
EMPLOYEES' PSYCHOLOGICAL HOPE AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN MAJOR OIL AND GAS COMPANIES IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research investigates the correlation between employees' psychological hope and their organisational commitment. The study encompasses a sample of 280 managerial and non-managerial employees randomly drawn from ten prominent oil and gas companies situated in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. Employing a quasi-experimental research design, data collection was conducted via a cross-sectional survey deemed most suitable for the administrative sciences. Data analysis employed the Spearman rank correlation coefficient and multiple regression model, utilising Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15. The results reveal a positive and significant association between employees' psychological hope and organisational commitment within the major oil and gas companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Specifically, employees' willpower and way power were identified as exerting a favourable and statistically significant impact on their affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment, respectively, within these organisations. In light of these findings, the study concludes that employees' psychological hope significantly contributes to bolstering organisational commitment within major oil and gas companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Particularly, the study emphasises the pivotal roles played by employees' willpower (agency) and way power (pathways) in augmenting their affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment within these organisations. Consequently, the study underscores the imperative for managers in Nigerian Oil and Gas industry to adeptly manage employees' psychological hope to fortify their commitment to the organisation. Moreover, the study deliberates on additional theoretical and managerial implications for effectively nurturing employees' hope and enhancing organisational commitment in the workplace, with specific reference to the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Keywords: Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment, Niger Delta Region, Nigeria, Organizational Commitment, Positive Psychological Capital, Psychological Hope, Way power, Willpower.

Introduction

CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

Amidst the backdrop of the global economic downturn and escalating global competition, a noticeable trend emerges: employees are frequently seeking opportunities elsewhere, drawn by the allure of better prospects. This phenomenon is underscored by Martin and Schmidt (2010), who assert, "Despite what you might think, the downturn has actually made your highest-potential employees more likely to jump ship: one in four plans to leave your firm within the year." As attention from enterprise managers, scholars, policymakers, and analysts intensifies on the erosion of workers' commitment to both the ethos of work and the organisations that employ them, organisational commitment has become a focal point of inquiry. This attention spans diverse cultural and occupational contexts, with scholars endeavouring to delineate its precursors and ramifications (Randall, 1993; Mowday et al., 1982; Welsch and LaVan, 1981).

The management literature has proposed various interpretations of organisational commitment. One such definition characterises it as "an employee's strong belief in and acceptance of an organisation's goals and values, willingness to expend effort on behalf of the organisation to reach these goals and objectives, and strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation" (Hunt and Morgan, 1994). Implicit in this definition is the notion that organisational commitment reflects employees' attitudes towards their affiliations with the organisations they serve (Moorhead and Gryphon, 1995). Similarly, Luthans (1992) contends that organisational commitment encompasses the inclination to sustain organisational membership, the readiness to exert significant effort on behalf of the organisation, and a profound belief in and endorsement of its goals and values.

The pivotal role of employees in the efficient and effective functioning of any business cannot be overstated (Benedict et al., 2011). Without their contribution, the success of the business would be jeopardised. Thus, a manager's responsibilities extend beyond merely attracting top talent from the labour market; they must also discern those likely to stay long-term amidst the high stakes involved (Benedict et al., 2011). Citing the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, Benedict et al. (2011) highlight a growing trend wherein employees tend to remain with companies for an average of 23 to 24 months. Moreover, they reference the Employment Policy Foundation, which notes that the cost to a company for each departing employee averages around \$15,000. These costs encompass separation expenses, administrative tasks, unemployment claims, as well as vacancy expenses such as overtime or temporary staffing, and replacement costs including recruitment advertising, interview processes, relocation, training, and the associated productivity loss resulting from the departure of colleagues. Creating an engaging workplace environment not only cultivates content, motivated, and empowered individuals but also mitigates employee turnover and absenteeism rates. Such an environment fosters both personal and professional development, thereby nurturing harmony and fostering encouragement across all organisational levels, with ripple effects felt throughout the company.

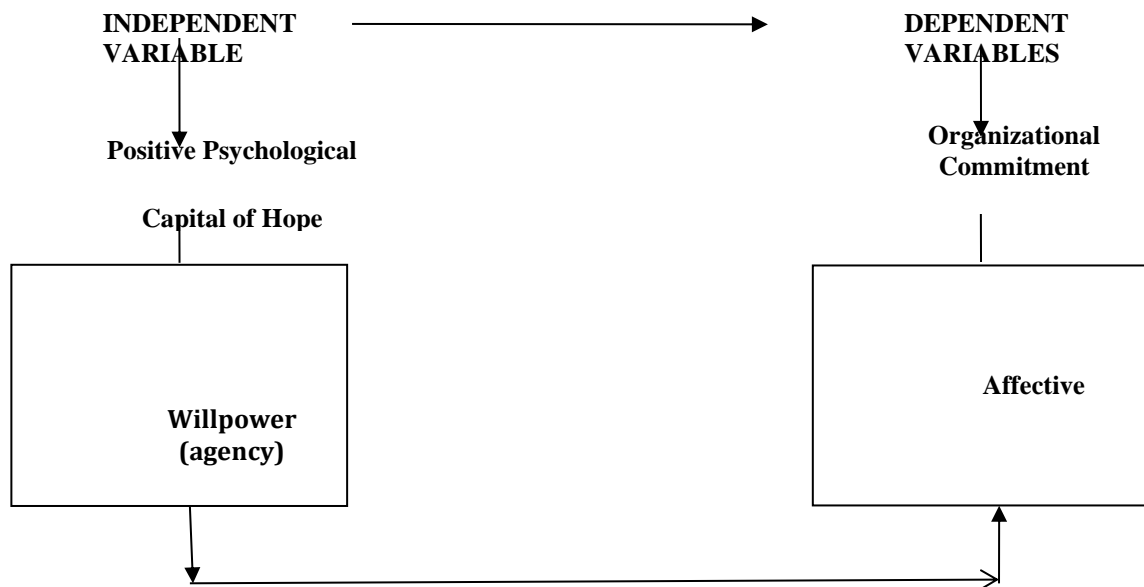
Previous attempts to explain this seemingly persistent phenomenon, with its attendant challenges, have largely focused on factors such as (1) items external to the individual, such as pay, working conditions, co-workers (Warsi, et al (2009) and work-family climate (O'neill,

