DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AND EMPLOYEES COMMITMENT OF CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between disciplinary tools and employees commitment of construction firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Primary data was collated through self-administered, structured questionnaire. The population was 300 (Three Hundred) employees of six registered construction firms in Rivers State from which a sample size of 171 was determined using Taro Yamene sample size determination formula. The data were analyzed with the use of the simple percentages while the hypotheses were tested using the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study findings revealed that there is a negative and significant relationship between disciplinary tools and employee commitment of construction firms in Rivers State. Furthermore, specific findings revealed that all the dimension of disciplinary tools and employee commitment were all negatively correlated. The study thus concluded that disciplinary tools significantly influence employee commitment of construction firms in Rivers State. The study thus recommended that management of organization should endeavour to always provide warning before initiating disciplinary action on wanting employees. An offense should be stated in clear terms instead of reciting company's regulation.

Keywords: *Disciplinary tool, Verbal Reprimand, affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment and employee commitment*

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INTRODUCTION

Over the years, organizations have developed different mechanisms for providing employees with a formal opportunity to improve unacceptable performance. The first structured introduction of discipline into organizations was established in the United States of America in the 1930s in response to the trade unions' request eliminating summary terminations. It is in this place a progressive system of punishment was developed. It was envisaged that this process would provide a worker with protection against job loss (Huberman, 2009).

In Africa, there are very rare circumstances where an employee will agree to a reprimand where the employer's reasons are considered acceptable by the employee. In these situations, an employer is well advised to have the employee provide written confirmation of the acceptance of the action so that it will not later be used against the employer if the employee thereafter is terminated or changes his mind as to the appropriateness of the disciplinary action taken against him or her. Without the employee's consent or a properly documented performance deficiency trail, an employer can still discipline employees as it considers appropriate by providing appropriate notice of the action (Banda, 2004).

The human element in the organization is one very critical productive asset that needs special management. A rationally organized social structure involves clearly defined patterns of activity and discipline, which must be functionally related to the purpose of the organization. The social sciences are more fluid and human behaviour more difficult to explain and analyzed. Individuals are unpredictable, unique with distinct characters, attitudes, aspirations, objectives, perceptions, beliefs etc. Accurate and precise prediction of the mind or behaviour of an individual even to the nearest second is difficult (Nwinyokpugi, 2015).

Organizational leaders are familiar with the complexities that are innate in handling the social structure. Issues that likely arose from the inability to organize the social elements embrace conflicts, disorder and failure in goals achievements. Major disconnect that lack of order poses for organization can be imagined in a struggle between two opposing ideas. With this existence, conflicts between a manager and an employee are most likely a continuous encounter in the workplace. Ensuring a sound relationship between the management and employees depends upon how it is regulated by management. One of the conditions for maintaining such relationship is that employees should uphold a particular performance and behavioral standards. (Jegadeesan, 2008). Should the employees not comply with these standards, it is assumed that disciplinary measures are enforced to improve their performance and maintain the healthy relationship.

However, if the employees do not agree with the manner of implementing disciplinary actions, it can have an adverse effect on the rapport between management and the employees. Psychologists generally agree that people have different reasons for doing the things they do, or for behaving the way they do. This means in other words, that all human behaviour is designed to achieve certain goals and objectives. It is therefore, a deficiency of something within the individuals, which sparks chains of events leading the individual to engage in one kind of behaviour - good or bad, lawful or unlawful.

Clearly, if a rule is unenforceable, it is not worth having. Standards of conduct must be maintained but they must be realistic so as to contribute to the proper functioning of the workplace. Rules governing insubordination, theft, vandalism, gambling on company premises, drinking on the job and taking drugs at work, are all related to productivity and the general wellbeing of an organization, (Eni, 2000). It is believed that the most unpleasant role of an organizational leader is to institute a disciplinary

action to an erring employee (Franklin & Pagan, 2006). Although the goal is to modify the employees undesirable behaviors, their decisions are often subjected to opposing personal interpretations.

