

Psychological Empowerment and Employee Affective Commitment in Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined psychological empowerment and employee affective commitment in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria, four major hypotheses guides the researcher in accomplishing this empirical study, one hundred (100) copies of the research questionnaire were distributed while only ninety two (92) copies were used in our analysis. The analyses was carried out using the Pearson's Product Movement Correlation coefficient statistical tool with the aid of statistical package for social scientists (SPSS) and the result revealed a significant relationship between the dimensions of psychological empowerment and the measures of employee affective commitment used in this study. Based on the outcome, the researcher recommended thus; Management of the manufacturing organization should devise positive means of encouraging their employees to participate actively in the problem solve scenario through active mental models. The employees should be properly motivated and assisted to improve their sense of autonomy and self-efficacy for executing their job activities and controlling responsibilities.

Keywords: Psychological empowerment; Affective commitment; Competence; Self Determination; shared Value; Personal Involvement.

1.1 Introduction

The ability of business organizations in Nigeria to maintain a positive competitive advantage in the highly competitive business environment depends not only on the development of modern dimensions of technology, but also on the dedication and total submission of employees to the course of the organization in a bid to realizing the goals of such an organization. Scott & Jafte (1993) argued that empowerment currently represents the new fuel that propels the growing and booming workplace. Spreitzer (2007) posited that for a business to be successful in our present day business environment, companies required the knowledge, ideas, energy and creativity of each and every constituent member of the employee or workforce.

Human resource management is inevitable in every business organizations; this is in view of the fact that human resource breeds human capital which comprises the stock of constituted knowledge and experience which an individual worker acquires over time. Krishna (2007), argues that employees of organizations contributes positively to the progress made by their organizations through the work they perform and the knowledge they acquire over time which makes the employees valuable to any organization. Therefore, employees are important investments for the organization because of their worth to the organization.

Psychological empowerment can be considered as a positive strategy for restructuring which can be employed to reorganize and guide the organizations in contains the prevailing changes that exist in the work environment. Chen & Chen (2008), argue that psychological empowerment represent a positive weapon that can guide business organizations in the effective engagement of their human resources/capital stock in the workplace.

In recent times, a whole lot of attention has been directed at the understanding of the concept(s) of psychological empowerment. Perkins & Zimmerman (1995), states that psychological empowerment consists of organizational

processes and structures that enhances the active participation of employees in the work process and as such improve goals accomplishments for the organization.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In spite of the diverse and highly published role which psychological empowerment is assumed to play in the context of business organizations, there is still a serious conflict concerning the very definition of empowerment within the formal organizational context. In a bid to meet the ever increasing challenges created as a result of global competition, organizations are constantly placed under pressure to constantly initiate actions that support the dynamic changes in the business environment. Consequently, business organizations encourage team work, promote multi-dimensional skills and initiate a range of action course all designed to empower the employees within the organization.

In order to achieve the much desired competitive advantage in the work environment, the challenge of management is to initiate a positive working conditions under which the constituting work group within the organization would chose to commit themselves, collaborate with one another and act collectively towards the accomplishment of organizational goals (Duvall, 1999).

A hand full of researcher has considered the concept of employee psychological empowerment as an antecedent as well as predictor of favourable outcomes at the work environment. Therefore, there are numerous studies that have emphasized that employees that are positively empowered will help the business to accomplish a favourable competitive advantage (Forrester, 2000). However, there are still limited empirical studies on the impact of psychological empowerment on employee affective commitment especially in the manufacturing firms, therefore, this study seeks to enrich our general understanding of the concepts of psychological empowerment and employee affective commitment by filling the existing gap in literature.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the effect of psychological empowerment on employee affective commitment in manufacturing organizations in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically this study seeks to examine;

- (i) The effect of competence on the shared value of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- (ii) The effect of competence on the personal involvement of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria
- (iii) The effect of self determination on the shared value of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- (iv) The effect of self determination on the personal involvement of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will provide relevant information to management of the manufacturing firms and other business organization on possible methods to ensure positive employee empowerment that will encourage affective commitment of workers. The study will also open new research avenues in the field of human resources management and also serving as a referent material to researchers who may wish to tow this line of research endeavour in future. It will also contribute positively to the stock of knowledge in the administrative and social sciences.

