

## Meaningfulness of Work and Worker's Attitude in Health Ministries in South-South, Nigeria

---

<sup>1</sup>Anyanaba D. Idoniboyeobu, <sup>2</sup>Justin M. O. Gabriel and <sup>3</sup>Soye P. Asawo

Department of Management, Faculty of Management Sciences

Rivers State University, Port Harcourt

---

### Abstract

This study examined the relationship between meaningfulness of work and worker's attitude in health ministries in South-South, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. Primary data was generated through a 4-point Likert scaled questionnaire. The population of the study was two thousand one hundred and eighty-one (2181) employees. A sample size of three hundred and thirty-eight (338) employees was drawn from the population using the Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The study adopted the simple random sampling technique. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Science. The findings revealed that meaningfulness of work had a significant positive relationship with affective commitment, affective satisfaction and workers engagement. Therefore, the study concludes that a vested effort towards enhancing meaningfulness of work will help boost positive work attitude among workers in the health ministries, South-South, Nigeria. Thus the researchers recommend that the work of the workers is designed in a way that makes it worthwhile as such will enhance their affective commitment.

**Keywords:** *Full-Time Working, Organizational Robustness*

### Introduction

Individuals have been recognised as the most valued asset of organizations, and their behaviour at the workplace is a function of their work attitude. Worker's attitude is important mostly in this era of high turbulence in the business domain because the positive attitude of a worker remains a great resource for organizations to leverage in gaining higher performance. Worker's attitude denotes the individual feelings, opinions and beliefs, as regards to work and its environment. (Srivastav & Das, 2013). Edalatian, Maleki, Koolivand and Meyvand (2013) argue that people pay attention to work characteristics and environmental factors, and the psychological impact they have on individuals, hence the need to have a deep understanding of how psychological empowerment influences worker's attitude. Gopinath (2020) contends that the positive work attitude of employees is vital for organizations and a key factor that distinguishes successful firms from rivalries. In alignment with the above assertion, Deal, Ruderman and Rweyongoza (2011) maintain that positive employee work attitude leads to reduced absenteeism, reduced turnover, and better performance all of which are critical factors in enhancing organization's outcome and wellbeing. The employee's right attitudes to work are vital for organizational success. Both positive and negative attitude to work can be exhibited by employees. Negative attitudes to work are attitudes demonstrated at workplace that may be detrimental to the success of the organization while positive attitude yields result that assist in achieving the organization's goals and objectives. This implies that both positive and negative attitudes are subject to one's psychological disposition which in turns influences employee's behaviour and performance. Balamurugan and Dhivya (2020) note that employee attitude towards the organization affects the operations of the organization and their willingness to accept change in the work place. The authors further remark that positive employee attitude is vital in ensuring total quality management and business process reengineering which are necessary in improving firm's efficiency, innovativeness and quality of service. Attitude, however is the neural and mental state of readiness organised through experience, dynamic influence or exerting a direction upon the individual's response to various situations or object with which he/she is related (Srivastav & Das, 2013).

Attitude depicts the manner an employee feels in a certain situation, which encompasses an individual's feelings, his/her reaction towards his employer, co-workers and the person's position within the organization (Blessing, Mary & Busola, 2020). Hence, the continuous evaluation of employee's attitude is indispensable for increasing productivity. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), intrinsically motivated behaviours and attitudes are because of the choices made by individuals, and these choices depend on their self-values and desires. A Self determined person is intrinsically motivated and the inner motivation makes him exhibit a higher level

of job performance. Employee's disposition to work can result in satisfaction, commitment, and engagement. Affective job satisfaction and cognitive job satisfaction are positive experiences (Lyubomirsky King, & Diener, 2005). While satisfaction, commitment and engagement are seen as positive attitudes, dissatisfaction, lack of commitment and intention to quit are negative attitudes. This made work meaningfulness a dimension of psychological empowerment emerge as a vital construct, due to its influence on employees' job attitudes. Meaningfulness of work is a critical and essential factor because it enhances the positive psychological state of the employees which could thus help enhance their positive work attitude in the workplace. Employees consider jobs that are more interesting, emit feelings of accomplishment, promote helpfulness and contribute to people's lives to be critical in achieving meaningful work (Bibby, 2001). More recently, fulfilment, autonomy, satisfaction, engagement, working relations and learning have been identified as important in a meaningful job (Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski, 2010; Steger & Dik, 2010). The interest in meaningful work is teamed with positive individual and organisational consequences with regard to work (Rosso *et al.*, 2010). The above highlights a necessity for an investigation into meaningful work and the role it plays in contributing towards positive work outcomes. If employees yearn for meaningful work, organizations would benefit in accommodating it. This study investigated the positive effect that meaningful work has on promoting work engagement and organizational commitment.