et al 2009); (2) factors associated with the individual, such as age, tenure and sex (Khalili, 2012; Cohen, 1993), level of education, and level in the organization hierarchy (Wahn, 1998); and (3) factors tied to the employees' reactions to the job, such as job satisfaction (Lumley, et al 2011), employee involvement (Guest, et al 1993) and expectations (Van Vuuren, 2006; Jusoh et al, 2011). At times like this, there is an obvious need for new thinking and approaches. Luthans (2007) has called on managers and organizations to look beyond human capital and begin to focus on the less recognized psychological capacities of employees for sustained performance and other important considerations, including employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. Luthans argue that we must look beyond the human and social capital of worker to understand their state of hopefulness, optimism, resilience, and confidence, which they often fail to recognize. This suggests that in addition to the other psychological capacities, developing and nurturing employees' state of hopefulness in an organisation is important. Among other positive effects, hope has been shown to directly relate to adjustment and well-being (Snyder, 2002). Additionally, research indicates the constructive impact of hope on both academic and athletic achievements. Within professional settings, empirical findings suggest that individuals with high levels of hope, as opposed to those with lower levels, generally exhibit reduced reactivity to stressors (Snyder, 2002; Chang and DeSimone, 2001). Moreover, empirical evidence underscores hope's significant role in moderating the impact of stressful life events (Snyder, 2002).

From the preceding discussions, it is evident that the presence of hopeful and committed employees confers a competitive edge on any organisation. This phenomenon partly elucidates the surge in research endeavours focused on the constructs of positive psychological capital, particularly hope and organisational commitment. This surge in scholarly activity within the organisational domain stands as one of the most noteworthy advancements in the sociology of knowledge. Nevertheless, despite the extensive exploration of these themes, certain gaps persist. Firstly, there exists a dearth of studies examining the correlation between psychological hope and employees' commitment to the organisation. Secondly, a review of pertinent literature reveals that research into positive psychological capital, particularly hope, has predominantly occurred within Western contexts (e.g., Luthans et al., 2007). However, the applicability of these findings to African, specifically Nigerian, work environments and organisational cultures remains uncertain. To enhance the relevance and applicability of research findings to Nigerian organisations, it is imperative for researchers to conduct studies within Nigerian organisational contexts. To address this research gap, the current study investigates the relationship between employees' psychological hope and organisational commitment within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry. Given the escalating competition in Nigeria's Oil and Gas industry, where managers often resort to talent poaching and other recruitment strategies, the central inquiry guiding this study is: Does a relationship exist between employees' psychological hope and organisational commitment?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is presented in Figure 1 below.



Source: conceptualized by the

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

THE CONCEPT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HOPE

Hope constitutes a crucial dimension within the framework of psychological capital (PsyCap), a construct introduced by Fred Luthans and colleagues (Zhong, 2007). According to Luthans, PsyCap represents a positive state-like capacity that has undergone extensive theoretical elaboration and empirical investigation (Zhong, 2007). Psychological capital, as defined by Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007), denotes "an individual's positive psychological state of development," characterised by several key attributes: confidence (self-efficacy) in undertaking and persisting in challenging tasks; optimism in harbouring positive expectations about present and future success; hope in persevering towards goals and adapting paths to achieve them; and resilience in coping with adversity and rebounding to achieve success (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). Consequently, PsyCap comprises self-efficacy or confidence, optimism, hope, and resilience as its constituent dimensions. Research indicates that the integration of these dimensions yields a second-order, core factor that demonstrates superior predictive power for performance and satisfaction compared to each individual factor in isolation (Luthans et al., 2007). PsyCap endeavours to enhance the positive orientation in organisational behaviour by meeting the inclusion criteria of being positive, theoretically grounded, measurable, developmental, and performance-oriented (Luthans et al., 2007). Moreover, PsyCap is conceptualised, assessed, and cultivated as a state-like positive core construct, wherein the individual resources of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience synergistically contribute to its development and manifestation.