2.0 Review of Related Literature/Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The phenomenon of psychological empowerment focuses on certain theories that have been developed to offer a useful framework for the consideration of employee affective commitment. Hence, in this study the theory provide valuable insights and knowledge of factors influencing employees' attitudes to work and enable managers to stimulate the workers towards greater affective commitment. Thus, the theories of motivation were consulted in an attempt to explain the behaviour and attitudes of employees. The concept of psychological empowerment can be considered an extension of the concept of motivation, which also includes attitudes and feelings towards the organization in general. This study was based on the Herzberg's two factor theory of motivation. This theory posits that there are certain variable of work which leads to job dissatisfaction such as salary, status, security, recognition, achievement and growth. Reily (2006) said satisfaction and dissatisfaction operate in different dimensions. People respond differently to work tasks and environment. A factor could cause satisfaction on one job and dissatisfaction on another person like "responsibility".

2.2 Psychological Empowerment

There are numerous definitions of the concept of psychological empowerment. Conger & Kanungo (1988) opined that there have been increasing attention over time on the concept of empowerment and that this attention has become necessary as a result of the poor understanding of the construct of this empowerment and its underlying processes. Psychological empowerment has been conceptualized as a set of psychological states which are considered necessary for workers to feel some serve of control in relation to their job assignments (Spreitzer, 2007). There are numerous perspectives of empowerment, however the psychological perspective which is our major area of interest is closely associated with the state of the workers and how they experience their work. Spreitzer (2007) states that the psychological perspective of empowerment makes reference to empowerment as the individual beliefs which these employees possess concerning their roles in relation to their work organizations.

Thomas & Velthonse (1990) made reference to empowerment from the psychological perspective and consequently described psychological empowerment as the practice directed at improving the feelings of self efficacy among organizational players through the recognition and elimination of such conditions which promotes powerlessness by both formal organizational practices as well as informal techniques directed at providing access to information required for organization effectiveness. In the same vein, Avey, Hughes,

Norman & Luthans (2008) defined psychological empowerment as a construct of intrinsic motivation which moves the workers to accomplish set goals through task performance demonstrated in terms of meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact.

Competence: The competence dimension of psychological empowerment is expressed in terms of the sense of confidence and beliefs which the workers have in their capabilities and associated skills required to carry out their tasks most effectively (Spreitzer, 1995). It represents the extent to which an employee is able to carry out his/her duties and responsibilities in the most skillful manner (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Therefore, if the employees do not have the confidence that they can perform effectively giving their level of skills and capabilities, then psychologically, they may not feel duely empowered by their superiors even though their superiors have actually empowered them (Liu, Fellows & Chiu, 2006).

Bandura (1977) observed that when there is the manifestation of a high degree of self-efficiency, such would result in the employees initiating positive behaviours and attitudes, and the willingness to put in much more efforts even amidst obstacles, Nabila (2008) on the other hand, posits that when there is manifestation of low self efficiency on the part of the employees, such employees will tend to avoid the likeliness of confronting their fears or even striving to improve on their competencies.

Self Determination: This is perceived as the sense of autonomy concerning the freedom accorded the employees to carry out their tasks independently (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). When there is a feeling of the sense of empowerment on the part of workers, it is believed that they would possess substantial freedom and the power to make some decision concerning their job responsibilities.

Raub & Robert (2007) posits that when the employees assumes that they are strictly adhering to the instructions of their superior(s), such category of employees will lack the sense of empowerment as a result of limited freedom or autonomy given to them. Therefore, the self determination dimension is presumed to exist when the subordinates are allowed some level of freedom or autonomy to exercise some level of control over their official tasks (Krishna, 2007).