Discipline entails a process of learning. One of the positive contributions which discipline can make in our lives is that it brings about knowledge that is cumulative; knowledge that maintains and knowledge that restructures society when applied. And there cannot be an end to learning because society does not operate in a state of static equilibrium but in a state of generativity in terms of idea conception and development. Discipline is also a training process, but unlike training which is job oriented. The primary purpose of discipline is to teach responsibility rather than to evoke obedience. This means consistently helping employees to understand that life involves choices and consequences.

Discipline in the organization consists of setting clearly defined limits for employees. The vast majority of workers in crises often claim to not clearly understand organization's limit, because most of them come from places where discipline was not consistent. Employees discipline for undesirable behaviours only tells them what not to do. It does not tell them what behaviours are preferred. It is the purpose of this study of disciplinary process to preserve a healthy relationship between employees and managers for an organization to perform well. Both parties are expected to abide by the prevailing regulations. Disciplinary policies are in place to serve as a guide to an orderly conduct in the workplace in order to achieve the organizational goal (Gatchalian and Lumiqued, 2005). The situation in which the employee commits misbehavior may vary in the same way that the manager may also handle an individual situation in different ways that is commensurate to the situation. However, the method in which the manager executes the disciplinary action may produce various opinions from the employees.

Discipline and commitment of employees is essential to all organization to cope with any changes occurring in groups (Smith, 2006). Employees of any organization must reasonably conform to the codes of conduct or behavior established and administered by the organization and its managers so that order is maintained and common goals are accomplished (Smelterlzer, 2006). The culture of an organization is reflected in the discipline of its employees. In this case conduct and morale have bearing in employees feeling, Armstrong (2003). He emphasized that all employees are expected to be committed to their work and behave appropriately in the work place. He further noted that "disciplinary or collective action is a process of communicating with the employees so that they can be committed or be aware of their work". The employees have to know accurately what is expected from them and in this Case Job description and outline is expected to be discussed. The process must be objective so that employees will not perceive corrective procedures negatively.

Organization systems with high commitment and well-disciplined employees always experience larger output, financial routine, and efficiency than organization with low commitment or poor control systems (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Arthur 1994; Delaney 1996; Huselid 1996, MacDuffie, 1995; Ichniowski, 1997; Wood & de Menezes, 1998; Yond, 1996; Delery 1998). Discipline is the main factor to be measured in every human/ individual and in each aspect of life.

Employees' who go through disciplinary procedures are those that have not met required standards of the organization. It is important for organization to have disciplinary procedures since it help deal with undesirable behavior immediately it give room to the employees to defend themselves as to why they did misconduct or give a reason for poor performance since sometimes the organization may also be part of the problem, it help to solve various problem

affecting both the organization and employees (Wilton, 2011).

Most of the researches on the effects of disciplinary procedures on employees' performance have been done in the developed world. However to the best of the knowledge of the researcher, there is little empirical studies that deals how disciplinary action affects employee commitment in developing countries like Nigeria. This study sought to fill the existing research gap by conducting examining the relationship between o disciplinary actions and employee commitment of construction in Nigeria.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- To what extent does disciplinary tool influence affective commitment of construction firms in Rivers State?
- To what extent does disciplinary tool influence normative commitment of construction firms in Rivers State?
- To what extent does disciplinary tool influence continuance commitment of construction firms in Rivers State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Progressive Discipline Theory

This theory was advanced by Brent (2010) through his research on implementation of disciplinary policies in the UK firms. The term progressive discipline signifies an approach to modify undesirable employee behavior through the use of a range of disciplinary consequences that are applied depending upon the nature and history of the particular employees' misconduct. These disciplinary actions often include verbal warnings, formal probationary notices, suspensions without pay and Verbal Reprimands, Brent (2010). He further stated that most undesirable behavior does not result in immediate discharge, but rather in imposition of some lesser sanctions. If the behavior is repeated, progressively more severe

disciplinary action is taken, ultimately leading to termination.

