



Effect of Employee Commitment on Organisational Performance: Evidence from MTN Service Office in Damaturu, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of affective, continuance, normative, and behavioural commitment on organisational performance at MTN Nigeria's Damaturu Head Office. Drawing on Meyer and Allen's three-component model, extended to include behavioural commitment, and grounded in Psychological Contract Theory, the research employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. Data were obtained from 216 employees selected via stratified random sampling, using validated instruments with high reliability. Multiple regression analysis indicated that all four commitment types significantly and positively predicted organisational performance, collectively explaining 63% of its variance. Affective commitment emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by continuance, behavioural, and normative commitment. The findings highlight the primacy of emotional attachment in driving performance outcomes, while also demonstrating the strategic value of sustained discretionary effort in resource-constrained contexts. The study advances commitment-performance scholarship by validating behavioural commitment as a distinct construct within a Sub-Saharan African telecommunications setting and offers practical insights for enhancing organisational resilience through targeted commitment-building strategies.

Keywords: Employee commitment, Organisational performance, Affective commitment, Continuance commitment, Normative commitment, Behavioural commitment, MTN Nigeria.

Article Information:

Received: 16 October 2024
Revised: 18 December 2024
Accepted: 28 December 2024
Published: 2024

Vol. 14, No. 1, 2024

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Introduction

Organisational performance, commonly defined as the extent to which an organisation achieves its strategic objectives through efficient resource utilisation, is increasingly recognised as a function of employee engagement and commitment, particularly in competitive and dynamic markets (Klein *et al.*, 2012). In emerging economies such as Nigeria, the drivers of organisational performance are shaped by complex structural and macroeconomic challenges, including high inflation, infrastructure deficits, and volatile market conditions. For instance, Nigeria's inflation rate reached 25.8% in August 2023, eroding corporate profitability and constraining long-term strategic investment (NBS, 2023). Within the telecommunications sector, these conditions are compounded by erratic electricity supply—averaging 30 outages per month—which increases operational costs and disrupts service delivery (World Bank, 2023). Against this backdrop, the commitment of employees emerges not merely as a human resource concern, but as a critical strategic asset capable of sustaining operational stability and service quality.

MTN Nigeria, the largest telecommunications provider in the country, exemplifies both the opportunities and challenges of performance management in such a context. The Damaturu Head Office, a strategic administrative hub in the Yobe State region, records an estimated 15% annual employee turnover, a figure that raises concerns regarding retention, morale, and service continuity. Employee turnover of this magnitude has been linked in prior research to declines in productivity, customer satisfaction, and organisational reputation (Jaramillo

et al., 2005). While extensive international literature has examined the relationship between employee commitment and organisational performance (Meyer *et al.*, 2002), empirical studies within Nigerian telecommunications remain scarce and often neglect potentially significant constructs such as *behavioural commitment*—defined here as the sustained discretionary effort that extends beyond formal job descriptions.

This study addresses this gap by examining the effects of four dimensions of commitment—*affective*, *continuance*, *normative*, and *behavioural*—on organisational performance at MTN Nigeria, Damaturu. The research integrates Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model (TCM) with psychological contract theory (Rousseau, 1995) to capture both the attitudinal and behavioural aspects of commitment. The methodological approach is rigorous: a descriptive survey design with stratified random sampling was used to ensure departmental representation, and psychometric validation confirmed the reliability of the measures employed. By employing robust statistical techniques, including multiple regression analysis, the study not only tests the differential effects of each commitment type but also evaluates their combined explanatory power for organisational performance outcomes.

The novelty of this research lies in its theoretical extension of the TCM to include behavioural commitment as a distinct predictor, its empirical application within an underexplored sub-Saharan African telecommunications context, and its potential to inform targeted managerial interventions. The findings are expected to advance scholarly understanding of commitment-performance dynamics while providing actionable insights for



practitioners seeking to strengthen organisational resilience in resource-constrained environments.

