



## **Skill Variety and Employee Withdrawal Behaviour in Telecommunication Firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** *This study investigated the relationship between skill variety and employee withdrawal behaviour in telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population for the study was 248 administrative and management employees of 8 selected telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. The sample size of 153 was determined using calculated using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. Results from analysis of data revealed that there is a significant relationship between skill variety and employee withdrawal behaviour in telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study recommends that in implementing the strategy of job enrichment as a means of motivation for workers, management should ensure that skill variety are apportioned in a manner that will bring about the retention of especially high flying staff. Therefore, management should utilize skill variety optimally so that the staff will not also perceive the load as too complex or complicated to handle.*

**Keywords:** *Skill Variety, Employee Withdrawal Behaviour*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

There are numerous hours of lost productivity each year adversely affecting organizations and creating a burden on enterprises (Strom, Sears & Kelly, 2014). The most common forms of employee work disengagement are withdrawal behaviors, which manifest as absenteeism, employee turnover, tardiness, and burnout (Timms, Brough & Graham, 2012). Organizational leaders depend on a skilled, stable and diverse workforce to remain viable in a competitive marketplace (Banks, Patel & Moola, 2012). Withdrawal behaviors are challenging for organizational leaders as well as other co-workers (Johnson, Holley, Morgeson, LaBonar & Stetzer, 2014). Absenteeism disrupts teams, superior-subordinate relationships, and group dynamics. Although the literature regarding workforce absenteeism is capacious, there are

significant gaps (Johnson, Holley, Moregeson, Labonar & Stetzer, 2014). Literature scarcities include absence management, which is managing absence behavior and the association between employee behavior and key stakeholders (Johnson et al., 2014). Judicious attendance at work with the correct quantity of competent employees in place to meet business requirements is vital for sustainable and scheduled business activities (Torre, Pelagatti & Solari, 2014). Skill variety is a crucial job characteristics needed to ensure the attainment of these business requirements.

Today's organizations use standardization, automatization and technology to gain efficiency in production. The way in which work is organized has implications, which can often be lower levels of task variety (Loukidou *et al.*, 2009). According to the job design literature (Demerouti *et al.*, 2001; Humphrey *et al.*, 2007), low levels of task variety reflect a lack of work stimulation. The influence of job design on employees' attitudes and well-being has been studied widely. It is also the case that employees may not want to simply accept unsatisfactory job design. Thus, research has also increasingly recognized the need to explore employees' behavioral reactions when coping with unsatisfactory and unstimulating job designs (Oldham and Hackman, 2010; Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). Some of these behaviors may have dysfunctional implications for organizations (Spector and Fox, 2010).

In the view of Garg & Rastogi (2006), skill variety refers to the extent to which the job requires the employee to draw from a number of different skills and abilities as well as upon a range of knowledge (cited in Ali, 2010). According to Benjamin (2012) the theory behind providing skill variety in job design is that it will reduce boredom, thereby increasing job satisfaction and motivation. This is likely to be true as long as the employee enjoys the skills and perceives the addition and mix of skills to be a benefit to the job. But adding a variety of skills the employee finds stressful, isn't qualified to address, or simply adding basic duties and minimal skills without adding to the intrinsic value of the job could actually have the opposite effect and increase dissatisfaction. Involve employees in job design to have the greatest positive impact on motivation and satisfaction.

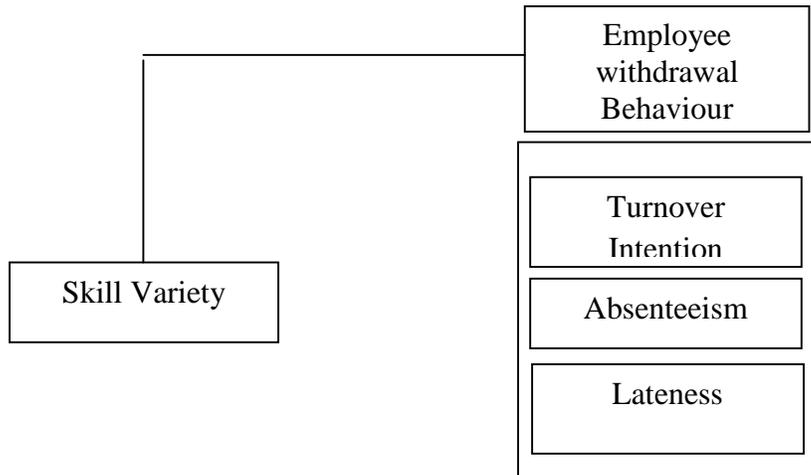
In other studies, skill variety is considered as the number of various task elements that are necessary for the job fulfilment. Task variety communicates clarity of knowledge (Pentland, 2003). According to the literature of careers, employees at the start of their careers make attempts to discover tasks from which they attain or achieve their goals (Feldman & Thomas, 2012). Inherent characteristics of a job including significance of a task and skill variety are usually mostly associated with low rates of absenteeism (Taber & Taylor, 1990).