2.3 Affective Commitment

Affective commitment is defined as the employee's positive emotional attachment to the organization. Meyer & Allen (1997) pegged affective commitment as the "desire" component of organizational commitment. An employee who is affectively committed strongly identifies with the goals of the organization and desires to remain a part of the organization. This employee stays committed to the organization because he/she "wants to". This commitment can be influenced by many different demographic characteristics: age, tenure, sex, and education but these influences are neither strong nor consistent. The problem with these characteristics is that while they can be seen, they cannot be clearly defined. Meyer & Allen (1997) gave this example that "positive relationships between tenure and commitment maybe due to tenure-related differences in job status and quality" In developing this concept, Meyer and Allen drew largely on Mowday, Steers & Porter, (1979) concept of commitment, which in turn drew on earlier work by Kanter (1968).

Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, (2002) propose that commitment is "a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets". Employees are theorized to experience this

force in the form of three bases, or mindsets: affective, normative, and continuance, which reflect emotional ties, perceived obligation, and perceived sunk costs in relation to a target, respectively (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Additionally, Meyer & Herscovitch (2001) argue that commitments include 'behavioral terms' that describe what actions a commitment implies. Specifically, these terms can take the form of focal and discretionary behavior. A focal behavior is one believed to be integral to the concept of commitment to a particular target, such that all three mindsets should predict this behavior. It is the behavior "to which an individual is bound by his or her commitment".

Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky (2006) notes that commitment has both cognitive and affective elements. The cognitive elements are the behavioral terms and the basis of the commitment, and the affective element comprises whatever feelings a specific mindset invokes.

Shared Values: Shared value is an explicit or implicit fundamental beliefs, concepts, and principles that underlie the culture of an organization, and which guide decisions and behaviour of its employees, management, and members (Porter & Cramer, 2011). Shared Value is a management principle that seeks opportunity for business in solving social problems. Florin (2011) observed that Companies can solve problems in three ways that can lead to competitive wins.

- The first is to solve them through products and services. This requires defining markets in terms of unmet needs or social ills, and developing products that will change these conditions as they are purchased and used. Innovation and growth is typically fueled by a renewed sense of purpose in the business. We call this form of Shared Value re-conceiving products and markets.
- The second is to address them through the company's operations by consuming "public goods" as efficiently and productively as possible. Better use of natural resources, growing human talent or supplier capabilities can help businesses both in the short and long term: by lowering costs and by ensuring future access to these goods. We call this form of Shared Value reconfiguring value chains.
- The third is to invest outside the company's operations to solve the problems that are most connected with the company's growth and productivity potential. Social conditions ranging from the rule of law, to infrastructure or the presence of supportive industries and academic institutions are all assets that allow businesses to thrive if they exist, or cause them to struggle if they are absent. Investing to build these assets helps unleash a company's growth and productivity potential. We call this form of Shared Value enabling local cluster development.

In all three cases, a company's opportunity to create Shared Value is unique to its business model and the social conditions that surround its operations. Shared Value creation starts with a deep understanding of social problems and their connection to the business.

Shared values are critical component of any covenantal relationship. Values that are noncontroversial (Quality, Innovation, Cooperation and Participation) are easy to share and can forge close relationships (Florin, 2011). If

employees believe that their organization values quality products, they will engage in behaviors that will contribute to high quality. If employees are convinced that their organization values participation, they will be more likely to feel as though their participation will make a difference. Consequently, they will be more willing to seek solutions and make suggestions to contribute to the organization's success.

Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, (2003) research reveals that when employees hold values that match the values of their employing organization, they are satisfied with their jobs, identify with the organization, and seek to maintain the employment relationship. And these minimize the costs of turnover, and promote extra-role behavior linked to positive attitudes. Schein, (1990) states that when an employee have similar values with its organization they intend to have similar motives, set similar goals and respond to events in similar ways. These similarities help employees predict what will occur, because employees can use their own motives and goals to anticipate the actions of the organization and its members. Similarities in shared value in an organization promotes harmony and cooperation among organizational member and increases the likelihood that people share goals and agree to tasks and procedures, thereby avoiding conflict that could undermine positive interpersonal relationship (Jehn et al., 1999, 2001). Alignment of values shared between employers and employees and between individuals and the organization is necessary for the development of organizational commitment. Employees are affectively committed to organization whose values they share are similar.