Hope represents the emotional disposition that fosters confidence in favourable outcomes concerning life's events and circumstances. It embodies the notion of "anticipating the fulfilment of desires with a sense of reasonable assurance" or "enthusiastically looking forward to positive outcomes" (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia). Alternately expressed, hope entails "nurturing aspirations with eager anticipation," "yearning for with an expectation of realisation," or "awaiting with a sense of conviction" (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia). In the English language, hope can function both as a noun and a verb, with consistent connotations across its various usages (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia). Additionally, hope has been delineated as "a constructive motivational state originating from an interactive fusion of perceived efficacy in goal attainment (agency) and the strategic planning of pathways to achieve those goals" (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991). It embodies the conviction that future circumstances will improve, grounded not merely in wishful thinking but in genuine belief, even when empirical evidence may be lacking. Hope encapsulates a broad spectrum of convictions, ranging from a student aspiring for an A in mathematics to an individual with HIV/AIDS aspiring for a cure, despite the absence of immediate scientific breakthroughs.

While the theoretical depth and prevalence of research on hope may not match those of confidence, it has nonetheless emerged in earlier studies as a significant contributor to positive psychological capital within workplace contexts. Despite its apparent similarity to other positive attributes such as optimism, confidence, and resilience, meticulous theoretical and measurement analyses affirm its conceptual distinctiveness and discriminant validity. Particularly noteworthy is the distinctiveness of hope's "way power" dimension, as delineated in this context, which sets it apart from conventional interpretations and other dimensions of psychological capital.

Previous empirical investigations have established a direct correlation between hope and adjustment as well as overall well-being (Snyder, 2002). These associations have been extensively documented across diverse settings, encompassing both within-person analyses (Snyder et al., 1996) and between-person examinations (Snyder et al., 1991). The robustness of these associations has been demonstrated across clinical and non-clinical populations, spanning children, adolescents, and adults (e.g., Edwards, Rand, Lopez, & Snyder, in press). Within organizational settings, empirical findings indicate that individuals with high levels of hope generally exhibit lower reactivity to stressful circumstances compared to those with lower levels (Chang and DeSimone, 2001; Snyder, 2002). Moreover, substantial empirical evidence supports the positive influence of hope on academic and athletic performance. Similarly, empirical research has underscored hope's pivotal role in mitigating the impact of stressful life events (Snyder, 2002). However, only a limited number of studies, both direct and indirect, have explored its implications within workplace contexts (including Adams et al., 2003; and Peterson and Luthans, 2003).

THE CONCEPT OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT

Numerous interpretations of organisational commitment exist within the management literature. One definition characterises it as the intensity of the sense of duty and obligation that an employee harbours towards an organisation's mission (businessdictionary.com). The dimensions of organisational commitment delineated in the literature, extensively researched

and widely embraced within the academic realm, encompass affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

Affective Commitment: Among the triad of organisational commitment facets, affective commitment (AC) has garnered the lion's share of scholarly inquiry (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Meyer et al., 2002). Affective Commitment (AC) pertains to the emotional connection an individual harbours towards the organisation, characterised by a sense of identification, engagement, and satisfaction in organisational membership (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982). It signifies the employee's emotional allegiance, identification, and active participation within the organisation, stemming from positive sentiments or emotions towards the organisation. Notably, the emotional attachment perspective finds notable representation in the research of Porter and colleagues (Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979; Porter, Crampon, and Smith, 1976), who conceptualised organisational commitment as the degree of an individual's identification with and involvement in a specific organisation (Mowday et al., 1979).

Continuance Commitment: Some scholars argue that affective factors play a marginal role in the conceptualization of commitment. Instead, commitment is construed as a propensity to persist in consistent patterns of behaviour (Becker, 1960), rooted in the individual's acknowledgment of the "costs" or foregone opportunities entailed in discontinuing those behaviours (Becker, 1960; Farrel and Rusbult, 1981). These investments encompass the employee's close interpersonal relationships with colleagues, vested pension benefits, accrued seniority, career advancements, and specialised competencies acquired through prolonged tenure within the organisation. Employees are apprehensive about forfeiting these investments if they were to leave the organisation. Hence, continuance commitment denotes a commitment grounded in the perceived costs linked with departing from the organisation. The individual opts to remain affiliated with the organisation due to the perceived loss of invested resources. The individual perceives that significant effort and/or time have been invested and feels compelled to stay within the organisation. For instance, Kanter (1968) characterised cognitive continuance commitment as arising when continued involvement yields benefits while leaving incurs costs. Stebbins (1970) described continuance commitment as the realisation that opting for an alternative social identity is unfeasible due to the substantial penalties associated with such a transition.

Normative Commitment: A less prevalent yet equally valid perspective on commitment regards it as a perception of one's duty or obligation to the organisation. Normative commitment (NC) denotes the extent to which an individual feels compelled to remain affiliated with the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1991; 1997). Over time, the definition of normative commitment has undergone refinement (Allen, 2003). Initially rooted in Weiner's (1982) work on the internalisation of norms regarding organisational loyalty, normative commitment was subsequently conceptualised as a sense of obligation to remain with the organisation, without explicit reference to social pressures regarding loyalty (Meyer et al., 1993). More recently, however, this obligation has subtly shifted, implying a reciprocation for

benefits received (Meyer et al., 2002). Various revisions to the definition of normative commitment have reflected these changes (e.g., Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 1993). Across these iterations, the essence of normative commitment lies in the employee's perception of obligation. Accordingly, normative commitment is defined as the individual's attachment to the organisation driven by a sense of duty. It also encapsulates an employee's sense of obligation to continue their association with the organisation, stemming from the internalisation of the organisation's values and objectives. The crux of the matter is that the individual opts to remain with the organisation due to feelings of obligation. For instance, an organisation may have invested considerable resources in an employee's training and development, thereby eliciting a sense of obligation from the employee to reciprocate this investment by remaining with the organisation.