This study therefore examines the relationship between skill variety and employee withdrawal behaviour in telecommunication firms in Port Harcourt.

Furthermore, this study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. To what extent does skill variety influence turnover intention in the telecommunication firm?
- ii. To what extent does skill variety influence absenteeism in the telecommunication firm?

- iii. To what extent does skill variety influence lateness in the telecommunication firm?



**Fig.1:** Conceptual Framework for the relationship between skill variety and employee withdrawal behaviour

**Source:** Author’s Desk Research, 2019

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

The study is anchored on enriched job characteristics theory postulated by Hackman and Oldham. The theory was built on the previous knowledge and research, mainly coming from Need Hierarchy Theory, Expectancy Theory, Herzberg Two– Factor theory (Garg & Rastogi, 2006) and using also an earlier work by Turner and Lawrence (1965) about task attributes. This theory assumed that the main approach to job enrichment is based on the job characteristics, which offer motivation, satisfaction, commitment, involvement, performance quality, and withdrawal behaviours such as absenteeism and turnover are a function of three critical psychological which are experienced meaningfulness, responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge of results (Grant & Shin, 2011 and Lawler *et al.*, 2009).

This theory proposes that the job itself should be designed to possess certain characteristics that create conditions for high work motivation, satisfaction, performance involvement, and commitment. It identifies the tasks condition in which individual is predicted to prosper in their work. The theory gives the management the insight that employee effectiveness can be enhanced by enriching the jobs with high levels of key characteristics and making sure those employees with appropriate personal qualities are assigned to these jobs. In today’s competitive business world, every organization is aspiring to have committed and

motivated workforce who are passionate about carrying out set tasks and committed to achieving organizational objectives. The reason for using the job enrichment theory is that it proposes that a job should be designed to possess certain characteristics that create conditions for high work motivation, satisfaction, performance involvement, and commitment; and identifies the tasks condition in which individual is predicted to prosper in their work.

### **Skill Variety**

This is the first core job dimension which involves the number of different types of skills that are used in performing a task. It focuses on the degree to which a task challenges the job holder to use different kind of skills, abilities and talents. It is believed that when only one skill is adopted in performing tasks repetitively, it tends to bring fatigue, stress and boredom which will in turn affect their morale and productivity at workplace. Derek and Laura (2000), argued that movement of employees from one job to another job within a particular organization and allowing them to adopt a variety of tasks in their work helps in avoiding repetitiveness, dullness and boredom. Several researchers added that the use of skill variety serves as a means of retaining and motivating workers for higher performance. Bratton (2007), also pointed that when a variety of skills are necessary to complete a task and those skills are perceived to be of value to the organization, employees find their work to be more meaningful. Garg & Rastogi (2006), Skill variety refers to the extent to which the job requires the employee to draw from a number of different skills and abilities as well as upon a range of knowledge (cited in Ali,2010). The theory behind providing skill variety in job design is that it will reduce boredom, thereby increasing job satisfaction and motivation. This is likely to be true as long as the employee enjoys the skills and perceives the addition and mix of skills to be a benefit to the job. But adding a variety of skills the employee finds stressful, isn't qualified to address, or simply adding basic duties and minimal skills without adding to the intrinsic value of the job could actually have the opposite effect and increase dissatisfaction. Involve employees in job design to have the greatest positive impact on motivation and satisfaction.

Skill variety involves the number of different types of skills that are used to do a job. This area is important because using only one skill to do the same task repeatedly can be quite boring, typically causing the employee's productivity to decrease after a period of time. However, using a variety of skills in a job will tend to keep the employee more interested in the job and more motivated. One way businesses are focusing on this area is through job rotation, that is, moving employees from job to job within the company, thereby allowing employees a variety of tasks in their work and helping prevent boredom. While this process can be costly to the company because employees must be trained in several different areas, the cost tends to be balanced by the increase in morale and productivity. Job rotation also gives each employee the opportunity to see how the different jobs of a company fit together and gives the company more flexibility in covering tasks when workers are absent. However, while job rotation is a good way to enrich employees' jobs, it can also hinder performance: Having to know several different jobs in order to rotate can prevent employees from becoming proficient at any of the jobs. Therefore, the advantages and disadvantages of job rotation as an enrichment strategy have to be carefully weighed.