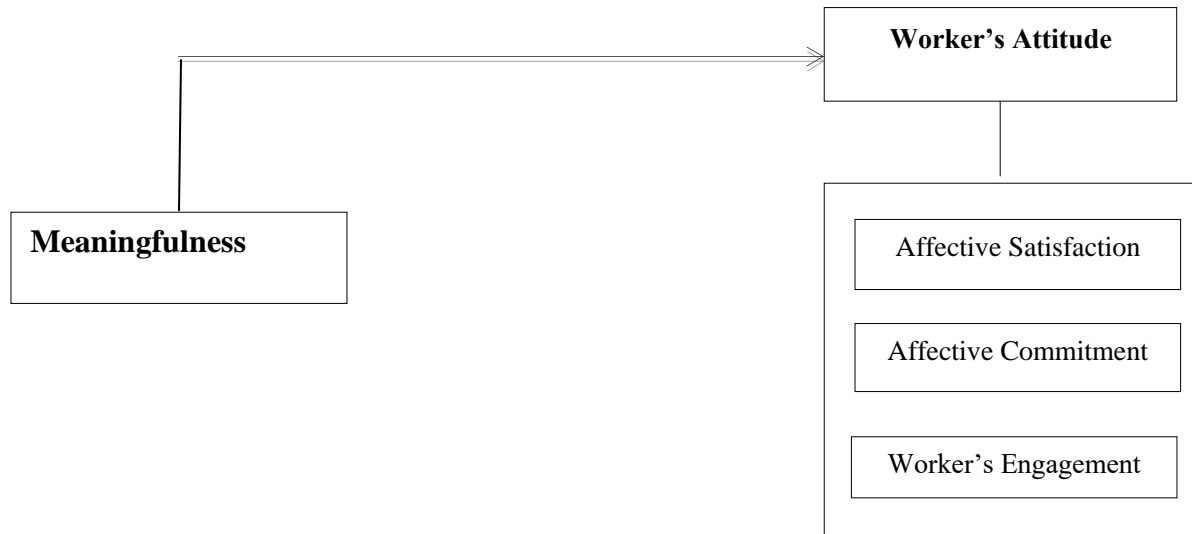
Positive work outcomes, such as work engagement and organizational commitment, have long-term benefits for organizations who attempt to foster initiatives that promote meaningfulness at work. Work engagement is driven by job characteristics such as providing skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback on results (Saks, 2006). The work tasks themselves have been directly related to meaningfulness (Kahn, 1990). When workers experience meaning in their work, there is improvement in organizational performance (e.g. productivity) (Neck & Milliman, 1994), retention of top talent, effective change management, greater commitment and engagement (Holbeche & Springett, 2004; Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003). Meaning is a concept that is unavoidably linked to one's existence (positive or negative) and encompasses the workplace as an inevitable part of one's existence. Defining the concept of meaning constitutes varying viewpoints. Meaning, according to Seligman (2002), allows individuals to transcend, either through promoting positive social relationships or connecting to a higher power. Additionally, individuals are bound to find meaning in their lives when they view their lives as purposeful, significant and understandable. In his attempt to define meaning, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) acknowledges and warns of the difficulty of capturing the construct into a common phrase. At best, meaning refers to a purpose or significance, and the intentions a person holds.

There has been a steady increase in research into meaningfulness, engagement and commitment at work (Dik & Duffy, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). This increased interest may be due to employees being better educated (Kompier, 2005) and increasingly questioning the nature and meaning of their work (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006). Since people spend many hours at work (Van Zyl, Deacon & Rothmann, 2010), it becomes the environment in which they engage in goal-orientated activities, and aim to find meaning (Cameron, Dutton & Quinn, 2003). In addition, evidence has been brought forward to suggest that money is losing its power as a central motivator, partially due to the general population realising that above a minimum level necessary for survival, money adds little to their subjective well-being (Seligman, 2002). People have come to define themselves and be socially defined by their work (Casey, 1995); hence, understanding alternate sources of meaning in work becomes a natural outgrowth for organisational systems valuing human thriving and a contribution to the greater good (Wrzesniewski, 2003).

This study therefore examined the relationship between meaningfulness of work and worker's attitude in health ministries in South-South, Nigeria. The following research questions were provided as a guide in this study:

- i. What is the relationship between meaningfulness of work and worker's affective satisfaction in health ministries, South South, Nigeria?
  - ii. How does meaningfulness of work relate with worker's affective commitment in health ministries, South-South, Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between meaningfulness of work and worker's engagement in health ministries, South-South, Nigeria?

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework for meaningfulness of work and worker's attitude