Literature Overview

Employee commitment has been consistently linked to a range of desirable organisational outcomes, including improved performance, reduced turnover, and enhanced organisational citizenship behaviour. As a psychological bond between employees and their organisations, commitment shapes not only whether employees remain but also the quality and intensity of their contributions (Meyer *et al.*, 2002). Figure 1 illustrates a framework for employee commitment, categorising it into four types: affective commitment (emotional attachment), continuance commitment (cost-benefit analysis), normative commitment (moral obligation), and behavioural commitment (sustained engagement). This framework is used to study how these different forms of commitment among employees at MTN Nigeria, Damaturu, impact the company’s performance. The research aims to provide empirical evidence linking employee commitment to business performance.

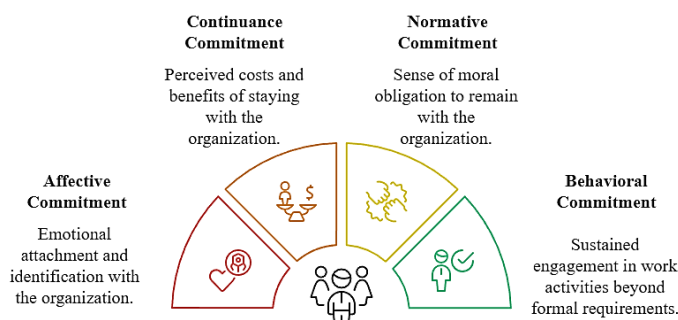


Figure 1. Employee Commitment Framework

The Three-Component Model (TCM) of Organisational Commitment

The Three-Component Model (TCM) proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) remains a cornerstone in commitment research, distinguishing between affective, continuance, and normative commitment. *Affective commitment* refers to an employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation; employees high in this dimension tend to engage in discretionary behaviours that support organisational objectives (Meyer *et al.*, 2002). *Continuance commitment* is based on the perceived costs of leaving the organisation, such as loss of benefits, career disruption, or scarcity of alternatives, and often functions as a retention mechanism without necessarily enhancing performance (Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2019). *Normative commitment* reflects a felt obligation to remain, arising from internalised norms, reciprocity expectations, or investments made by the organisation in employee development (Donkor, 2022).

Empirical evidence suggests that the relative effects of these commitment forms on performance vary across cultural and industrial contexts. In Western economies, affective commitment is consistently the strongest predictor of positive work behaviours, while continuance commitment often yields weaker or even negative associations with discretionary effort (Klein *et al.*, 2012). In emerging economies, however, high unemployment and job scarcity may enhance the stabilising effect of continuance commitment, even if it does not directly improve performance (Meyer *et al.*, 2002).

Extending the TCM: Behavioural Commitment

While the TCM focuses primarily on attitudinal bonds, recent scholarship highlights the importance of incorporating behavioural manifestations of commitment. Behavioural

commitment, as conceptualised in this study, refers to the sustained discretionary effort employees invest beyond their formal job requirements. This construct is conceptually related to organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) but is distinguished by its enduring, self-regulated nature and its grounding in long-term alignment with organisational goals (Organ *et al.*, 2006). Behavioural commitment is especially relevant in resource-constrained environments, where organisational resilience often depends on employees’ willingness to assume extra responsibilities, adapt to operational disruptions, and maintain service quality without direct supervision.

Evidence from service-intensive industries suggests that behavioural commitment can be a decisive driver of customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and innovation (Jaramillo *et al.*, 2005). In volatile contexts such as Nigeria’s telecommunications sector—characterised by infrastructural instability, regulatory pressures, and rapid technological change—behavioural commitment may translate affective and normative attachment into concrete, performance-enhancing actions.

Psychological Contract Theory and Commitment Formation

The Psychological Contract Theory (Rousseau, 1995) complements the TCM by framing commitment as the product of reciprocal obligations between employer and employee. Psychological contracts—encompassing both transactional elements (e.g., competitive remuneration, job security) and relational elements (e.g., recognition, career development)—set the expectations that shape attitudinal and behavioural responses. Fulfilment of these perceived obligations strengthens affective and normative commitment, while breaches undermine trust, reduce discretionary effort, and may even prompt turnover.

In the African context, where employees may place high value on stability, interpersonal trust, and career progression, the psychological contract plays a particularly salient role. Breaches in these implicit agreements—such as failure to deliver promised training opportunities—may erode not only emotional attachment but also employees’ willingness to invest extra-role effort, thereby weakening behavioural commitment.