### **Employee Withdrawal Behaviour**

Such behaviors manifest at work, and may be physical or psychological. Physical behaviors are the most recognizable withdrawal behaviors. Examples of these behaviors are absenteeism, lateness/tardiness, leaving the job, internal job transfer, and turnover. Hanisch, and Hulin (1990) suggests individuals who are psychologically disengaged are often considered "lazy" or "burnt-out"; they easily become unreceptive, lack inspiration, and conduct trifling efforts on the job. In actuality "the lights are on, but nobody's home." Employees with low job satisfaction are less productive merely because they are less available to perform. Withdrawal behaviors are linked to one another, and they are all at least partially caused by job dissatisfaction. Many ask the question of how much an employee can withdraw while still upholding this relationship. The motivation to participate in absenteeism and the opportunity to do so must be present in order for an employee to achieve withdrawal. Employees withdraw from work in stages (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008). First, employees may show up late. Then, they withdraw additionally by not showing up for work (i.e. calling in sick). The final stage of employee withdrawal is turnover. Employees withdraw since they cannot stand either their leaders or co-workers, the job itself is not pleasurable, and the pay is bad and the opportunity for promotion even worse. Withdrawal may also be part of a progressive model and relate to job dissatisfaction, lack of job involvement, and decreased organizational commitment.

### **Voluntary and Involuntary Withdrawal Behaviors**

Many employees experience voluntary or involuntary withdrawal behaviors. An example of voluntary withdrawal would be if I begin coming to work late and/or leaving early because I no longer have interest in my job. This would encourage withdrawal behavior if not properly dealt with and could lead to poor performance. An example of involuntary withdrawal would be if my car breaks down I start having difficulty getting to work but the mental stress of having difficulty getting to work which could include experiencing hives or getting shingles as a result of. The difference is one is physical and the other becomes psychological. Job attitudes and voluntary withdrawal behaviors go hand-in-hand. The ability for an employee to explore job dissatisfaction opens a gateway to turnover if left unresolved. Leaders' attentiveness to what employees' needs are and identifying their stress/burnout is imperative in reducing the behavior or experiencing turnover. Effective techniques for reducing withdrawal behaviors can be implemented through company policy and by developing clear and effective job structures within a supportive work environment.

### **Measures of employee withdrawer behaviour**

The literature refers to withdrawal behaviors as tardiness (lateness), absenteeism and turnover (Adler, 1981; Clegg, 1983; Rosse, 1988; Blau, 1994). Prior to the 21st century, minimal research activity had been directed toward discerning the relationship between organizational citizenship behaviors and negative employee performance such as employee withdrawal behaviors and recently employee counterproductive behaviors (e.g. Berry, Carpenter & Barratt, 2012).

Subsequently, an interest in the subject area was spearheaded by researchers in the west and nonwestern countries using diverse sampling populations as a point of analysis to explore the relationships between organizational citizenship and withdrawal behaviors (e.g.

police officers in Australia, Brunetto, Shacklock & Farr-Wharton, 2012; social workers in Israeli health care system, Carmeli, 2005; manufacturing and sales organization work groups in the north eastern U.S., Eder & Eisenberger, 2008; elementary school teachers and administrators in Ankara, Turkey, Erdemli, 2015; employees in a financial institution in Haifa, Israel, Meisler, 2013; employees in a French-listed company, Nicolas & Nicolas, 2015; employees in a physical education organization in Ardabil, Iran, Noroozil & Masumabad, 2015; alumni of a business school in Fance, Paille & Grima, 2011; employees in the tourism and hospital industry in London, England, Regts & Molleman, 2012; employees in a vocational training organization in Ardabil, Iran, Sehbaradar & Hasanzadeh, 2013; high school teachers in Israel, Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2012; male and female nurses employed in a hospital in northern Israel, Shapira-Lishchinsky & Even-Zohar, 2011; employees from a variety of organizations in Netanya, Israel, Sharoni, *et al.*, (2012); teachers in a middle Tennessee school district, Shockley, 2012).