**Source:** Research Desk, 2021

### The Concept of Meaningfulness of work

Humans spend nearly one-third of their waking hours at work, and it occupies a significant position in their lives. As people spend more time at their places of employment, they begin to see their jobs as the focal point of their lives, providing them with meaning and identity (Hoar, 2004; Holbeche & Springett, 2004). Despite the fact that the term meaningfulness of work is frequently used in conjunction with other terms such as meaning, callings, and job crafting, the experience of meaningfulness of work is a distinct psychological experience that indicates the perceived amount of significance associated with one's work (Rosso, *et al.*, 2010). According to Spreitzer and Quinn (1997), meaning is defined as the value employees assign to their jobs in accordance with their beliefs and standards, as well as the fit between the requirements of a task or work goal set by the organization and the job's own personal values or ideas (Spreitzer, 1995). A work goal's monetary value in relation to an individual's personal ideals is what it is called (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). According to Brief and Nord (1990), meaning is a match between an employee's beliefs, values, and behaviours and the demands of his or her work role. In sense, when employees do not believe their work is important, they are more likely to be apathetic and less willing to participate in the commitment's events. They are also more likely to be distracted from their work tasks (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). When employees believe that their job responsibilities are important, they are more likely to put forth more effort in understanding problems from multiple perspectives and searching for different solutions using information from a variety of sources, according to research (Gilson & Shalley 2004; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). It is primarily through the design and perceived fit of one's job role, as well as rewarding social interactions experienced while performing one's job role, that one develops an experience of meaningfulness of work at work (Kahn, 1990). The meaning of work can be defined as the positive and significant contribution made by a job to the meaning of life for individuals, as well as the satisfaction that a person receives from his or her job, according to the definition provided by the United Nations (Rosso, *et al.*, 2010). Another definition of the meaning of work is the degree to which the purpose of individuals for working has an

impact on the viewpoints and attitudes of an individual for the rest of his or her lifetime (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). Individuals may experience a variety of cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and economic benefits as a result of increasing the meaningfulness of their work in their lives (Steger, Dik & Duffy, 2012). Employees who believe their work is important will most likely have a greater sense of commitment and will participate in the organization's events more frequently, as well as being more focused on their work tasks; otherwise, the employees will be apathetic and less willing to participate in the organization's events; and (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). It is more likely that employees will put forth greater effort in understanding problems from multiple perspectives and searching for different solutions using information from a variety of sources if they believe their job requirements are meaningful to them (Gilson & Shalley 2004; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Employees believe that intrinsic concern for a specific job is one of three critical psychological states of intrinsic motivation and that this is one of three critical psychological states of intrinsic motivation (Amenumey & Lockwood, 2008).

Meaningfulness of work has long been recognized as a critical psychological experience that is required for high levels of motivation, satisfaction, and performance. This is because it is a fundamental psychological need that strengthens an individual's sense of self-worth and life experience (Yeoman, 2014). Individuals who have experienced meaningfulness of work are internally motivated to act in ways that help them achieve their future work goals while also fulfilling their values of self-improvement and self-transcendence, as well as their psychological needs for relatedness and belonging (Glazer, Kozusznik, Meyers, & Ganai, 2014). The presence of meaning in one's work environment may therefore broaden affective and cognitive processes that promote a broader interest in the workplace context, for example, work goals and expected performance behaviour. Furthermore, meaningfulness of work may help to build personal resources, such as self-efficacy, that enable intrinsically motivated behaviour to occur (Barrick, Mount & Li, 2013).

### **The Concept of Worker's Attitude**

Attitudes can be defined as either a positive or negative feeling or mental state of readiness that has been learned and organized through experience and that has a specific attitude on a person's response to other people and objects, as well as to specific situations. Affective attitudes, according to Newstorm and Davis (1993), are reasonably good predictors of behavioural outcomes. The information they provide can be used to deduce an employee's behavioural intentions or inclinations to act in a specific manner. Positive job attitudes are associated with the attitude of constructive behaviours, whereas negative job attitudes are associated with the prediction of undesirable behaviours. Attitudes toward work refer to the feelings we have about various aspects of the workplace that we encounter (Carpenter, Talya & Erdogon, 2009). According to the authors, there are several factors that influence attitudes toward work, including personality, person-environment fit, job characteristics, psychological contract, organizational justice, work relationship, and stress. As defined by Robbins (2003), attitudes are evaluative statements that can be either favourable or unfavourable in nature when applied to objects, people, or situations. As a result, they are a reflection of how someone feels about something. Worker's attitudes are the feelings that employees have about various aspects of their work environment and are expressed verbally.

### **Affective Satisfaction**

In the workplace, job affective satisfaction refers to the emotions or feelings that they associate with their jobs. Individuals' overall emotional appraisal of their jobs determines their affective satisfaction with their jobs. As a result, it focuses on whether the job elicits a positive feeling, as well as affectively-oriented measures of job satisfaction. According to Tekell (2008), affective satisfaction includes both positive affect (i.e., the extent to which an individual feels enthusiastic, alert, and active) and negative affect (i.e., the extent to which an individual feels depressed, anxious, or passive), (the extent to which an individual experience a general dimension of subjective distress and unpleasant engagement which may take the form of emotional states such as anger, contempt, fear, disgust, guilt and nervousness). This implies that employees who report high levels of negative affective satisfaction also report higher levels of physical complaints and stress, indicating that they may regard their lives as a series of stresses or hassles, regardless of what actually happens to them in their jobs. Additionally, employees who report high levels of positive affective satisfaction are more energetic and outgoing in their jobs, as well as more satisfied with their jobs and with life in general. They are also more sensitive to the frequency of rewards, indicating that they may be more inclined to focus on the positive aspects of life (Yik & Russell, 2001). It is the affective component of attitudes that is responsible for the feelings or emotions that people associate with their job or attitude object, as well as the valence of those emotions. Positive affect (PA) is a measure of how enthusiastic, active, and alert a person is feeling at any given moment. It is sometimes described as being