Empirical Gaps and Study Rationale

While the TCM is extensively validated in Western and Asian contexts, the integration of behavioural commitment as a distinct dimension remains underexplored, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, Nigerian telecommunications research tends to emphasise turnover intentions and job satisfaction without examining how multiple commitment forms jointly influence organisational performance. By situating behavioural commitment within the TCM and linking it to psychological contract fulfilment, this study aims to address these empirical and theoretical gaps.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of affective, continuance, normative, and behavioural commitment on organisational performance at MTN Nigeria’s Damaturu Head Office. The methodological approach was selected to enable the systematic measurement of latent constructs, rigorous statistical testing of hypotheses, and generalisation of findings to the broader organisational population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Design and Justification

The descriptive survey design was chosen for its suitability in capturing perceptions and attitudes from a defined population



within a single time frame. This design allows for the quantification of relationships between variables and facilitates hypothesis testing using established statistical models. The focus on a single organisation—MTN Nigeria—was motivated by the need to examine commitment–performance dynamics within a controlled organisational and cultural context while retaining external validity for similar telecommunications environments.

Population and Sampling Strategy

The target population consisted of all 368 employees at MTN Nigeria’s Damaturu Head Office, distributed across seven functional departments: Customer Service, Sales and Marketing, Operations, Human Resources, IT and Technical Support, Finance, and Legal/Support. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation of each department in the sample, thereby enhancing the representativeness of results (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The sample size was determined using Yamane’s (1967) formula at a 5% margin of error, resulting in a sample of 250 employees. The proportional allocation method was applied to assign the number of participants per department, with the final selection made through a simple random sampling procedure within each stratum.

Research Instrument

Data for the study were gathered using a structured, self-administered questionnaire comprising three sections: demographic information (e.g., gender, age, education, department, and years of service); employee commitment measures covering affective, continuance, normative, and behavioural commitment, adapted from validated scales in prior studies (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Organ *et al.*, 2006); and organisational performance indicators addressing individual, team, and organisational-level outcomes, adapted from established performance measurement frameworks (Richard *et al.*, 2009). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 5 = *Strongly agree*.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert review by two academics specialising in organisational behaviour and one senior HR practitioner from the telecommunications industry. A pilot test involving 25 employees (excluded from the main study) confirmed clarity of items and instrument structure. Construct validity was assessed through factor analysis, yielding factor loadings above the recommended 0.50 threshold. Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha, with coefficients as follows: affective commitment (0.87), continuance commitment (0.85), normative commitment (0.82), behavioural commitment (0.88), and organisational performance (0.86). These values exceed the 0.70 benchmark suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), indicating high reliability.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from MTN Nigeria’s Human Resources Department. Questionnaires were distributed both physically and electronically to accommodate respondents’ accessibility preferences. Participants were given a two-week completion window, with follow-up reminders sent to maximise response rates. Of the 250 questionnaires administered, 216 were returned fully completed, representing an 86.4% response rate. This high rate strengthens the statistical power of the analysis and reduces the likelihood of non-response bias.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analysed using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and

percentages) were computed to summarise demographic variables and key study constructs. Inferential analysis employed multiple regression modelling to assess the simultaneous effects of the four commitment dimensions on organisational performance, controlling for relevant demographic variables. The model’s explanatory power was evaluated using R² and adjusted R² values, while the F-statistic tested overall model significance. Individual predictor significance was assessed using standardised beta coefficients and associated *p*-values, with the significance threshold set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Results

Demographic Statistics

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 216 survey participants from MTN Nigeria’s Damaturu Head Office. The gender distribution indicates 57.4% male and 42.6% female respondents, reflecting a reasonably balanced workforce that allows for the consideration of gender-related perspectives in employee commitment and performance. The age distribution shows that 43.5% of respondents fall within the 26–35 years range, followed by 29.2% in the 36–45 years category, suggesting a predominantly young to mid-career workforce. Educational qualifications are notably high, with 47.7% holding a bachelor’s degree and 32.9% possessing a master’s or professional qualification, indicating a skilled and knowledge-driven employee base. Regarding tenure, 40.3% have served between 5–10 years, while 32.9% have more than 10 years of service, pointing to a stable core of experienced employees. Departmental representation was diverse, with the largest proportion from Customer Service (28.2%) and Sales/Marketing (23.6%), followed by Finance (19.4%), Human Resources (16.7%), and Technical/Operations (12.0%).