Fox, Spector, Goh, Bruursema & Kessler (2012) succinctly indicated that studies have shown a strong negative correlation between counterproductive work behavior (CWB) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and opposite correlations with hypothesized antecedents (Spector & Fox 2010a and 2010b). Cohen, Panter & Turan's (2013) sampling of employees working in diverse industries at several levels in the organizations, findings indicated that employees low in guilt proneness engaged in counterproductive work behaviors to a greater degree than employees high in guilt proneness as predicted by gender, age, intention to turnover, interpersonal conflict at work and negative affect at work. The authors cautioned that it would be wise for employees to take into consideration guilt proneness of applicants at the initial stage of the hiring process. Studies on the consequences of employee withdrawal behaviors have examined the negative financial impact that these behaviors have on organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Cascio (2001) and Koslowsky (2000) suggested that these costs included lost productivity, administrative costs and negative effects on coworkers. Hackett (2009) indicated that employee absenteeism is a costly personnel problem and the estimated aggregate loss in wages and salaries to U.S. American workers was as high as \$26 billion a year (Steers & Rhodes, 2008).

### **Turnover Intention**

Employee turnover is an important factor in a small business's bottom line. Replacing employees can affect a business' productivity, expenses and overall performance. If you can measure your staff's turnover intention, you can determine the likelihood of your staff leaving your organization. This helps you determine where you can find opportunities to reduce your overall turnover. Turnover is the process through which staff leaves a business or organization and that business or organization replaces them. Turnover intention is a measurement of whether a business' or organization's employees plan to leave their positions or whether that organization plans to remove employees from positions. Turnover intention, like turnover itself, can be either voluntary or involuntary. Turnover intention and intention to quit are used interchangeably in the literature (Balogun, Adetula, & Olowodunoye, 2013). When employees seriously consider quitting their jobs, they are thought to have the intention to quit the organization (Omar, Anuar, Majid & Johari, 2012). The term "intention" describes an

employee's desire or deliberateness to leave the organization (Martin Jr., 2009; Tett & Meyer, 1993).

Turnover intention, a strong predictor of quitting an organization as discussed earlier, becomes a final step before an employee actually leaves the organization (Lee & Bruvold, 2003). The measurement of this construct often entails using a certain period of time (Suliman & Al-Junaibi, 2010; Tett & Meyer, 2003). The thought behind using this interval as a measurement is that employee turnover intention is a time-consuming process. This process has three stages (Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007). It starts with thinking of leaving the organization followed by the intention to search for a new job and is finally directed to the intention to leave (Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2008). The intention to quit is not only conceived as an important determinant of actual turnover but also provides important information for management to control employees' avoidance behaviors. For example, employees with high turnover intention tend to become less productive and efficient (Balogun et al., 2013).

### **Absenteeism**

Absenteeism is a habitual pattern of absence from a duty or obligation without good reason. Generally, absenteeism is unplanned absences. Absenteeism has been viewed as an indicator of poor individual performance, as well as a breach of an implicit contract between employee and employer. It is seen as a management problem, and framed in economic or quasi-economic terms. Absenteeism is an unplanned, disruptive incident; but more specifically it can be seen as non-attendance when an employee is scheduled to work (Van Der Merwe and Miller, 1988). Nel, Dyk, Haasbroek, Schultz, Sono and Werner (2001) defined absenteeism as withdrawal behaviour when it is used as a way to escape an undesirable working environment. Nel *et al.*, (2001) also gives the meaning and level of motivation as: the minimum level – doing less than is required; expected level – doing just what is required; and the maximum level – doing more than is necessary. When a person is functioning at the first level or the third level as denoted above, this may be a cause for absenteeism. Organisational labour productivity needs to be analysed regarding how it will change in the future. Projected employee turnover and absenteeism influence the productivity of an organisations' workforce and its future workforce needs. This issue must be analysed so that plans can be developed to address them (Abbott, 2003).

The monitoring of absenteeism is a human resources function which is often neglected, and which also has employment relations implications if not properly managed; for example, Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia, and Irmer, (2007) states that high turnover and absenteeism rates often show poor management and/or conflict within the relationship with labour. It is the responsibility of the human resources department and the line managers to monitor and establish reasons for high absenteeism. Scheduled time off for employee vacations is an inevitable cost of doing business. In addition, costs related to unscheduled absenteeism can be reduced through wellness programmes, disability management and flexible time-off options. Employers cannot escape the salary costs of time off the job, but when they plan ahead they can often eliminate indirect costs such as hiring a temporary worker, paying someone else to work overtime or lost productivity.