Although progressive discipline as a practical matter is nearly universal, the manner in which employers communicate and apply progressive discipline varies greatly. At one end of the spectrum lays a very formal, written policy, in which exact sequences of progressive disciplinary action are mandatory for specific offenses or categories of offences (Bragon, 2009). Employers generally follow at least informal procedural guidelines in disciplining and terminating employees, which can in turn subject them to lawsuits for breach of implied contract, promissory estoppel and other claims. If carefully drafted, reviewed and implemented, progressive discipline policies can minimize employer's liability and improve employee performance. Employees who utilize progressive discipline may successfully correct a problem and enjoy many years of productivity from the employee (Brent, 2010).

Disciplinary Tools

According to Nwachukwu, (2010) Employee discipline can be defined as management action aimed at enforcing organizational standard on employees. Discipline suggests the hasher side of personnel management, it is an adverse action basically Verbal Reprimand. The purpose mainly is to correct a situation where the employee is incompetent and failed to do the right thing or has violated established rules and practice. Disciplinary actions are most times negative and they seem to contradict the principles of effective personnel management. Wheeler, (2006) on the other hand defines discipline as action taken by management against an individual or group who has failed to conform to the rules established by management within the organization.

Under many circumstances, subordinates perform more effectively with limited supervisory order and control. Lastly, the author is of the view that hierarchical form of organization structure will

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accelerate direction and information management effectively in large organizations. However, the bureaucracy should not be too tall otherwise desertion in communication will arise. Toni, (2009,) sees discipline as action taken by management against an individual or group who has failed to conform to the rules and regulations established by management within the organization Wheeler (2006). It is generally acknowledged that discipline is an essential ingredient to the success of every human endeavour; no wonder it is regarded as a sinequanon in an effective and efficient organization. According to Nwachukwu (2010), discipline is "inculcating the value of good behaviour in order to promote obedience to the organizations rules necessary for mutual existence and imposing just punishment on transgressors".

George (2006) defined Discipline as involving any action that attempts to generate compliance with the rules and regulations laid down by management. For the purpose of this study, Nwachukwu definition is most appropriate because it is all embracing. The maintenance of discipline within the organization is not achieved simply by a series of isolated occasions of formalized action by management, the formal disciplinary process is an important management strategy for regulating human behaviour within the organization, that is, the disciplinary process may be seen as a control strategy, the aim is to ensure that employees conform to the behavioural and performance standards determined by management as being necessary for the achievement of organizational objectives. According to Recardo, (2010) attitudes which can attract possible disciplines are, stealing, embezzlement of public and company property, truancy, insubordination, lateness, fighting, quarrelling etc.

Verbal Reprimand

An employee reprimand is an official notice to an employee verbally, that his or her performance is failing to meet expectations in one or more aspects of their job. The employee reprimand is provided following the failure of informal supervisory coaching to help the employee improve the required performance. Usually, the first step in a progressive disciplinary action reprimand is a verbal reprimand. If the employee fails to improve in the areas pointed out to them, the next step is a (more serious) written reprimand. This should escalate the disciplinary action to a new level of concern for the employee Atwater, Waldman, Carey & Cartier, 2001).

This is the initial step of progressive discipline. Whether "spur-of-the-moment" or "after-the-fact", the verbal reprimand is given in a private setting; and the discussion is conducted in a friendly, but firm, "low-key" manner. A verbal reprimand is generally used when a problem persists after the supervisor has brought it to the employee's attention through counseling. The purpose of this step is to alleviate any misunderstanding and to clarify the direction for necessary and successful correction of the problem (Atwater, Waldman, Carey & Cartier, 2001). Most performance problems are resolved at this stage. If the problem continues, the supervisor may want to repeat this step before proceeding to a written reprimand. The verbal reprimand is used to bring a problem to the attention of the employee before it becomes so serious that it jeopardizes the employment status of the employee.

Reasons for Giving Verbal Reprimand

A supervisor needs to give at least one employee a verbal warning at work at some point in time as a boss. It might be because of the employee's performance, for example; poor standards of work, such as too many mistakes, inability to cope with instructions given to them, Struggling to handle their workload, lack of effort or ambition and lack of skills or training for the work required.