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Survey Participants

Variable	Categories	Freq.	%
Gender	Male	124	57.4
	Female	92	42.6
Age Group	18-25	32	14.8
	26-35	94	43.5
	36-45	63	29.2
	46 and above	27	12.5
Educational Qualification	Diploma/OND	42	19.4
	Bachelor’s Degree	103	47.7
	Master’s Degree/Professional	71	32.9
Years of Service	Less than 5 years	58	26.9
	5-10 years	87	40.3
	More than 10 years	71	32.9
Department	Customer Service	61	28.2
	Finance	42	19.4
	Human Resources	36	16.7
	Sales/Marketing	51	23.6
	Technical/Operations	26	12.0

These demographic patterns have several implications for the study’s findings and for MTN Nigeria’s management strategies. The balanced gender composition enables organisational policies to address commitment drivers without disproportionately favouring one gender. The relatively youthful workforce, combined with high educational attainment, provides an opportunity to leverage innovation, adaptability, and digital competence—critical factors in the fast-paced telecommu-



nications sector. The substantial representation of employees with long tenure suggests a strong potential for normative and continuance commitment, which could be strategically reinforced through career development and recognition programmes. Departmental diversity in the sample ensures that the analysis captures variations in commitment levels across functions, allowing for targeted interventions that address the unique engagement needs of different operational units.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis showed that affective commitment recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.50, SD = 1.00$), followed closely by behavioural commitment ($M = 4.40, SD = 1.10$), while continuance commitment ($M = 3.50, SD = 0.70$) and normative commitment ($M = 3.50, SD = 0.90$) were moderate; organisational performance was rated positively ($M = 3.90, SD = 0.70$). The prominence of affective and behavioural commitment suggests that employees at MTN Nigeria, Damaturu, display strong emotional attachment to the organisation and a willingness to exceed formal job requirements—attributes known to enhance service quality, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction. Conversely, the moderate levels of continuance and normative commitment indicate that while employees recognise the costs of leaving and feel some obligation to stay, these drivers are less dominant compared to intrinsic motivation and discretionary effort. The favourable organisational performance rating is consistent with the high affective and behavioural scores, reinforcing the view that emotionally engaged and behaviourally proactive employees are key contributors to sustained organisational success.

Regression Analysis

The results of multiple regression analysis in Table 2 revealed that the overall model significantly predicted organisational performance, $R^2 = 0.63$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.62$, $F(4, 211) = 89.70$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that 63% of the variance in organisational performance was explained by the four forms of commitment. Among the predictors, affective commitment had the strongest positive effect ($\beta = 0.45, p = 0.001$), followed by continuance commitment ($\beta = 0.32, p = 0.012$) and normative commitment ($\beta = 0.25, p = 0.014$), both showing moderate positive effects. Behavioural commitment also demonstrated a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.28, p = 0.024$). These results suggest that while all four commitment types significantly contribute to organisational performance, affective commitment emerges as the most influential predictor, underscoring the centrality of employees’ emotional attachment in driving performance outcomes.

Table 2. Regression Analysis

Type	β	z	p	Interpretation
Affective	0.45	3.12	.001	Strongest positive effect
Continuance	0.32	2.53	.012	Moderate positive effect
Normative	0.25	2.10	.014	Moderate positive effect
Behavioural	0.28	2.40	.024	Significant positive effect

Discussion

The present study provides clear empirical evidence that employee commitment exerts a positive and significant influence on organisational performance in MTN Nigeria’s Damaturu Head Office, with affective commitment emerging as the most impactful predictor. This finding underscores the centrality of employees’ emotional attachment—manifested through identification with organisational values and goals—in driving service quality, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction.

Behavioural commitment also demonstrated a robust and statistically significant effect, reinforcing its relevance as a distinct and actionable construct. In practical terms, the willingness of employees to contribute discretionary effort beyond formal job requirements represents a critical lever for enhancing organisational resilience and competitiveness in service-intensive sectors.