Personal Involvement: Involvement is a process of emotional attachment of the employees to the organization, to the level where they not only speak positive about the company and have immense desire to remain its part but also contribute an extra effort for achievement of organizational objectives (Elankumaran, 2004). "Involvement is not an event but a series of events that emotionally involves the employee with the organization. Out of this emotional attachment employees tend to affiliate themselves with the company and hence exhibit higher level of commitment and productivity (Li, Lin & Chen, 2007). Whenever employees engross themselves with the company they start speaking positively about it and become ready to do more than is required as standard benchmark for the position they hold.

Some defined employee involvement as a term which means an extent to which employee believes in the mission, purpose and values of organization and demonstrates that commitment through their actions as an employee and their attitude towards their employer and customers (Stockely, 2005) while other believes that employee involvement is a higher level of commitment and engagement an employee has towards their organization and its value (Jayasingam & Yong, 2013). In either case engaged employees are more than committed to organizational mission, vision and tries to add value to organizational processes. It is not just the satisfaction of an employee to work at the assigned job but willingness to exceed expectation of employers and customers through their attitude and behaviour.

Hewitt Associated (2004) define employee and executive involvement as, "a state in which individuals are emotionally and intellectually committed to the organization or group, as measured by three primary behaviours:

Say –The employee consistently speaks positively about the organization to co-workers' and refers potential employees and customers;

Stay –The employee has an intense desire to be a member of the organization, despite opportunities to work elsewhere; and

Strive –The employee exerts an extra effort and exhibits behaviours that contribute to business success.

Employee involvement is thus the level of intellectual excitement and emotional involvement an employee has towards his/her organization and a strong commitment to the values instilled by the organization. An involved employee is aware of business context, and works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization. The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement, which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee. Thus Employee involvement is a barometer that determines the association of a person with the organization.

2.4 Psychological Empowerment and Employee Affective Commitment

The review of literature has revealed that some researchers have examined the nature of relationship between psychological empowerment and the affective commitment dimension of organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Chan, 2003). Jermier & Berkers (1979) in their study observed that when the superior gives their subordinates the opportunity to take active part, in the organizations decision making process or to assume responsibilities of high prestige, that the affective commitment of such employees become even stronger. Bateman & Strasser (1984) also posited that organizations that maintain a decentralized structure rather than a centralized operational structure and thus giving their employees some level of authority to make decisions that affect the organization, will encourage stronger affective commitment of such employees.

Chan (2003) in his study also exposed that psychological empowerment is positively and significantly associated with employees affective commitment in organizations. Consequently, workers that are psychologically empowered by their superiors are most often likely to exercise higher affective commitment to their parent organization and this makes them feel highly motivated to remain with their organizations. Therefore, it is evident from our review of existing literature that psychological empowerment is strongly associated with employee affective commitment.

2.5 Research Hypotheses

- H0₁:** There is no significant relationship between competence and shared value of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- H0₂:** There is no significant relationship between competence and personal involvement of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- H0₃:** There is no significant relationship between self determination and shared value of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- H0₄:** There is no significant relationship between self determination and personal involvement of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