fully immersed in one's life and fully engaged in one's feeling (Weiss & Cropanzo, 1996). Individuals with a high PA tend to be extroverted, outgoing, and enthusiastic (Yik & Russell, 2001). Not surprisingly, these individuals engage in more social behaviour as a result of their PA, which has been linked to increased extroversion (Watson, Clark, McIntyre & Hamaker, 1992). PA-positive individuals are also more satisfied with their jobs and with their lives in general, and they are more sensitive to the frequency of rewards, which suggests that they are more inclined to focus on the positive aspects of life.

### **Affective Commitment**

Employees experience feelings and emotions, which they express in a variety of ways depending on the situation. According to Allen and Meyer (1990), affective commitment is defined as an individual's emotional identification with a particular organization. In the workplace, it is an emotional tie or bond that connects employees to their various organizations, and it is a determinant of dedication and loyalty (Rhoades, Elsenberger & Armeli, 2001). The researchers went on to say that an affective committed worker is perceived to have a sense of identification and belonging, which increases their participation in the organization's goals and increases their desire to remain with the organization. An individual becomes emotionally attached to an organization when there is a link or congruence between his or her personal goals and values and those of the organization. The personality and values of employees, on the other hand, are a precondition for affective commitment. In the opinion of Osita-Ejikeme and Worlu (2017), once a human resource has identified the organization's goals and is willing to work toward achieving them, he will become emotionally attached to the organization. A further finding by Kaptijn (2009) is that personal characteristics have a significant positive influence on affective commitment. Gozukara and Yildirim (2015) found that corporate reputation had a significant impact on affective commitment, which in turn causes employees to have a strong emotional attachment to their employer's products or services. Affective commitment has been found to be associated with positive work-related behaviours such as organizational citizenship behaviour, attendance, and other aspects of job performance (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). An important antecedent of affective commitment is a set of dispositional variables that include values and personality traits (Allen & Meyer, 1990). While Meyer *et al.* (2002) suggest that there are several categories, they also propose that there are several subcategories. These categories include demographic variables (e.g., age, education level, marital status and gender), job characteristics, structural characteristics and individual differences, as well as work experience. Affective commitment was found to be associated with interactional justice, transformational leadership, and organizational support, according to their research. This is in contrast to previous work conducted by Meyer and Herscovitch (2002), they assert that job satisfaction is a distinct concept from organizational commitment and that the two are not related. Affective commitment was found to be correlated with occupational commitment and job involvement (Meyer *et al.*, 2002).

### **Worker's Engagement**

Engagement, as a concept that has evolved over time, has been defined in numerous, often inconsistent, ways in the literature, to the point where the term has become ambiguous to many and it is rare to find two people who define it in the same way (Macey and Schneider, 2008). It has been conceptualized as a psychological or affective state (e.g., commitment, involvement, attachment, etc.), a performance construct (e.g., role performance, effort, observable behaviour, organizational citizenship behaviour, and so on; Macey and Schneider, 2008), or an attitude. According to Macey and Schneider (2008), some researchers even link the concept of engagement to other specific constructs such as altruism or initiative. However, there is no consensus among researchers regarding which of these definitions is the definitive, or at the very least, "best-fit" model of engagement. Macey and Schneider (2008) divided engagement into three categories: trait engagement, state engagement, and behavioural engagement. They argue that trait engagement is an inclination to see the world from a particular vantage point, and that this is reflected in the individual's "state engagement," which leads to "behavioural engagement," which is defined in terms of exerting discretionary effort. As pointed out by Newman and Harrison (2008), however, when engagement is broken down into the separate aspects of state, trait, and behaviour, state engagement becomes a redundant construct that tells us nothing more than an individual's attitude toward their job, which, as they point out, has been adequately measured in the past by other constructs. As an alternative, they contend that the defining characteristics of employee engagement are the simultaneous presence of three behaviours in employees, namely their performance on the job, citizenship behaviour, and involvement. Although this proposition does not define the psychological state of engagement, it does describe the outcomes that result from it.

An employee's level of engagement can be measured by the degree to which they express a high level of satisfaction and an emotional connection to their employer's development and success. It also contributes to the creation of an improvement, increases performance, and assists directly or indirectly in the retention of employees and the support of turnover (Taylor, 2011). Positive attitudes and feelings among employees at work are not the only characteristics of employee engagement; it can also be defined in terms of "organization citizenship attitude, commitment, and high involvement work practices." It is used as a method of motivating employees to work more actively and creatively in order to achieve organizational objectives.