These results align with the foundational propositions of organisational behaviour theory and human resource management literature, which consistently link high affective commitment to superior performance outcomes (Meyer *et al.*, 2002). The findings also echo Organ *et al.*’s (2006) conceptualisation of discretionary effort, which frames extra-role behaviours as essential to organisational success. Notably, continuance and normative commitment produced moderate yet significant effects, corroborating prior empirical work by Vandenberghe *et al.* (2019) and Suliman and Iles (2020), which identifies these forms as stabilising mechanisms that reduce turnover and maintain workforce continuity, albeit with a more limited direct impact on performance metrics.

The study’s contribution is particularly salient in its context: evidence from the telecommunications sector in a developing region—Damaturu, Nigeria—adds nuance to a literature base dominated by Western-centric studies. The economic and cultural environment of Damaturu, characterised by constrained labour mobility, limited alternative employment opportunities, and strong community ties, may amplify the retention effects of continuance and normative commitment. However, the relatively weaker performance link for continuance commitment could stem from its transactional nature; employees who remain primarily due to perceived costs of leaving may be less intrinsically motivated to engage in high-performance behaviours (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Conversely, the predominance of affective commitment in predicting performance may reflect the service-oriented nature of the telecommunications industry, where customer-facing roles reward and reinforce emotional engagement with organisational goals.

The identification of behavioural commitment as a separate predictor offers a valuable extension to traditional commitment models. In volatile operational environments such as Nigeria’s, discretionary behaviours—such as assuming additional duties during service disruptions or proactively resolving customer complaints—can directly buffer the organisation against performance volatility. This finding suggests that management interventions should not only nurture affective bonds but also create enabling conditions for sustained discretionary contributions, for example through empowerment, recognition systems, and participatory decision-making.

Conclusion

This study provides robust empirical evidence that employee commitment is a multidimensional construct exerting a substantial influence on organisational performance within the Nigerian telecommunications sector. The integration of behavioural commitment into the established Three-Component Model offers a more comprehensive framework for understanding the interplay between attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of commitment. The findings confirm that affective commitment—rooted in emotional attachment and identification with organisational goals—is the most potent driver of performance, while continuance and normative commitments contribute moderately to workforce stability and service continuity. Behavioural commitment, conceptualised as sustained discretionary effort, emerges as a distinct and meaningful predictor of organisational outcomes in resource-constrained environments. The study captures the organisational realities of MTN Nigeria’s Damaturu Head Office characterised by infrastructural instability, high operational



costs, and limited labour mobility. The results thus provide both theoretical advancement and practical guidance for enhancing organisational resilience in similar environments.

Recommendations

Drawing on the study's findings, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. *Foster Affective Commitment* – Management should strengthen employees' emotional attachment by promoting shared values, transparent communication, and participatory decision-making processes. Initiatives such as team-building activities, recognition programmes, and value-based leadership can reinforce affective bonds.
2. *Encourage Behavioural Commitment* – Opportunities should be created for employees to demonstrate sustained discretionary effort, for example through empowerment, flexible role boundaries, and reward systems that recognise extra-role behaviours.
3. *Leverage Continuance and Normative Commitment Strategically* – While these forms of commitment are less strongly linked to performance, they play an important role in retention. Competitive benefits, career progression pathways, and clear reciprocity norms should be maintained to preserve workforce stability.
4. *Integrate Psychological Contract Management* – Explicitly managing and fulfilling both transactional and relational aspects of the psychological contract can prevent breaches that undermine trust and discretionary effort.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences between commitment dimensions and performance outcomes. Longitudinal designs could capture changes in commitment over time. Second, the study's focus on a single organisational site—MTN Nigeria's Damaturu Head Office—limits the generalisability of findings to other regions, sectors, or organisational types. Third, reliance on self-reported data may introduce common method variance or social desirability bias, despite assurances of confidentiality. Finally, while behavioural commitment was operationalised as a distinct construct, further refinement of its measurement may enhance its validity across diverse contexts.

Suggestions for Further Research

Future research could address these limitations by adopting longitudinal or mixed-method designs to explore the causal mechanisms linking commitment forms to performance. Comparative studies across different sectors and cultural contexts would test the generalisability of behavioural commitment as a predictor of organisational outcomes. Additionally, experimental or intervention-based research could

evaluate the effectiveness of specific managerial strategies in enhancing affective and behavioural commitment. Investigating the role of contextual variables—such as leadership style, organisational culture, and technological change—may also deepen understanding of how commitment translates into performance in dynamic environments.

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