Shared among the aforementioned approaches (i.e., affective, continuous, and normative commitment) is a connection between the employee and the organisation that diminishes the probability of turnover; however, it is evident that the nature of this connection varies. Individuals with robust affective commitment remain because they wish to, those with strong continuance commitment because they must, and those with robust normative commitment because they believe they should do so. Affective, continuance, and normative commitment are best conceptualised as distinct constituents rather than distinct types of attitudinal commitment; thus, individuals may experience varying degrees of these psychological states. For instance, some employees may feel both a compelling necessity and a strong sense of obligation to stay, yet lack the desire to do so; conversely, others may lack both a compelling necessity and a sense of obligation but possess a strong desire, and so forth. Therefore, the cumulative extent of an individual's commitment to the organisation reflects each of these distinct psychological states.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Based on empirical findings, individuals with high levels of hope demonstrate a proclivity towards independent thinking (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007). They exhibit reduced conformity to the ideas of others, including leaders, thereby fostering a propensity to generate innovative solutions and seize opportunities from unconventional perspectives. Such individuals are inclined to explore diverse information sources and approach problems and opportunities from multiple angles (Zhou and George, 2003). Hopeful individuals typically exhibit determination in pursuing goals, demonstrate a willingness to take risks, and exhibit adaptability by seeking alternative pathways when faced with obstacles (Snyder, 1994, 2002). They engage in positive self-talk, employing agency-focused phrases such as "I can do it" and "I am ready for this challenge," fostering intrinsic motivation and creativity in goal pursuit (Amabile, 1988, 1997; Oldham and Cummings, 1996; Shalley and Gilson, 2004).

Moreover, hopeful individuals introduce a degree of uncertainty into seemingly straightforward goal situations, thereby stretching their skills and capabilities (Snyder, 2002). For instance, akin to basketball players striving not only to score but also to do so with flair and originality (Jones, 1973; Snyder and Fromkin, 1980), hopeful individuals inject creativity into their work tasks and objectives, aiming to develop and expand their skill set and approach goals in novel ways. They perceive seemingly unattainable goals as achievable, leveraging

their creativity to surmount perceived barriers (Snyder, 2002). In the face of setbacks, they utilise feedback to refine their goal pursuit strategies, exhibiting resilience and a propensity to explore alternative and creative avenues to overcome challenges. Consequently, they are less likely to succumb to impatience or frustration when confronted with difficulties in navigating problems and opportunities.

As highlighted by Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007), "hopeful employees tend to be more creative and resourceful, even with limited financial resources." Conversely, individuals with low levels of hope demonstrate less flexibility in thinking and are less inclined to generate alternative solutions for problem-solving and seizing opportunities (Snyder, 1994, 2002). Their diminished agency energy results in lower motivation for goal pursuit, thereby reducing their inclination to seek creative pathways to achieve objectives. They are more inclined to adhere to organisational regulations and comply with directives from superiors (Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio, 2007), which diminishes their propensity to suggest innovative ideas that diverge from the status quo or contradict their superiors' viewpoints. With their perceived deficits in agency and pathways, they likely approach goals with a focus on potential failure rather than success (Snyder, 1995), thereby dampening their drive for goal pursuit and innovation in problem-solving. What may seem feasible for individuals with high levels of hope appears unattainable for them, leading to reduced improvisation and fewer attempts to devise alternative strategies for problem-solving and seizing opportunities. Feedback from unsuccessful goal pursuits tends to foster rumination and self-doubt rather than serving as a catalyst for improvement (Michael, 2000; Snyder, 1999, 2002), resulting in diminished intrinsic motivation, negative emotions, and reduced creative endeavours in pursuing goals.

Hope, regarded as a positive psychological strength, is a concept closely associated with the theory and research of positive psychologist C. Rick Snyder. Snyder and colleagues' hope theory (Snyder et al., 1996; Snyder et al., 2000, 2002) holds significant sway in clinical and positive psychology and boasts substantial research backing. Defined by Snyder et al. (1996) as a "positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (1) agency (goal-directed energy) and (2) pathways (planning to meet goals)," hope comprises three distinct yet interconnected components: agency (willpower), pathways (way-power), and goals.

The agency component of hope represents the will to achieve a specific task or objective (Snyder et al., 1996), encompassing the motivation or directed energy to succeed in a particular endeavour within a specific context. Conversely, the pathway component pertains to the means by which a task or objective can be achieved, signifying the strategy or approach to accomplishing a goal. Together, they constitute the resolve and the method to accomplish a given task or objective. Snyder and colleagues' theory and research emphasise that possessing one component alone is insufficient; genuine hope, as defined and operationalized, necessitates both the will to succeed in a given task and a viable means or pathway to achieve it.