Meeting with staff once a week to review their targets and their skills can help a supervisor stay up-to-date on their progress.

Or he might find that someone in his team is at fault for their conduct, for example; they might late for work a lot, they have misused IT, they are not co-operating with others in their team or they may be bullying.

Employee Commitment

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

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

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

According to Meyer & Allen (1997) employee commitment is multi-dimensional in nature, encompassing workers loyalty, their willingness to exert more effort on behalf of the organization, adherence to organizational values, and desire to remain in the organization.

Shahid & Azhar (2013) argued that employee commitment has been an important factor to determine the success of an organization and that employee commitment to an organization has acquired increasing demand as it aids the organization to retain more staff thereby increase in achievement, productivity and effectiveness. In addition, that the three top drivers to employee commitment are fulfilment, fairness and care and concern for employees. According to Beheshtifar & Herat (2013), employee commitment is also seen as the degree to which an employee identifies with the organization and wants to continue actively participating in it. Bratton & Gold (2007) and Lee & Chen (2013) said employee commitment is relative to the worker's attachment to participation in the activities of the organizations in which they are employed. Lee & Chen (2013) emphasized that employee commitment is significant since it determines whether employees are likely to leave their jobs or improve their performance.

For purpose of this research, we have anchored our view of commitment on the work of Meyer & Allen (1991) who proposed a three component model for organizational commitment that integrates a variety of alternative conceptualizations. The three dimensional construct are normative, affective and continuance commitments.

Measures of Employee Commitment

The following are the measures of workers commitment adopted in this study, they are: normative, affective and continuance commitment respectively (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

As pointed out in Meyer et at, (2002) argued that one of the most important reasons for distinguishing among the different forms of workers commitment was that they have very different implications for cultural behaviour. Although the three forms tend to bind workers to the organization, and therefore relate to turnover, their relations with other types of work behaviour can be different' (Meyer et al, 2002). These forms of commitments as identified by Meyer & Allen (1991) constitute the measures of employee commitment in this study.

Normative Commitment (NC)

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

Unarguably, Meyer & Maltin (2010) opined that latter observation regarding normative commitment is consistent with recent findings; demonstrating that normative commitment can have two faces, one reflecting a moral imperative and the other reflecting

indebted obligation (Geltatly, et at, 2006). Firstly, the moral imperative mindset is experienced when normative commitment combines with strong affective commitment. Secondly, the indebted obligation mindset results from a combination of strong normative commitment and continuance with weak affective commitment. Also, Lee & Chen (2013) asserted that normative commitment relates to obligation employee may feel they owe the organization for being given a job when they need it most. That in no small measure will increase or boost the employee level of commitment especially in a society where there is an army of unemployed people. And in another view, normative commitment is said to develop as a junction of cultural and organizational socialization and the receipt of benefits that activate a need to reciprocate (Scholl, 1981). Meyer & Allen (1996) stated that the normative approach is a less common approach to commitment. The internalized moral obligation is contributor behaviour and is therefore, prominent in the individuals terminating employment with the organization. But in this type of commitment the employee is expected to pledge unalloyed loyalty to the organization without opposing and criticizing the activities of the organization.

Affective Commitment (AC)

According to Meyer & Allen (1991) affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to identification with, and involvement in the organization based on positive feelings, or emotions, toward the organization.

The antecedent for affective commitment include perceived job characteristic where there is task autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety and supervisory feedback, organizational dependability that mean extent to which employees feel the organization can be counted on to look after their interest, and perceived participatory management that they can influence decisions on the work environment and other uses of concern to them

(Madi et al, 2012). They further asserted that the use of these antecedents is consistent with the findings by Rowden (2002) that these factors all create rewarding situations, intrinsically conducive to development of affective commitment.

