eager to contribute for the well-being and growth of the organization. They sense a personal attachment with their work place. Absorption is a sense of detachment from your surroundings, a high degree of concentration on the job, and a general lack of conscious awareness of the amount of time spent on the job (Rayton and Yalabik, 2014).

Some researchers think that engagement is more about proactive attention than anything else. It is a decision to immerse yourself in the task for its own sake, not for any external reward. The more attention you have on what you are doing, the more you like it, remember, and derive intrinsic pleasure for it, say researchers. For organization to achieve high level of engagement from the employee, the organization need to motivate the employees by providing their needs. Employee engagement has been found to be related to major work outcomes, namely, turnover intention and actual turnover. Indeed, employees who are strongly engaged to their organization are less likely to leave

### **Relationship between Transportation Facilities and Employee Engagement**

The term transportation facilities as used in this work refer to provisions made by organizations to cater for the movement of their staff from one place to another. Our third research objective has to do with how transportation facilities influence employee engagement, Provision of transportation facilities such as free shuttles and monitoring vehicles, as found by Transloc (2014), makes it possible for employees to know one another better, including co-workers outside their normal work sphere, helping them feel more connected and fostering a sense of teamwork. Similarly, Clement (2013) in his study found that corporate transport facilities reduce the stress resulting from driving in peak hour traffic, reduce the cost of daily travel including fuel, car maintenance and parking; and bring about bonding amongst colleagues.

Zeb-Obipi and Agada (2018) did a study on the effect of workplace social infrastructure and employee commitment in transport companies. The study focused on the influence of dimensions of workplace social infrastructure on affective, normative, and continuance commitment. The results show that provision of car loans or provision of official cars to employees boost and sustain employees' commitment. This transportation platform creates opportunity for junior staff to meet and associate with colleagues from different departments and even locations.

The essence of this set of transportation facilities is to guarantee security and adequate mobility of staff in the performance of their duty outside the office premises (Moneke 2012). The provision of transport facilities in an organization can enhance high productivity, employee engagement, commitment, effectiveness, and efficiency in the organization.

The study postulates the following hypotheses to be tested:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no relationship between provision of transportation facilities and vigor in commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no relationship between provision of transportation facilities and dedication in commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no relationship between provision of transportation facilities and absorption in commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was sourced through structured questionnaire. The population for the study was four hundred and forty (440) employees of five (5) commercial banks in South-South, Nigeria. The sample size of 210 was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The research instrument was validated through by experts as provided by supervisors vetting and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring coefficients above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

### **Bivariate Analysis**

The Spearman Rank Order Correlation coefficient is calculated using the SPSS 21.0 version to establish the relationship among the empirical referents of the predictor variable and the measures of the criterion variable.

**Table 1: Correlations for Transportation Facilities and measures of Employee Engagement**

			<b>TF</b>	<b>Vigor</b>	<b>Dedication</b>	<b>Absorption</b>
Spearman's rho	TF	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.517**	.400**	.792**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	156	156	156	156
	Vigor	Correlation Coefficient	.517**	1.000	.846**	.469**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	156	156	156	156
	Dedication	Correlation Coefficient	.400**	.846**	1.000	.342**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	156	156	156	156
	Absorption	Correlation Coefficient	.792**	.469**	.342**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	156	156	156	156

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

Source: SPSS output version 23.0

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between provision of transportation facilities and vigor of commercial banks in Nigeria. The correlation coefficient (rho) result in table 1 is used to answer the question 1. The correlation coefficient (rho) 0.517 indicate that there is a positive and moderate correlation between provision of transportation facilities and vigor employee engagement. The interpretation of the foregoing result means that, as the provision of transportation facilities improved, the vigor employee improves also. The p-value of 0.000<0.05 shows that relationship between transportation facilities and vigor is significant. Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between transportation facilities and vigor of commercial banks in Nigeria.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between provision of transportation facilities and dedication of commercial banks in Nigeria. The correlation coefficient (rho) 0.400 for transportation facilities and dedication employee engagement indicate that there is a positive and moderate correlation between availability of transportation facilities and dedicated employee engagement. The means that availability of transportation facilities leads to dedication employee engagement. The p-value of 0.000<0.05 shows that relationship between transportation facilities and absorption is significant. Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between transportation facilities and dedication of commercial Banks in Nigeria.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between provision of transportation facilities and absorption of commercial banks in Nigeria. The correlation coefficient (rho) 0.792 for availability of transportation facilities and absorption employee engagement indicate that there is a positive and strong correlation between availability of transportation facilities and absorption employee engagement. Therefore, the relationship between availability of transportation facilities and absorption employee engagement in commercial banks in South-South in Nigeria is positively strong. The P-value of 0.000<0.05 shows that relationship between transportation facilities and absorption is significant. Therefore, based on this finding the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between transportation facilities and absorption of commercial banks in Nigeria.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The results from the test of hypotheses revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between transportation facilities and employee engagement of commercial banks in Nigeria. This finding corroborates the position of the earlier work Transloc (2014) which found that the provision of transportation facilities such as free shuttles and monitoring vehicles makes it possible for employees to know one another better, including co-workers outside their normal work sphere, helping them feel more connected and fostering a sense of teamwork. Similarly, our finding is in alignment with the finding of Clement (2013) who found that corporate transport facilities reduce the stress resulting from driving in peak hour traffic, reduce the cost of daily travel including fuel, car maintenance and parking; and bring about bonding amongst colleagues. This finding suggests that provision of transportation facilities positively influences employee engagement.

### **Conclusion**

Transport facilities is the facility that is provided in order to comfort and improve employee willingness to work and is provided over and above the wages. This helps in raising the intention and motivation so as to retain the employees for longer period and reduce employee turnover. The logic behind providing workplace social infrastructure is to create efficient, healthy, honest and satisfied labour force for the organization. The purpose of providing such facilities is to make their stay at workplace better and have pleasant living standard. From the study findings, the welfare facility provided by commercial banks in Nigeria has helped the employees to contribute and it has also helped them to stay motivated and engaged.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the discussion and conclusion above, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. Since employees of commercial banks are expected to report early to work and close out late, it is recommended that Management should make robust arrangements to cater for the transportation needs of its staffers in ways such as providing employees with car loans at an affordable rate of interest rate and with favorable repayment terms.
- ii. The study recommends that management of commercial banks should issue car loans or provide official cars, staff buses and monitoring vehicles to ensure the safety and transit security of their staff as well as cater for their transportation costs to give them a sense of belonging.

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