While hope has long been associated with academic and athletic achievement in clinical and positive psychology contexts (Snyder, 2000, 2002), its exploration in the workplace is a relatively recent endeavour. Initial research in organisational settings suggests that hope correlates with various performance indicators, including supervisory-rated performance

among Chinese factory workers (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, and Li, 2005), unit financial performance, employee satisfaction, and retention (Peterson and Luthans, 2003), as well as employee performance, satisfaction, happiness, and commitment (Youssef and Luthans, 2007).

Considering that elevated levels of psychological capital (PsyCap) capacities, such as hope, have been empirically demonstrated to elicit positive emotions (Snyder, Harris et al., 1991), and hopeful individuals also exhibit reduced experience of negative emotions, particularly attributed to their way power and willpower (Snyder et al., 2000), and given the demonstrated impact of hope on various organisational outcomes as discussed previously, we posit that a similar level of influence will be extended to the construct of organisational commitment. Therefore, we formulate the following hypothesis:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between employees' willpower and their affective commitment to the organization within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between employees' willpower and their normative commitment to the organization within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between employees' willpower and their continuance commitment to the organization within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between employees' way power and their affective commitment to the organization within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Ho5: There is no significant relationship between employees' way power and their normative commitment to the organization within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Ho6: There is no significant relationship between employees' way power and their continuance commitment to the organization within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Methodology: We adopted a cross-sectional survey approach, a widely employed method in social and administrative science research, for several reasons, including its cost and time efficiency, perceived anonymity, and provision of adequate time for respondents to contemplate their responses. It is pertinent to highlight that the cross-sectional survey method, also known as survey design, entails gathering standardised data from a representative sample of a specific group or population.

Sampling Technique: Sampling entails the selection of a representative subset from a larger population, assuming a common characteristic exists among the population elements. Baridam (2001) underscores that there is no universally superior sampling method; rather, the selection of a sampling technique should be guided by the study's nature and objectives. Given the heterogeneous nature of the target population, we employed Taro Yamen's formula and the cluster sampling technique recommended by Baridam (2001). A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed to managerial employees in major oil companies within the upstream sub-sector of the Nigerian oil and gas industry. Of these, 280 completed questionnaires were returned and deemed suitable for analysis. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of

their responses and offered a soft copy of the research report upon request as an incentive for their participation in the study.

Operationalization Measures of Variables: The focal independent variable in this study is psychological hope. Drawing upon the seminal work of Snyder et al. (1996, 2000) and the scale devised by Fred Luthans and his collaborators, hope comprises two dimensions: willpower (agency) and waypower (pathways). Willpower, or agency thinking, pertains to individuals' perceived capability to pursue goals despite encountering obstacles, manifested in affirmations such as "I can overcome this" and "I won't be deterred." Conversely, way power, or pathway thinking, reflects individuals' perceived ability to devise feasible routes towards goals, articulated through statements like "I can figure out a solution." The measurement of this variable employed the Adult Hope Scale (AHS) by Snyder, wherein respondents indicated their hope levels via the State Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1996), with slight modifications tailored to the work context. For instance, the item "If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of many ways to get out of it" was adjusted to "If I should find myself in a work-related jam, I could think of many ways to resolve it." While the chosen scales have undergone rigorous psychometric validation across diverse samples in prior research and have been utilised in workplace investigations either independently or in tandem (e.g., Jensen and Luthans, 2006; Larson and Luthans, 2006; Luthans et al., 2005; Peterson and Luthans, 2003; Youssef and Luthans, in press), adjustments were made to align with the objectives of this study. Notably, the selected hope scale of Snyder et al. (1996) fulfils the criterion of representing "state "hope," as explicitly delineated and supported in prior research.

There are eight (8) items assessing the concept of hope (see appendix). The agency (willpower) subscale score is calculated by summing items 2, 9, 10, and 12; the pathway (way power) subscale score is calculated by summing items 1, 4, 6, and 8, while the remaining items are dummies. The total Hope Scale score is computed by summing the four agency items and the four pathway items. These hope dimensions were evaluated using a 5-point Likert-type scale, with response options ranging from 1–5, where 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = not sure or neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree. It is important to note that while administering the scale, it is referred to as the Future Scale. Nonetheless, adjustments were made to this instrument to align with the objectives of this study and the specific environmental circumstances in Nigeria.

Conversely, the dependent variable in this study is organisational commitment, comprising the three components: affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuity commitment. These were assessed using an 18-item scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) and the scale by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993). Responses to these questions were also rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = not sure or neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

Data Analysis Techniques:

For the empirical examination of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, along with their respective components, we utilised the Multiple Regression Model and the Spearman Rank Statistical Techniques, employing the Statistical Package for Social

Sciences (SPSS). The multiple regression model was deemed suitable for our analysis given that all variables in this study are measured on an ordinal scale. Similarly, the selection of Spearman’s rho was based on its compatibility with the type or level of data collected.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The significance of data cannot be fully understood until subjected to statistical analysis. Thus, our hypotheses will undergo rigorous statistical testing based on the collected data. This analysis aimed to explore the correlation between employees' levels of hope and their commitment to the organisation. The results indicated a positive and significant association between employees' hope levels and various aspects of organisational commitment.