Also, Meyer & Herscovitch (2001) argued that the primary basis for the development of affective commitment are personal involvement, identification with the relevant target, and value congruence (Meyer, *et' al*, 2004). As a result of the above view of Meyer & Herscovitch (2001), which states that when there is a high level of affective commitment, employees will be willing to remain in that organization, otherwise the reverse will be displayed. It has also been seen in the view of Bal, *et al*, (2014) that affective commitment reflects an emotional attachment and involvement in the organization. But earlier, Alien & Meyer (1991) defined affective component as an emotional attachment to the organization via identification, involvement and enjoyed membership. It has also been said that affective commitment shows commitment that depends on emotional ties the employee develops with the organization through work experiences that are positioned. The 'work experience relates to the boss-driven development as a dimension in management development.

Additionally, Meyer et al (2006) noted that commitment has both cognitive and affective elements. The cognitive elements are behavioral forms and the basis of the commitment, and the affective element comprises whatever feelings a specific mindset invokes. Also, Kaptijn (2009) shows that Meyer & Allen affective commitment has three sub-components; the emotional attachment to the organization, the identification with the organization and the involvement in the organization.

These three components of affective commitment no doubt further elaborate it. It has also been discovered that affective commitment develops if the employee

is able to meet their expectations and fulfill their needs within the organization (the employee wants to stay in the organization (Bennett, & Robinson, 2000).

Continuance Commitment (CC)

Bal, *et al* (2014) opined that continuance commitment is based on the perceived costs associated with discontinuing employment work with the organization. Kanter (1968) referred to continuance commitment as a cognitive orientation where costs are considered when leaving or remaining with the organization. Continuance commitment is seen as the commitment that is based on the cost that the employee is associated with when leaving the organization (due to high cost of leaving). And the potential antecedents of continuance include age, tenure, career satisfaction and intent to leave. Age and tenure can be seen as adopted predictors of continuance commitment, as a result of their roles as substitute measures of investment in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). In the view of Madi *et' al* (2012), tenure indicates non-transferable investments that means close working relationship with co-workers, retirement investments, career investments and skills peculiar to the particular organization while age can be negatively related to the number of available job opportunities. Career satisfaction was said to provide a more direct measure of career related investments which could be at risk if the individual leaves the organization. They went further to assert that whatever employees perceive to as sunk costs, resulting from leaving the organization, are antecedents of continuance commitment.

Also, Bal *et al*, (2014) further opined that continuance commitment is based on the perceived costs associated with discontinuing employment with the organization. It is imperative to assert that while employees with strong affective commitment will continue employment with the organization because they want to, those with strong continuance

commitment remain because they need to; and those with strong normative commitment because they feel they ought to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1991.In the same vein continuance commitment is said to relates to such terms of employment as job contract, which may make leaving the current job very costly and troublesome (Mullins, 2001). Continuance commitment is further developed as the result of accumulated investments, or side-bets that would be lost if the individual discontinued a course of action, and as a result of lack of alternative to the present course (Powell & Meyer, 2004).

Relationship between Disciplinary Tools and Employee Commitment

The negative effects of the application of discipline and or punishment were reported by Chelliah (2010). He presents his findings in: Power Sharing in Progressive Discipline: New Rules of Engagement Arising from an Australian Perspective. He views progressive discipline as a form of managerial power, which ultimately results in domination of the worker. Chelliah found that the application of progressive discipline on employees is particularly concentrated around industry and occupational class workers. These workers are more susceptible to disciplining by employers. Chelliah argues that an unequal power balance exists between employee and employer in the progressive discipline system because progressive discipline follows the traditional 'power over' model. Chelliah however does not completely discard the use of disciplinary measures.

Up to now the review was concentrated on the effects of the application of disciplinary measures on the shoulders on the worker. Vard (2001) however took a different approach. He examined the relationship between perceived organizational climate and misbehavior at work in an Israeli Metal Production Plant. The findings were publicized in: The Effects of Organizational and Ethical Climates on Misconduct at Work. The author builds on research by Bateman and Zeithaml (1990) who states two

major types of antecedents of misbehaviour at work: Individual factors (e.g., dissatisfaction, personality, moral development) and organizational factors(e.g., goals, climate and control systems).