### **Meaningfulness of Work and Worker's Attitude in Health Ministries in South-South, Nigeria**

Kaur and Mittal (2020) investigated the relationship between the meaningfulness of work of one's work, employee engagement, and affective commitment in the workplace. In addition, the mediating influence of affective commitment on the relationship between meaningfulness of work and employee engagement is investigated in this study, according to the authors. The researchers used a cross-sectional survey design to collect data for the study, which was a quantitative approach to data collection. The research included the use of standardized scales and was carried out on 319 employees who worked in the service sector in the Indian states of Punjab and Chandigarh. The findings of the study in question confirmed that there is a positive relationship between the meaningfulness of work of one's work, employee engagement, and affective commitment. Hsiang-Fei, Sheng-Hsiung and Ya-Yun (2014) in their study about empowering hospitality employees in China posited that if there is a perception of employees that the work they do is meaningful and important to them, they make extra efforts to understanding and solving problems. They further argued that psychologically empowered employees are more confident in their work resulting in the display of a higher degree of satisfaction in their work. In addition, Patah, Abdullah, and Derani (2012) in their study in Kuala Lumpur hotels examined the influence of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction of receptionists. Their study posited that the construct of "meaning" of psychological empowerment does have a significant influence on the overall job satisfaction of the receptionists. This meant that receptionists who perceived that their jobs had higher levels of connection to their lives, developed work skills and confidence and most likely experienced a higher level of job satisfaction. Dickson and Lorenz (2009) and Powpaka (2012) find that there exists a positive and significant relationship between the dimension of meaning and job satisfaction for workers. This was also in line with findings generated by Spreitzer (2008) that the meaning cognition was positively related to job satisfaction. The results generated by almost all of the studies reviewed had the same outcome; which was that the meaning cognition had a significant relationship with job satisfaction. This research revealed that when guest house supervisors find the work they perform to be consistent with their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours they tend to be happier and contented with their jobs. Affective outcomes, such as job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement are likely candidates for explaining the relationship between meaningfulness of work and performance. For instance, Kahn (1990) suggested that meaningfulness of work brings about engagement with one's work role, leading to persistence in one's work, which may in turn facilitate higher levels of performance. Allan, Batz-Barbarich, Sterling and Tay, (2019) meta-analytically examined the mediating roles of work engagement, job satisfaction, and commitment on the relationship between meaningful work and self-report job performance. They found that meaningful work was equally related to each of the three mediators (.74, .74, and .75, respectively), and together they explain 24% of the variance in self-report performance. Although there are likely to be multiple mediating pathways between meaningfulness of work and supervisory-rated performance, we shift attention away from work-related attitudes to the behaviours that employees enact at work. This is because supervisors rate employees based on the behaviours that they display at work and not normally based on how employees feel about their work.

Based on the foregoing, the study thus hypothesized:

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between meaningfulness of work and worker's affective satisfaction in health ministries in South-South, Nigeria.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between meaningfulness of work and worker's affective commitment in health ministries in South-South, Nigeria.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between meaningfulness of work and worker's engagement in health ministries in South-South, Nigeria.

**Methodology**

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. Primary data was generated through a 4-point Likert scaled questionnaire. The population of the study was two thousand one hundred and eighty-one (2181) employees. A sample size of three hundred and thirty-eight (338) employees was drawn from the population using the Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The study adopted the simple random sampling technique. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS).

**Data Analysis and Results**

**Bivariate 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 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 1 Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Satisfaction**

		Meaningfulness of work	Affective Satisfaction
Spearman's rho	Meaningfulness of work	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	304
	Affective Satisfaction	Correlation Coefficient	.644**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	304

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Satisfaction in Health Ministries, South-South, Nigeria.

The result of the analysis in Table 1 shows a correlation value of  $\rho = 0.644$  implying that there is a strong positive relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Satisfaction. The result also indicates a significant level  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), this means that there is a significant relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Satisfaction. The study therefore observes that there is a strong positive and significant association between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Satisfaction. In light of this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Satisfaction in Health Ministries, South-South, Nigeria.

**Table 2 Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Commitment**

			Meaningfulness of work	Affective Commitment
Spearman's rho	Meaningfulness of work	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.642**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	304	304
	Affective Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.642**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	304	304

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Commitment in Health Ministries, South-South, Nigeria. The result of the analysis in Table 2 shows a correlation value of rho = 0.642 implying that there is a positive relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Commitment. The result also indicates a significant level  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), this means that there is a significant relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Commitment. The study therefore observes that there is a strong positive and significant association between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Commitment. In light of this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Affective Commitment in Health Ministries, South-South, Nigeria.

**Table 3 Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Engagement**

			Meaningfulness of work	Worker's Engagement
Spearman's rho	Meaningfulness of work	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.779**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	304	304
	Worker's Engagement	Correlation Coefficient	.779**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	304	304

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Engagement in Health Ministries, South-South, Nigeria. The result of the analysis in Table 3 shows a correlation value of rho = 0.779 implying that there is a moderate positive relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Engagement. The result also indicates a significant level  $p < 0.05$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), this means that there is a significant relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Engagement. This entails that as one variable increases the other increase, that is, an increase in Meaningfulness of work will lead to a corresponding increase in Worker’s Engagement. The study therefore observes that there is a strong positive and significant association between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Engagement. In light of this, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker’s Engagement in Health Ministries, South-South, Nigeria.



### Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that there is a strong positive significant relationship between Meaningfulness of work and Worker's Attitude in Health Ministries, South-South, Nigeria. Hence, Meaningfulness is an essential factor in organizations that help increase Worker's Affective Satisfaction. Furthermore, the finding was in consonance with Naser and Afnan (2013) that meaning has a positive impact on employee satisfaction. The result also supported the proposition that employee psychological empowerment leads to higher satisfaction (Naser & Afnan, 2013). Kivuva, Pepela and Nzioka (2019) argue that employees who perceived their jobs to be significant and worthwhile also felt higher levels of job satisfaction than employees who saw their jobs as having little value. Ponton (2011) finds that there is a positive relationship between the sub variable of "meaning" and job satisfaction. Additionally, the finding of this study corroborates with the work of Kaur and Mittal (2020) who examined the relationship between the meaningfulness of one's work, employee engagement, and affective commitment in the workplace. In addition, the mediating influence of affective commitment on the relationship between meaningfulness of work and employee engagement is investigated in this study, according to the authors and whose finding confirmed that there is a positive relationship between the meaningfulness of one's work, employee engagement, and affective commitment. This finding is supported by Kaur and Mittal (2020) who observe that there is a positive relationship between the meaningfulness of one's work and affective commitment. Allan *et al.* (2019) argue that meaningfulness brings about affective commitment. Also, the result is supported by the claims of Kaur and Mittal (2020) who confirm that there is a positive relationship between the meaningfulness of one's work and employee engagement. Similarly, Britt, Adler and Bartone (2001) and Britt, Dickinson, Castro, and Adler (2007) observe a positive relationship between meaningfulness and employee engagement. Higher levels of engagement have been found to be associated with meaningful work (Janik & Rothmann, 2015).

In the same vein, the findings in a study conducted by Fürstenberg, Alfes and Shantz (2020) who carried out a study on meaningfulness of work and supervisory-rated job performance and that meaningfulness was positively and significantly associated with promotive voice behaviors. It is noteworthy that meaningfulness is directly and significantly related to supervisory-rated job performance. Moreover, our results revealed a significant indirect effect of meaningfulness on job performance ratings through promotive voice behaviors. Also, supporting our finding was the study carried out by Britt, *et al.* (2001) and Britt, *et al.* (2007) who examined meaningfulness in the context of military work and defined and measured it as a combination of being engaged in important work during the course of military operations and experiencing events during the course of deployment that set the deployment in a broader context. McCarthy and Friedman (2006) focused on meaningful work in the context of a nursing home, defining it as acts that lead to a sense of achievement and interaction with residents. These studies raise important questions about the comparability of the experience of meaningfulness across occupational groups. Additionally, the current study finding supports the previous finding by Hsiang-Fei, *et al.*, (2014) who carried out a study on empowering hospitality employees in China and found that psychologically empowered employees are more confident in their work resulting in the display of a higher degree of satisfaction in their work. In addition, Patah, *et al.*, (2012) in their study in Kuala Lumpur hotels examined the influence of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction of receptionists. Their study posited that the construct of "meaning" of psychological empowerment does have a significant influence on the overall job satisfaction of the receptionists. This meant that receptionists who perceived that their jobs had higher levels of connection to their lives, developed work skills and confidence and most likely experienced a higher level of job satisfaction. It is gratifying to note also that the support to our findings by the study Buitendach and Hlalele (2005) conducted on psychological empowerment and job satisfaction of engineers in a petrochemical industry in South Africa. The study found a positive correlation of large effect between the cognition of meaning and job satisfaction. Their findings implied that the two variables were related, that is, those employees who found their work to be meaningful had a correspondingly high level of job satisfaction. More so, Dickson and Lorenz (2009) and Powpaka (2012) found that there exists a positive and significant relationship between the dimension of meaning and job satisfaction for workers. This was also in line with findings generated by Spreitzer (2008) that the meaning cognition was positively related to job satisfaction. The results generated by almost all of the studies reviewed had the same outcome; which was that the meaning cognition had a significant relationship with job satisfaction. This research revealed that when guest house supervisors find the work they perform to be consistent with their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours they tend to be happier and contented with their jobs.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that the higher the meaningfulness of work workers have in the workplace, the higher their levels of affective satisfaction, affective commitment and worker's engagement. When workers in the health ministries perceive that their work contribute toward their personal growth, such enhances their emotional commitment to the work which will thus help enhance the fortune of the organization. When the work of the workers in the work place is worthwhile, such help attract the dedication of the workers. Conversely, when the workers do not see their work as worthwhile, such could result to their displaying negative attitude like low commitment and engagement in the workplace.

The study recommends that the management of the health ministries should ensure that:

- i The job activities of the workers add personal meaning to their life as such will boost their affective satisfaction.
- ii The work of the workers is designed in a way that makes it worthwhile as such will enhance their affective commitment.
- iii The workers are adequately motivated to ensure their engagement to work.