### **Lateness**

Late employees can be found in any organization. The implications of such workers has been estimated to cost companies thousands of dollars a year in lost production or revenue as an individual's lateness behavior impacts not only his or her performance, but others as well (Mirvis & Lawler 2007; Jamal, 2004; Blau, 2004; Sagie, Birati, & Tziner, 2002). The effect on others is especially pertinent in the university setting, as classes cannot commence until the instructor arrives. Lessons that do not start on time become shorter resulting in a decrease in the amount of material taught which affects student learning. As tardiness has no organizational benefits associated with it, it needs to be examined as to why such an act occurs and how it influences those who are exposed to such behavior. It is hoped that research in this area could lead to a decrease in teacher tardiness. Employee lateness or tardiness can be defined as the start of work after the scheduled starting time as agreed to by employee and employer (Adler & Golan, 1981).

In a university setting, for example, if the first period class is required to begin at nine o'clock, an employee would be considered late in arriving at one minute past nine. Lateness can be sorted into two types of categories – avoidable and unavoidable. Avoidable lateness is employee controlled and refers to when employees have more important or better things to do rather than be on time. This could range from sleeping in or reading a newspaper in the morning, to chatting to co-workers in the coffee room. Unavoidable lateness tends to be circumstance controlled and is characterized by less controllable factors such as late trains, bad weather, or personal illness (Blau, 2011). Although unavoidable factors contribute to employee tardiness, they cannot be controlled, thus will usually be forgiven by an employer if the frequency of the occurrence is minimal. It is the avoidable lateness that is frowned upon as it is seen as an unnecessary cost to a company and would best be eliminated.

Lateness has been literally defined as a situation where an individual arrives after the proper, scheduled or usual time (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 5th ed., 1995). Lateness has also been conceptualized as people not showing up on time (Lauby, 2009). Lateness has been viewed as "tardiness", which refers to being slow to act or slow to respond, therefore not meeting up with proper or usual timing (Breeze, 2010). It is obvious therefore that, lateness could be seen as a system of network breakdown (Peretomode, 1991).

### **Association between Skill Variety and Employee Withdrawal Behaviour**

Skill variety refers to the extent to which the job requires a person to utilize multiple high-level skills. A car wash employee whose job consists of directing customers into the automated car wash demonstrates low levels of skill variety, whereas a car wash employee who acts as a cashier, maintains carwash equipment, and manages the inventory of chemicals demonstrates high skill variety. Skill Variety is closely associated with the basic skills a person needs to perform a given task (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Skill Variety is an objective measure because the numbers of skills needed to perform a job are quantifiable. There are three important caveats to consider when examining the role of variety in motivation. First, skill variety tends to increase with a job's level within and organization. A CEO utilizes more skills than an assembly-line worker does. Second, the variety of skills must be challenging. Similar to the Goal Setting Theory idea that goals must be difficult to motivate, Skill Variety must be challenging to

increase meaningfulness and satisfaction. The third stipulation that helps explain the role of skill variety is the idea that in some jobs, manipulation of skills is difficult, but not impossible. When a job requires a very specific and specialized skill as a primary component of task completion, consideration to the fundamental purpose of the job prevents alteration of, or distraction from it. Thus, the need for careful evaluation of Skill Variety is established.

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

**H<sub>o1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between skill variety and turnover intention of staff in the telecommunication industry of Port-Harcourt.

**H<sub>o2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between skill variety and absenteeism of staff in the telecommunication industry of Port-Harcourt.

**H<sub>o3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between skill variety and lateness of staff in the telecommunication industry of Port-Harcourt.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population for the study was 248 administrative and management employees of 8 selected telecommunication companies in Port Harcourt. The sample size of 153 was determined using calculated using the Taro Yamane's formula for sample size determination. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

From the Ho1: There is no significant relationship between skill variety and turnover intention of staff in the telecommunication industry of Port-Harcourt.

***H<sub>o1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between skill variety and turnover intention of staff in the telecommunication industry of Port-Harcourt.***

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant negative relationship between skill variety and turnover intention. The *rho* value -0.397 indicates this relationship and it is significant at  $p < 0.000 < 0.05$ . The correlation coefficient represents a strong correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between skill variety and turnover intention of staff in the telecommunication industry of Port-Harcourt.