Vard (2001) concurs with others researchers that individual behavior is strongly influenced by the organization's value system. The author found that a significant negative relationship between Organizational Climate and behavior and between the Organizational Climate dimensions (Warmth and Support, and Reward), and misbehavior. His investigation supports the theoretical supposition that climate has both a positive and a negative effect on the behavior of the workforce.According to Chrismall (2006), there is almost universal agreement that attitudes tends to have only a comparatively low relationship to actual behavior towards the object of the attitude. Attitude and behavior are complex. One holds a particular attitude does not necessarily mean that certain types of behavior will occur.

According to Osuji (2008), understanding behavior in work setting has been an area of interest and research among social scientists Osuji, (2008) identified three major approaches in this attempts.

- Beheviour is a function of the persons, B = F (P). In this theoretical position, explanations are given as to why people behave the way they do by the use of internal psychological constructs such as motivation, perception, attitudes, expectancies and personality characteristics.
- Behaviour is a function of the environment B = F (E). This theoretical perspective is particularly concerned with the role that reinforcing contingencies play in maintaining and changing behavior. It is argued that behavior is externally oriented and this according to Osuji, (2008) is most closely associated with Skinner's operant conditioning.
- Behavior is a function of a person and the environment B = F (PE). This framework

recognizes both internal cognitive variables and external environmental variables and is the approach that is most widely stressed today by scholars of organizational behavior. Porter and Lawler's Model is according to Osuji, (2008) a good example of this approach.

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

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between Verbal Reprimand and affective commitment of construction firms in Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between Verbal Reprimand and normative commitment of construction firms in Rivers State.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between Verbal Reprimand and continuance commitment of construction firms in Rivers State.
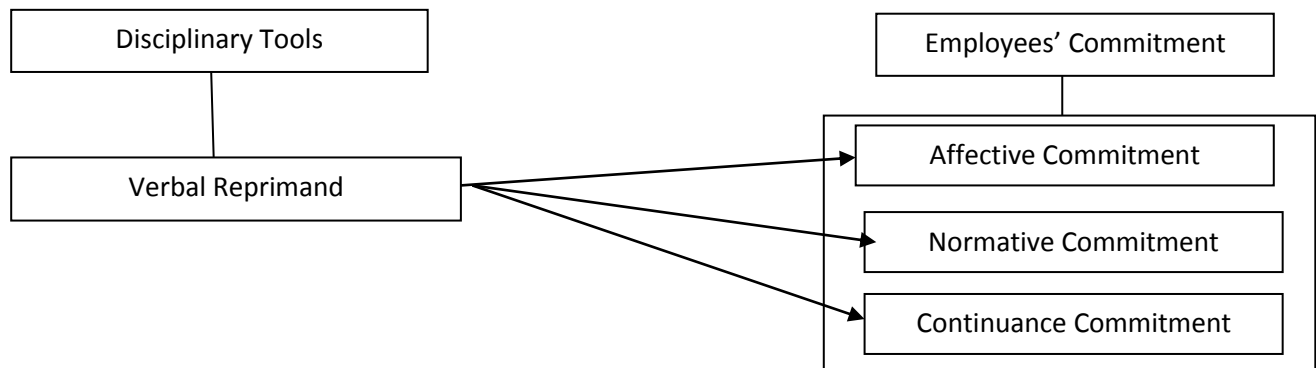
Figure 1: Operational Framework for the hypothesized relationship between Disciplinary tool **and employee commitment.**

Source: Author's Desk Research, 2018

METHODOLOGY

The study used a cross-sectional design. The population of this study consisted of six (6) registered construction firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Going by this status, the study focused on the chief engineering officers, operational managers, supervisors and head units. A total of three hundred (300) employees thus selected formed the total population for this study. The sample size for the study therefore was 171. The sampling technique applied in selecting a sample in this study was the purposive sampling in which every member had an equal chance of being selected. Descriptive statistics and Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient for data analysis and hypothesis testing with the help of the SPSS version 23 package.