2.5.1 Conceptual/Operational Framework of the Study

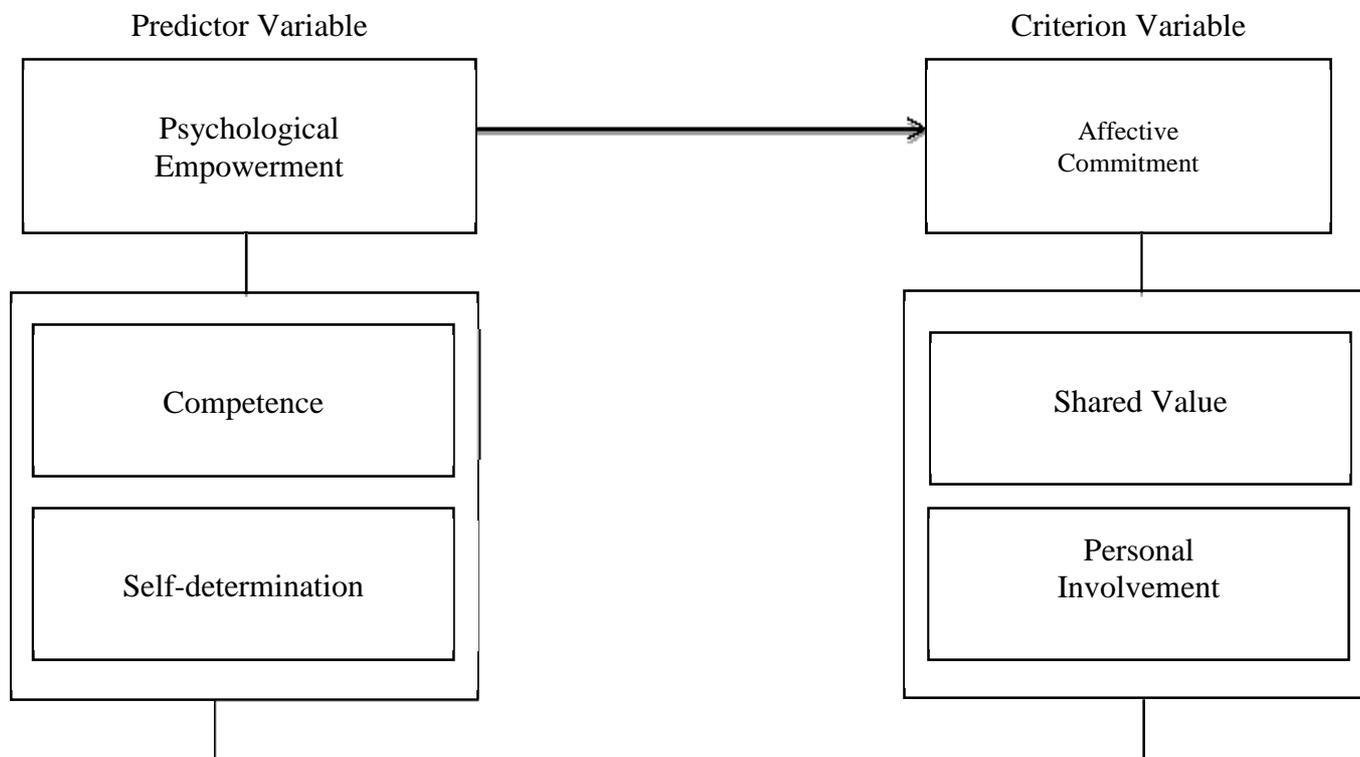


Figure 1.1: Conceptual/Operational Framework on psychological empowerment and affective commitment of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Source: Desk Research, 2017

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A research design has been described as a program, which guides the researcher in the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting observation. It also connotes the structuring of investigation aimed at identifying variables and their relationships to one another. Therefore, the researcher/study adopted a quasi-experimental design because there are both dependent and independent variables used in the model. The dependent variable is considerably influenced by the independent variables which make Quasi-experimental research design appropriate for the study. Further, primary data was used to carry out the analysis. Therefore, the research design for this work involves the following steps:

- (i) Data collation from a cross section of determinate members of the work force of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
- (ii) The analysis of data collected using the SPSS Version 22.0

3.2 Model Specification

The analysis involved the use of the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool. This was used to determine the perceived relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Model, which is the simplification of complex reality, specifies the relationship between the variables used in the analysis. Therefore, the models specify that affective commitment [measured by shared value and personal involvement] is significantly influenced by psychological empowerment (proxied by competence and self determination). The models, which are expressed in their natural forms, are formulated as follows,

Model I

$$SV = f(CM)$$

$$SV = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 CM + U_i \quad - \quad equ(1)$$

Model II

$$SV = f(SD)$$

$$SV = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 SD + U_i \quad - \quad equ(2)$$

Model III

$$PI = f(CM)$$

$$PI = \alpha_0 - \alpha_1 CM + U_i \quad - \quad equ(3)$$

Model IV

$$PI = f(SD)$$

$$PI = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 SD + U_i \quad - \quad equ(4)$$

Where;

The a priori expectations are $\alpha_1 > 0$ for models I to IV.

- CM = Competence
- SD = Self Determination
- SV = Shared Value
- PI = Personal Involvement
- U_i = Disturbance Term
- α_0 = Intercept
- α_1 = Coefficient of the independent Variables.