Table 1: Correlations Analysis showing the Relationship between Hope and Affective Commitment

Correlations				
			Hope	Affective Commitment
Spearman's rho	Hope	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.866**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Affective Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.866**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

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

As shown in Table 1, employees’ state of hope was revealed to be positively and significantly related to employees’ affective commitment to the organisation (Rho=0.866, p< 0.01).

Table 2: Correlations Analysis showing the Relationship between Psychological Hope and Normative Commitment

Correlations				
			Hope	Normative Commitment
Spearman's rho	Hope	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.803**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Normative Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.803**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

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

As shown in Table 2, employees’ state of hope is positively and significantly related to normative commitment (Rho=0.803, p< 0.01),

Table 3: Correlations Analysis showing the Relationship between Hope and Continual Commitment

Correlations				
			Hope	Continuance Commitment
Spearman's rho	Hope	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.774**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Continuance Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.774**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

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

As shown in Table 3 employees’ state of hope is positively and significantly related to continuance commitment (Rho=0.774, p< 0.01).

The specific relationship between the dimensions of psychological hope (will power or agency and way power or pathway) and the measures of organisational commitment (affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment) were also examined.

Hypothesis One

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the employees’ willpower (or agency thinking) and their affective commitment to the organization in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Table 4: Correlations Analysis showing the Relationship between Will Power (Agency) and Affective Commitment

Correlations				
Type	Variables1	Statistics	Willpower (Agency)	Affective Commitment
Spearman's rho	Willpower (Agency)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.825**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Affective Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.825**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

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

As shown in Table 4, the finding revealed a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between employees’ willpower (or agency thinking) and their affective commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry (Rho=0.825, p< 0.01). Ho1 is not supported. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate form. Based on this finding, the study concludes that employees’ willpower (or agency thinking)

plays a significant role in enhancing their affective commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the employees’ willpower (or agency thinking) and their normative commitment to the organization in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Table 5: Correlations Analysis showing the Relationship between Will Power (Agency) and Normative Commitment

Correlations				
Type	Variables1	Statistics	Willpower (Agency)	Normative Commitment
Spearman's rho	Willpower (Agency)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.780**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Normative Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.780**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

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

As shown in Table 5, the finding revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between employees’ willpower (or agency thinking) and their normative commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry (Rho=0.780, p< 0.01). H₀₂ is not supported. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate form. Based on this finding, the study concludes that employees’ willpower (or agency thinking) plays a significant role in enhancing their normative commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the employees’ willpower (or agency thinking) and their continuance commitment to the organization in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Table 6: Correlations Analysis showing the Relationship between Will Power (Agency) and Continuance Commitment

Correlations				
Type	Variables1	Statistics	Willpower (Agency)	Continuance Commitment
Spearman's rho	Willpower (Agency)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.760**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Continuance Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.760**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

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

Similarly, as shown in Table 6, the finding revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between employees' willpower (or agency thinking) and their continuance commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry ($Rho=0.760$, $p<0.01$). H_{o3} is not supported. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate form. Based on this finding, the study concludes that employees' willpower (or agency thinking) plays a significant role in enhancing their continuance commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Hypothesis Four

H_{o4}: There is no significant relationship between the employees' way power (pathways thinking) and their affective commitment to the organization in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Table 7: Correlations Analysis showing the Relationship between Way Power (Pathways) and Affective Commitment

Correlations				
Type	Variables1	Statistics	Way Power (Pathways)	Affective Commitment
Spearman's rho	Way Power (Pathways)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.880**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Affective Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.880**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

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

As shown in Table 7, the finding revealed a very strong positive and statistically significant relationship between employees' way power (pathways thinking) and their affective commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry ($Rho=0.880$, $p<0.01$). H_{o4} is not supported. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate form. Based on this finding, the study concludes that employees' way power (or pathways thinking) plays a significant role in enhancing their affective commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Hypothesis Five

H_{o5}: There is no significant relationship between the employees' way power (pathways thinking) and their normative commitment to the organization in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Table 8: Correlations Analysis showing the Relationship between Way Power (Pathways) and Normative Commitment

Correlations				
Type	Variables1	Statistics	Way Power (Pathways)	Normative Commitment
Spearman's rho	Way Power (Pathways)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.770**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Normative Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.770**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

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

As shown in Table 8, the finding revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship was also revealed between employees' way power (pathways thinking) and their normative commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry (Rho=0.770, $p < 0.01$). H_{05} is not supported. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate form. Based on this finding, the study concludes that employees' way power (or pathways thinking) plays a significant role in enhancing their normative commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Hypothesis Six

H₀₆: There is no significant relationship between the employees' way power (pathways thinking) and their continuance commitment to the organization in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

Table 9: Correlations Analysis showing the Relationship between Way Power (Pathways Thinking) and Continuance Commitment

Correlations				
Type	Variables1	Statistics	Way Power (Pathways)	Continuance Commitment
Spearman's rho	Way Power (Pathways)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.776**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	280	280
	Continuance Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.776**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	280	280