DATA BANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

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

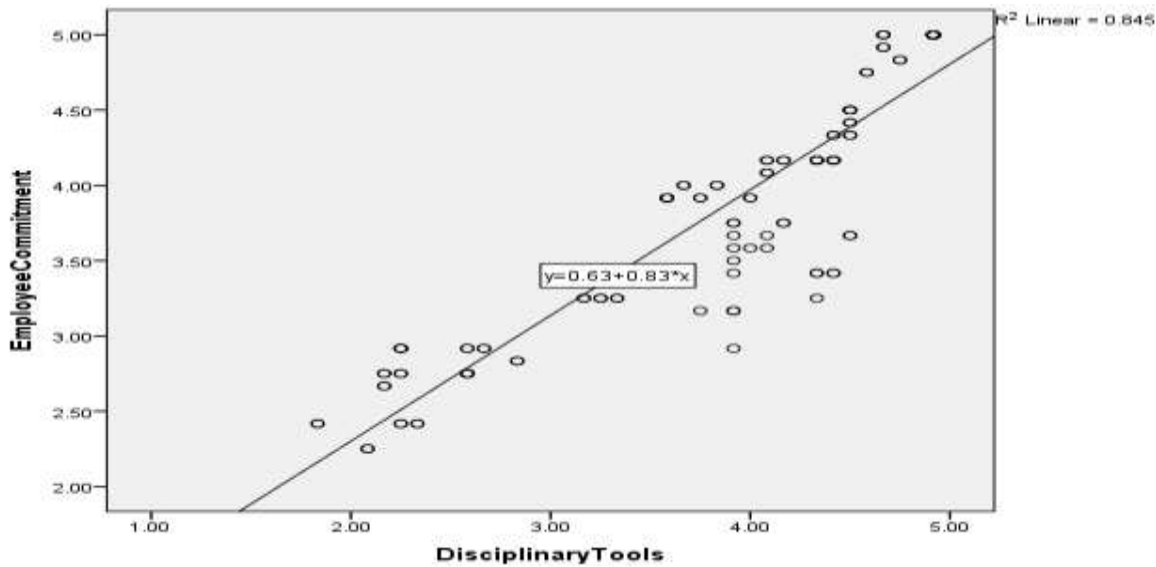We began by presenting first a test of existing relationships.

Figure 2: Scatter plot relationship between disciplinary tool and cooperate commitment

The scatter plot graph showed at R^2 linear value of (0.845) depicting a significant relationship between the two constructs. The implication was that an increase in disciplinary tool simultaneously brings about an increase in the level of employee commitment. The scatter diagram provided vivid evaluation of the closeness of the relationship among the pairs of variables through the nature of their concentration.

Table 1: Correlations for Verbal Reprimand and Employee Commitment

			Verbal Reprimand	Affective Commitment	Normative Commitment	Continuance Commitment
Spearman's rho	Verbal Reprimand	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.506**	-.775**	-.731**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	152	152	152	152
	Affective Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	-.506**	1.000	.593**	.498**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	152	152	152	152
	Normative Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	-.775**	.593**	1.000	.849**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	152	152	152	152
	Continuance Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	-.731**	.498**	.849**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	152	152	152	152

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

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

Table 1 illustrated the test for the three previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements. The results show that for

Ho$_1$: *There is no significant relationship between Verbal Reprimand and affective commitment of construction companies in Rivers State.*

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) showed that there is a significant and negative relationship between verbal reprimand and affective commitment. The *rho* value -0.506 confirmed the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it was significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represented a moderate correlation indicating a moderate relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated was hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between verbal reprimand and affective commitment of construction in Rivers State.

Ho$_2$: *There is no significant relationship between verbal reprimand and normative commitment of construction companies in Rivers State.*

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) showed that there is a significant and negative relationship between verbal reprimand and normative commitment. The *rho* value -0.775 confirmed the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it was significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represented a strong correlation indicating also a very strong relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated was hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between verbal reprimand and normative commitment of construction in Rivers State.