3.3 Sources and Method of Data Collection

The data for this study was obtained mainly from the employees of manufacturing firms in Rivers State. One hundred copies of the research questionnaire were distributed; this was based on the researchers' convenience. However, only ninety two (92) copies were used for the analysis representing 92% of total respondents.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

The study was to investigate the effect of psychological empowerment on the affective commitment of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, data collected for this study were analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 20.

The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was used to determine the impact of the dimensions of the independent variable on the measures of the dependent variable.

4. Analyses and Results

The dimensions of psychological empowerment: competence and self determination were correlated against the measures of the dependent variable which were, shared value and personal involvement. The aim was to ascertain if there is a significant relationship between these dimensions of psychological empowerment and the employee affective commitment measures, and also to determine the direction of such relationship. The Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient statistics was used in analyzing the data collected for the purpose of this study, this was done with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 20.

4.1 Hypothesis One

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between competence and shared value of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis One

		Competence	Shared Value
Competence	Pearson Correlation	1	.955
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.044
	N	92	92
Shared Value	Pearson Correlation	.955	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	
	N	92	92

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.955$) between competence and employee shared value is very strong and positive.

The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.91$) indicates that 91% of employees shared value can be explained by competence. The significant value of 0.044 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between competence and shared value of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

4.2 Hypothesis Two

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between competence and personal involvement of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis Two

		Competence	Personal Involvement
Competence	Pearson Correlation	1	.962
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.038
	N	92	92
Personal Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.962	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	
	N	92	92

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.962$) between competence and employees personal involvement is very strong and positive.

The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.925$) indicated that 92.2% of personal involvement of employees can be explained by competence. The significant value of 0.038 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between competence and personal involvement of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

4.3 Hypothesis Three

HO₃: There is no significant relationship between self determination and shared value of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis Three

		Self Determination	Shared Value
Self Determination	Pearson Correlation	1	.965
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.041
	N	92	92
Shared Value	Pearson Correlation	.965	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	
	N	92	92

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.965$) between self determination and employees shared value is very strong and positive.

The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.93$) indicated that 93% of employees shared value can be explained by self determination. The significant value of 0.041 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between self determination and shared value of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

4.4 Hypothesis Four

HO₄: There is no significant relationship between self determination and personal involvement of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis Four

		Self Determination	Personal Involvement
Self Determination	Pearson Correlation	1	.945
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.039
	N	92	92
Personal Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.945	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.039	
	N	92	92

From the result of the above table, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.945$) between self determination and employees personal involvement is very strong and positive.

The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.89$) indicated that 89% of employees personal involvement can be explained by self determination. The significant value of 0.039 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between self determination and personal involvement of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria.

5. Conclusion, Recommendations and Contribution to Knowledge

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between psychological empowerment and affective commitment of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically it examined the effect of competence on employees shared value and personal involvement and the effect of self determination on employees shared value and personal involvement. Data collected for this study was tested empirically using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical tool and the result revealed that a positive and significant relationship exist between the dimensions of psychological empowerment and the measures of employees affective commitment used in this study. It was thus revealed from our findings that.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the followings:

1. Management of the manufacturing organization should devise positive means of encouraging their employees to participate actively in the problem solve scenario through active mental models.
2. The employees should be properly motivated and assisted to improve their sense of autonomy and self-efficacy for executing their job activities and controlling responsibilities.
3. The employees' core competence in the manufacturing firms should be developed to motivate them in maintaining a high level of confidence when empowered by their organization.
4. Management of manufacturing firms should devise means of constantly elevating the morale of their workers so that they would always be determined to assume critical responsibilities when empowered by their superiors.

5.3 Contribution to Knowledge

The researchers are of the opinion that the findings of this study has to a great extent contributed positively to extant literature on psychological empowerment and employee affective commitment in the following ways.

First, the gap in literature which had been identified in the problem statement has been filled; this study therefore has contributed in resolving existing short falls in the area of psychological empowerment and affective commitment. This study has also developed a framework for linking psychological empowerment and employee

affective commitment in the manufacturing sector in Rivers State, Nigeria. Finally the outcome of this study will serve as a source of information that can spur up further research in this area of research interest.

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