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

Similarly, as shown in Table 9, the finding revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between employees' way power (or pathways thinking) and their continuance commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry (Rho=0.776, $p < 0.01$). H_{06} is not supported. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate form. Based on this finding, the study concludes that employees' way power (or pathways

thinking) plays a significant role in enhancing their continuance commitment to the organisation in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Every organisation endeavours to enhance its employees' commitment, recognising its positive correlation with various personal and work-related outcomes. These outcomes include performance, low turnover, absenteeism, burnout, high productivity, organisational citizenship behaviour, customer satisfaction, and increased employee satisfaction (Wegge et al., 2007; Meyer and Becker, 2004; Saari and Judge, 2004; Judge et al., 2001). It is against this backdrop that this study sought to explore the interconnection between psychological hope and organisational commitment.

The findings revealed a significant and positive relationship between employees' psychological hope and organisational commitment within major oil and gas companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Specifically, both willpower (agency thinking) and way power (pathways thinking) demonstrated a notable and statistically significant impact on employees' affective, normative, and continuance commitment within the Nigerian oil and gas sector. Consequently, the study concludes that employees' psychological hope significantly contributes to enhancing organisational commitment in this industry. Specifically, it underscores the pivotal roles of willpower (agency thinking) and way power (pathways thinking) in fostering affective, normative, and continuance commitment among employees. These findings suggest that employees' hope states positively influence their commitment to the organisation. Given the empirical evidence linking higher levels of psychological capital, such as hope, to the stimulation of positive emotions and the mitigation of negative ones, it was anticipated that this relationship would extend to organisational commitment in the Nigerian context, especially within the oil and gas industry.

This observation can be elucidated by the premise that when employees maintain a belief in the possibility of favourable future circumstances (psychological hope), several consequential factors unfold. Firstly, they tend to form a stronger emotional connection with the organisation, fostering feelings of attachment, identification, involvement, and enjoyment in being part of the organisation (affective commitment). Secondly, they demonstrate a propensity to adhere to consistent courses of action, driven by their recognition of the potential costs associated with discontinuing such activities (Becker, 1960; Farrel and Rusbult, 1981; Becker, 1960) (continuance commitment). These costs may encompass the investments made by employees in the organisation, such as close relationships with colleagues, pension benefits, seniority, career advancements, and specialised skills acquired over time. Fear of forfeiting these investments upon leaving the organisation reinforces continuance commitment, as individuals perceive a loss of sunk costs and feel compelled to remain. An employee exhibiting continuance commitment remains with the organisation out of necessity or to avoid the perceived costs of departure. Thirdly, employees are inclined to develop a sense of moral obligation to remain with the organisation, either due to internalised organisational values and goals or owing to the significant resources invested by the organisation in their training and development. Consequently, employees may feel indebted to the organisation and

obliged to stay as a form of reciprocation or to fulfil perceived obligations (normative commitment).

In light of the literature on organisational commitment, it is evident that employee perception serves as the bedrock of employee motivation, ultimately fostering higher levels of organisational commitment. Positive employee perceptions serve as precursors to enhanced employee motivation, thereby contributing to increased organisational commitment. Given that psychological hope is a pivotal determinant of positive employee perceptions, it is unsurprising that psychological hope emerges as a significant influencer of organisational commitment, as demonstrated in this study.

This discovery holds significant ramifications for Nigerian managers. Firstly, it suggests that one sustainable avenue to bolster both employee and organisational competitive advantages is to invest in, manage, and foster the psychological capital of hope among employees. Secondly, organisations can substantially cultivate a positive organisational culture to nurture the development of psychological capital and hope within their ranks. This, in turn, is poised to fortify employees' commitment to the organisation and subsequently enhance the bottom line. Thirdly, given the demonstrated positive influence of hope on various personal and organisational outcomes, such as creativity, it is imperative for organisations to prioritise the cultivation of employees' psychological capital of hope to fully leverage its benefits for both individuals and the organisation itself.

Similar to human and social capital, organisations have the capacity to invest in and manage the psychological hope of their workforce. Unlike conventional financial capital and tangible assets, this endeavour entails relatively minimal monetary expenditure. Luthans and Youssef (2004) advocate for the malleability of psychological capital dimensions, emphasising their 'state-like' nature as opposed to fixed traits. Consequently, organisations can strategically plan and allocate resources to develop psychological capital within their organisational framework. Given the dynamic and adaptable nature of the positive psychological capacity of hope, it can be cultivated and managed through deliberate planning.

Extensive evidence supports the notion that hope, defined by its willpower (agency) and way-power (pathways), can indeed be nurtured in both employees and organisations. Building upon earlier research by Snyder (2000) and Luthans and Jensen (2002), specific guidelines have been identified for fostering hope in employees and organisations:

- Firstly, managers within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry should initiate efforts to establish and elucidate organisational and employees' objectives that are specific, challenging, and quantifiable. Managers can enhance goal specificity by delineating expected percentages, target deadlines, and numerical targets for employee accomplishments. Additionally, they should consider formulating demanding yet attainable stretch goals to instigate a challenging yet feasible process. However, it's noteworthy that when an individual's initial hope level is markedly low, commencing with easily achievable and relatively straightforward goals might be preferable to instil some degree of hope before progressing to more ambitious objectives.
- Secondly, managers within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry should devise at least one alternative or contingency route for each established goal, accompanied by a corresponding action strategy. It is imperative to invest as much thought and effort into crafting pathways and action blueprints as was allocated to setting the goals themselves.