Ho$_3$: *There is no significant relationship between verbal reprimand and* continuance

commitment of construction companies in Rivers State.

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) showed that there is a significant and negative relationship between verbal reprimand and continuance commitment. The *rho* value -0.731 confirmed the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it was significant at p 0.000<0.05. The correlation coefficient represents a very strong correlation indicating also a very strong relationship. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between verbal reprimand and continuance commitment of construction in Rivers State.

DISCUSSIONS

This study using descriptive and inferential statistical methods investigated the relationship between Disciplinary tool and employee commitment of construction companies in Rivers State. The findings revealed a significant and negative relationship between Verbal Reprimand and employee commitment of construction companies in Rivers State using the Spearman's rank order correlation tool and at a 95% confidence interval. Data for the study reveals negative correlation between Verbal Reprimand and the measures of employees' commitment which are affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment.

The finding reinforced previous studies by Baridam (2009) which indicated that a demoted employee sees his/her employer and organization as being cruel and stands against his career success in the organization and thus create in the employee job dissatisfaction irrespective of the reason for his Disciplinary tool. Nwachukwu (2010) opined, Disciplinary tool is aimed at inculcating the right attitude on employees in relation to organization laid

down rule and regulation but found to be negatively correlated with employee commitment.

Nwinyokpugi (2015) stressed that discipline can be obtained by punishment but it should be noted that rewards or punishment may not influence the development of perception in an organizational environment to which staff respond. If they find it unfavorable, it may result in low morale or even protests. Punitive punishment may also be a failure in itself due to the fact that although workers may ultimately comply with rules, they may produce minimum output and show dissatisfaction in other ways. It is significant to understand that rules that workers participate in creating for themselves are more motivating than those simply assigned by managers.

Stephen (2012) conducted a study concerning Effect of disciplinary procedures on worker punctuality and performance in Tanzania, concluded that there is other factors such as management and leadership which influence punctuality and performance rather than discipline action or progressive Discipline. The managers may take other disciplinary measures such as coaching and performance appraisal if has not been doing well solves the problem. In case of serious misbehavior the boss could prefer to go on instantly toward disciplinary action.

Also, Barry (2010) indicated that Disciplinary tool does not necessarily correlate negatively with employee commitment. According to him, when an employee is reprimanded, as a result of incompetence is left with the opportunity of being better appriasal with time as his performance or level of competence increases.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Any organization expects their employees to be committed and disciplined to reach organization goals and that is why they establish rules and regulations. The presence of rules and regulations in the organizational helps members to behave in a specific way and expect also the employers to behave that the same. Rules make people feel secure and comfortable about their condition behavior and self-discipline. But it is not enough to have rules in place if they are not obeyed. When rules exist but people simply break them.

This necessitate disciplinary actions to be applied to deal or handling employee's behaviors in the organization Employees have the knowledge of disciplinary action but violating of rules is a very serious problem in public organizations whereby the public Organization has to take measures to minimize the problem because violation of disciplinary rules brings about difficulties on survival and prosperity of the organization. Lack of discipline can led to job turnover, less productivity, harmonious working environment, violence, distortion of public properties and so many problems. There is number of employees who were disciplined due to different misconduct like theft, alcoholism, absenteeism lateness, low performance, since disciplinary procedures provide conducive working environment in which employees become committed and go according to the will of organization.

Based on empirical findings, this study concludes that disciplinary tools are negatively correlated with employee commitment of construction companies in Rivers State.

Based on the findings obtained from summary of discussion and empirical findings the following recommendations are made:

- An informal verbal reprimand is often needed to improve an employee's conduct or performance. When the need to issue a verbal reprimand arises, supervisors should ensure to tell erring what they need to improve (timekeeping, work standards, work rate, etc.). Give them the chance to explain why their work has been subpar or why their conduct has been below what you expect of

them. Give them a plan to make their improvements.

▪ Verbal reprimand is a great way to snuff out any early problems with conduct or performance however, it should be fair and reasonable. If somebody is late once, you don't need to go straight for the warning.

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