### REFERENCES

- Allan, B. A., Batz-Barbarich, C., Sterling, H. M., & Tay, L. (2019). Outcomes of meaningful work: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Management Studies*, 56(3), 500–528.
- Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 63, 1-18.
- Amenumey, E. K., & Lockwood, A. (2008). Psychological climate and psychological empowerment: An exploration in a luxury UK hotel group. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 8(4), 265–281.
- Balamurugan, G. & Dhivya, S. (2020) A study on employee attitude towards organizational change its effect on employee commitment in private colleges. *International Journal of Engineering Technologies and Management Research*, 7(3), 31 - 41
- Barrick, M. R., Mount, M. K., & Li, N. (2013). The theory of purposeful work behaviour: The role of personality, higher-order goals, and job characteristics. *Academy of Management Review*, 38(1), 132-153.
- Bibby, R.W. (2001). *Canada's teens: Today, yesterday and tomorrow*. Toronto: Stoddart.
- Blessing, O. O., Mary, E. A. & Busola, O. O. (2020). Understanding the impact of employee's attitude on organisational performance. A study of selected service firms in Rivers State. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* 4(7), 445-449.
- Buitendach, J.H., & Hlalele (2005). Job insecurity, extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment of maintenance workers in a parastatal. *South African Journal of Business Management*, 36(2), 27-37.
- Cameron, S., Dutton, J., & Quinn, R. (2003). *Positive organizational scholarship: Foundations of a new discipline*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Carpenter, M., Talya, B., & Erdogon, B. (2009). *Principles of management (1st edition)*. New York: Flat World Knowledge.
- Cartwright, S. & Holmes, N. (2006). The meaning of work: The challenge of regaining employee engagement and reducing cynicism. *Human Resource management Review*. 16 (2)

- Casey, C. (1995). *Work, self and society: After industrialization*. London. Routledge.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Deal, S., Ruderman, G., & Rweyongoza, S. (2011). *Workplace attitudes: positive managers, positive organizations*. Center for Creative Leadership.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behaviour*. New York, Plenum.
- Dickson, K. E., & Lorenz, A. (2009). Psychological empowerment and job satisfaction of temporary and part-time nonstandard workers: a preliminary investigation. *Institute of Behavioral and Applied Management*, 166-191.
- Dik, B.J., & Duffy, R.D. (2008). Calling and vocation at work: Definitions and prospects for research practice. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 8, 48–61.
- Edalati Shahriari, J., Maleki, J., Koolivand, P., & Meyvand, M. (2013). The study of the relationship between organisational structure and psychological empowerment among the staffs in Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 330–338
- Fürstenberg, N., Alfes, K., & Shantz, A. (2020). Meaningfulness of work and supervisory-rated job performance: A moderated-mediation model. *Human Resource Management*, 1–17.
- Gilson, L. L., & Shalley, C. E. (2004). A little creativity goes a long way: An examination of teams' engagement in creative processes. *Journal of Management*, 30(4), 453–470.
- Glazer, S., Kozuszniak, M.W., Meyers, J.H., & Ganai, O. (2014). Meaningfulness as a resource to mitigate work stress. In S. Leka, & R.R. Sinclair (Eds.), *Contemporary Occupational Health Psychology: Global Perspectives on Research and Practice*, 3(114-130).
- Gopinath, R. (2020). Role on employees' attitude in work place. *Gedrag & Organisatie Review*, 33(2), 1461-1475.
- Gozukara, I., & Yildirim, O. (2015). Affective commitment and corporate reputation. The effects of attitude towards advertising and trust. *Academic Journal of Economic Studies*. 1(3), 126 – 147.
- Hoar, R. (2004). Work with meaning. *Management Today*, 5, 44–50.
- Holbeche, L., & Springett, N. (2004). *In Search of Meaning in the workplace*. UK: Roffey Park Institute.
- Hsiang-Fei Luoh Sheng-Hshiang Tsaor Ya-Yun Tang, (2014). Empowering employees: job standardization and innovative behavior. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 26(7), 1100 – 1117.
- Janik, M., & Rothmann, S. (2015). Meaningful work and secondary school teachers' intention to leave. *South African Journal of Education*, 35, 1008, 1–13.
- Kahn, W.A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33, 692–724
- Kaptijn, R. (2009). *Assessing affective commitment in the three – component model on the two factor theory: A comparison between the theories of Meyer and Allen and Herzberg, Mautner and Snyderman*. A published master thesis occupational organisational psychology. University of Twente.