**Table 1: correlation between skill variety and withdrawal behaviour**

			Skill Variety	Turnover Intention	Absenteeism	Lateness
Spearman's rho	Skill Variety	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.397**	-.244**	-.326**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	130	130	130	130
	Turnover Intention	Correlation Coefficient	-.397**	1.000	-.544**	-.630**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	130	130	130	130
	Absenteeism	Correlation Coefficient	-.244**	-.544**	1.000	-.396**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	130	130	130	130
	Lateness	Correlation Coefficient	-.326**	-.630**	-.396**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	130	130	130	130

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

**Source: SPSS Output**

***Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between skill variety and absenteeism of staff in the telecommunication industry of Port-Harcourt.***

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant negative relationship between skill variety and absenteeism. The rho value -0.244 indicates this relationship and it is significant at  $p < 0.000 < 0.05$ . The correlation coefficient represents a strong correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between skill variety and absenteeism of staff in the telecommunication industry of Port-Harcourt.

***Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between skill variety and lateness of staff in the telecommunication industry of Port-Harcourt.***

The correlation coefficient (r) shows that there is a significant negative relationship between skill variety and absenteeism. The rho value -0.326 indicates this relationship and it is significant at  $p < 0.000 < 0.05$ . The correlation coefficient represents a strong correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby

rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between skill variety and lateness of staff in the telecommunication industry of Port-Harcourt.

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study findings reveal that there is strong positive relationship between skill variety and lateness of staff in the telecommunication industry of Port-Harcourt. This implies that low skill variety may require additional effort to maintain attention and performance and is likely to result in a lack of stimulation and motivation, displeasure and even more negative affective states, such as frustration or anger.

Skill variety is the extent to which employees are able to perform a wide range of tasks and refers to the use of different skills and variety in their job content (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). An example of a job with low task variety is the job of a data entry clerk, which requires data being input and corrected all day. An example of a job with high task variety is the job of a product manager; this job includes the whole product management circle, such as developing a marketing strategy, implementing marketing measures, conducting market analyses and pricing. According to the job demand-resource (JD-R) model, high task variety is a job resource (Bakker & Demerouti 2007). Job resources are aspects of work that help employees achieve personal goals, satisfy personal needs, stimulate personal growth and cope with job demands that require effort to deal with (e.g., time pressure). High levels of job resources are associated with positive motivational outcomes, such as work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti 2007). In contrast, “lacking resources preclude dealing effectively with high job demands and foster mental withdrawal or disengagement” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004: 296).

Similarly, high task variety has the functional value of making work-related goals achievable and contributing to personal growth and thus qualifies as a job resource. Task variety offers valuable opportunities to use different skills and fosters an experience of meaningfulness and motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Humphrey, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007). Van den Broeck, Schreurs, Guenter & van Emmerik (2015) showed that skill utilization is important for individual well-being; Van Ruysseveldt, Verboon & Smulders (2011) found that task variety promoted on-the-job learning opportunities and Smith *et al.*, (2009) demonstrated that individuals started to vary their tasks in order to remain interested and therefore meet performance demands. In contrast to high task variety, low task variety means a lack of opportunity to use valued skills (Loukidou, Loan-Clarke & Daniels, 2009).

A decrease in skill variety can be understood as the loss of a valued job aspect and opportunities for making full use of skills. A decrease in skill variety is consequently associated with an increase in perceived repetitiveness (Loukidou *et al.*, 2009). The study argue that a loss of task variety is, in a similar way to low task variety, a negative work-related experience to which employees may react with negative affective states. In addition, employees may feel the need to find a substitute for a lack of work stimulation so this can go hand-in-hand with lower task variety (Spector & Fox, 2010).

Evidence indicates that employees tend to direct employee withdrawal behaviour against the source of their displeasure (Fox, Spector & Miles, 2001). As the employer is responsible for job design, perceptions of task variety might be more strongly associated with CWB-O than with CWB-I. However, low task variety may also provoke CWB-I. This is in line with the work-environment hypothesis developed and supported by researchers on bullying (Baillien, De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011).

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this world of globalization, organizations are competing globally and one of the vital resources to organizational competitive advantage is the employees. With the view to making employees to be committed in the organization, management has resorted to fair compensation policies and human resource (HR) strategies ranging from promotion, job security, and good working conditions. However, management of the studied organizations fail to understand why some employees are not committed to the organization even though they have proactively implemented fair compensation policies and human resource (HR) practices to motivate and retain them.

Consequently, this study has by its finding provided empirical outcomes that emphasize the utilization of skill variety as a veritable strategy in motivating workers such that they actualize the reduction of employees' withdrawal behaviour.

The study recommends that in implementing the strategy of job enrichment as a means of motivation for workers, management should ensure that skill variety are apportioned in a manner that will bring about the retention of especially high flying staff, since reward incrementing has a constraint. Therefore, management should utilize skill variety optimally so that the staff will not also perceive the load as too complex or complicated to handle.

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