- Thirdly, managers within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry ought to employ what Snyder et al. (1991; 2000) referred to as a "stepping method" to deconstruct these goals into manageable sub-steps, which would denote employees' advancement and generate tangible experiences of modest accomplishments and triumphs.
- Fourthly, managers within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry should be primed and resolute in confronting obstacles and challenges with persistence and determination. Formulating pathways can aid in framing the acknowledgment that obstacles may arise and subsequently foster persistence and resolve when problems surface.
- Fifthly, managers within the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry should possess the readiness and adeptness to discern which alternative pathways to select (and when to make such decisions) when the original path to goal attainment becomes impractical or unproductive. Engaging in "what if" scenarios and scenario planning exercises can facilitate the development of such decision-making skills.
- Sixthly, managers should recognise the satisfaction derived from the process of striving towards goals, emphasising the journey rather than solely fixating on the ultimate achievement.
- Finally, managers should be equipped and proficient in recognising when and how to execute what Snyder (2000) and Luthans and Jensen (2002) termed "re-goals" to evade the pitfall of false hope. This entails acknowledging when persistence towards a goal is unfeasible, regardless of the chosen pathway(s). If the original goal becomes obstructed, managers must discern when and how to adjust or revise it. Practice sessions and experiential training can fortify this insight and skill in redefining goals (Snyder, 2000; Luthans and Jensen, 2002).

As human capital emerges as the pivotal factor for organisations seeking a competitive edge, it becomes imperative to enhance and elevate positive psychological capital, particularly psychological hope. The practical strategies delineated herein demonstrate how the psychological capital of hope among employees can be cultivated and overseen to influence the desired levels of organisational commitment. By transcending conventional human and social capital paradigms and embracing positive psychological capital, organisations can fully harness the significance of the human element to address the substantial challenges confronting them both presently and in the future.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

One notable limitation of this study lies in the mutual positivity of both organisational commitment (and its facets) and the psychological capital of hope (along with its metrics), suggesting a high likelihood of mutual influence. However, potential moderating variables, as underscored by Luthans et al. (2008), warrant consideration in future research endeavours to comprehensively explain the relationship between these constructs.

Another constraint inherent in quasi-experimental studies, such as this one, pertains to the inherent subjectivity associated with the utilisation of primary data, which may render the inferences and conclusions susceptible to scepticism. While opinions inherently reflect individual states and necessitate deductions, the authors have sought to mitigate this issue by ensuring the reliability and validity of the instruments employed, as expounded in the research methodology section, and by diligently ensuring the appropriate individuals complete the

survey instrument. Consequently, it is believed that the conclusions drawn in this study possess sufficient reliability and validity to explicate the relationship between employees' psychological hope and organisational commitment within the Nigerian Oil and Gas sector. Despite these limitations, the findings of this study mark an initial stride towards delineating how individual variations in psychological hope manifest in their organisational commitment levels. Having demonstrated the pivotal role of psychological hope as a determinant of employees' commitment to the organisation, it becomes imperative to explore the potential contributions of other facets of positive psychological capital, such as confidence, optimism, and resilience, to organisational commitment within the Nigerian context. Hence, further examination of the impact of psychological confidence, optimism, and resilience on organisational commitment in the Nigerian milieu is warranted.

APEPENDIX

THE HOPE SCALE						
<i>Directions:</i> Read each item carefully. Using the scale shown below, please select the number that best describes YOU and put that number in the blank provided.						
S/No	Items	Strongly disagree =1	Disagree =2	Not Sure =3	Agree =4	Strongly Agree =5
1.	If I should find myself in a jam at work, I could think of many ways to get out of it.					
2.	At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my work goals.					
3.	I feel tired most of the time.					
4.	There are lots of ways around any problem that I am facing now at work.					
5	I am easily downed in an argument.					
6	I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are important to me.					
7	I worry about my health.					
8	Even when others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem.					
9	My past experiences have prepared me well for my future.					
10	Right now I see myself as being pretty successful at work and in life.					
11	I usually find myself worrying about something.					
12	At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself.					

Source: Snyder et al., (1996)

ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE						
S/N	Items	Strongly Disagree =1	Disagree =2	Neutral/ Not Sure =3	Agree =4	Strongly Agree=1
Affective Commitment						
1.	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.					
2.	I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it.					
3.	I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.					
4.	I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this organization.					
5.	I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization.					
6.	I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization.					
Continuance Commitment						
1.	I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another lined up.					
2.	It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.					
3.	Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.					
4.	It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization now					
5.	Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desired.					
6.	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.					
Normative Commitment						
1.	I think that people these days move from company to company too often.					
2.	I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization.					
3.	Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me.					
4.	One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that I believe that loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation.					
5.	If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my organization.					
6.	I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one's organization					

Source: Allen and Myer, (1990); Meyer, Allen and Smith, (1993)

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