- Kaur, P., & Mittal, A. (2020). Meaningfulness of work of work and employee engagement: The role of affective commitment. *The Open Psychology Journal*, 13, 115-122.
- Kivuva, A. K., Pepela, A. W. & Nzioka, A. M. (2019). Guest house supervisors meaning cognition and its influence on job satisfaction in the context of Mombasa country Kenya. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 8(3).
- Kompier, M.A.J. (2005). Dealing with workplace stress. In C.L. Cooper (Ed.), *Handbook of stress medicine and health* (pp. 349–374). London: CRC Press.
- Lips-Wiersma, M., & Morris, L. (2009). Discriminating between meaningful work and the management of meaning. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88(3), 491-511.
- Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: does happiness lead to success? *Psychol. Bull.* 131, 803–855.
- McCarthy, J., & Friedman, L. H. (2006). The significance of autonomy in the nursing home administrator profession: A qualitative study. *Health Care Management Review*, 31, 55-63.
- Macey WH, Schneider B (2008). The meaning of employee engagement, *Industrial and Organisational Psychology*, 1, 3–30.
- Meyer, J.P., & Herscovitch, A. (2002). Commitment to organizational change: extension of a three-component model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(3), 474-487
- Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., Herscovitch, L., & Topolnytsky, L. (2002). Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61(1), 20–52.
- Milliman, J., Czaplewski, A.J., & Ferguson, J. (2003). Workplace spirituality and employee work attitudes: An exploratory empirical assessment. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 16, 426–447.
- Naser, I. S. & Afnan, S. S. (2013). Psychological empowerment and job satisfaction in Jordanian hospital. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(16)
- Neck, C.P., & Milliman, J.F. (1994). Thought self-leadership: Finding spiritual fulfillment in organizational life. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 9, 9–16.
- Newman DA, Harrison DA (2008). Been there, bottled that: are state and behavioural work engagement new and useful construct ‘wines’? *Industrial and Organisational Psychology*, 1, 31–35.
- Newstrom, J. W., & Davis, K. (1993). *Organisational Behaviour: Human behaviour at work*. New York: Mcgraw Hill.
- Osita-Ejikeme, U.E. & Worlu, G.O. (2017). Personality traits and employee commitment in manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research*, 3(5), 22-42.
- Patah, R., Abdullah, A., & Derani, Z. (2012). The influence of psychological empowerment on overall job satisfaction of front office receptionists. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 4(11), 167.
- Powpaka, S. (2012). Empowering Chinese service employees: a re-examination and extension. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 21, 271-91.

- Rhoades, L., Elsenberger, R., & Armeli, D., (2001). Affective commitment to the organisation: The contribution of perceived organisational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(5), 825 – 836.
- Rosso, B.D., Dekas, K.H., & Wrzesniewski, A. (2010). On the meaning of work: A theoretical integration and review. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 30, 91–127
- Saks, A.M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of work engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 21, 600–619.
- Schaufeli, W. B. & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 25, 293-315.
- Seligman, M.E.P. (2002). *Authentic happiness*. New York: Free Press.
- Spreitzer, G. M. (2008). Taking stock: A review of more than twenty years of research on empowerment at work. *The handbook of organizational behaviour*, Sage Publication.
- Spreitzer, G.M. (1995). Psychological empowerment in the workplace: dimensions, measurement, and validation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(5), 1442-65.
- Spreitzer, G. M., & Quinn, R. E. (1997). The road to empowerment: Seven questions every leader should consider. *Organizational Dynamics*, 26(2), 37–49.
- Srivastav, A.K., & Das, P. (2013). A study on employees’ attitude towards the organization and job satisfaction. *International Journal of Science and Research*, 4(7), 102 – 107.
- Steger, M. F., Dik, B. J., & Duffy, R. D. (2012). Measuring meaningful work: The Work and Meaning Inventory (WAMI). *Journal of Career Assessment*, 20(3), 322-337.
- Steger, M. F., & Dik, B. J. (2010). *Work as meaning*. In P. A. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Page (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of positive psychology and work (131–142)*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, R. (2011). *Diversity and Engagement Go Hand in Hand*.
- Tekell, J. K. (2008). Affective and cognitive components of job satisfaction: Scale development and initial validation. University Libraries, UNT Digital Library
- Thomas, K. W., & Velthouse, B. A. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: An “interpretive” model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(4), 666–681.
- Thomas, K. W., & Velthouse, B. A. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: An “interpretive” model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(4), 666–681.
- Van Zyl, L.E., Deacon, E., & Rothmann, S. (2010). Towards happiness: Experience of work-role fit, meaningfulness, and work engagement of industrial/organisational psychologists in South Africa. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 36, 1–10.
- Watson, D., Clark, L. A., McIntyre, C. W., & Hamaker, S. (1992). Affect, personality, and social activity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63(6), 1011-1025.

- Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective events theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes, and consequences of affective experiences at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 18*, 1-74.
- Wrzesniewski, A., & Dutton, J.E. (2003). Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work. *Academy of Management Review, 26*, 179–201.
- Yeoman, R. (2014). Conceptualising meaningful work as a fundamental human need. *Journal of Business Ethics, 125* (2), 235-251.
- Yik, M. S. M., & Russell, J. A. (2001). Predicting the big two of affect from the big five of personality. *Journal of Research in Personality, 35*, 247-277.
- Zhang, X., & Bartol, K. M. (2010). Linking empowering leadership and employee creativity: The influence of psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and creative process engagement. *Academy of Management Journal, 53*(1), 107–128.