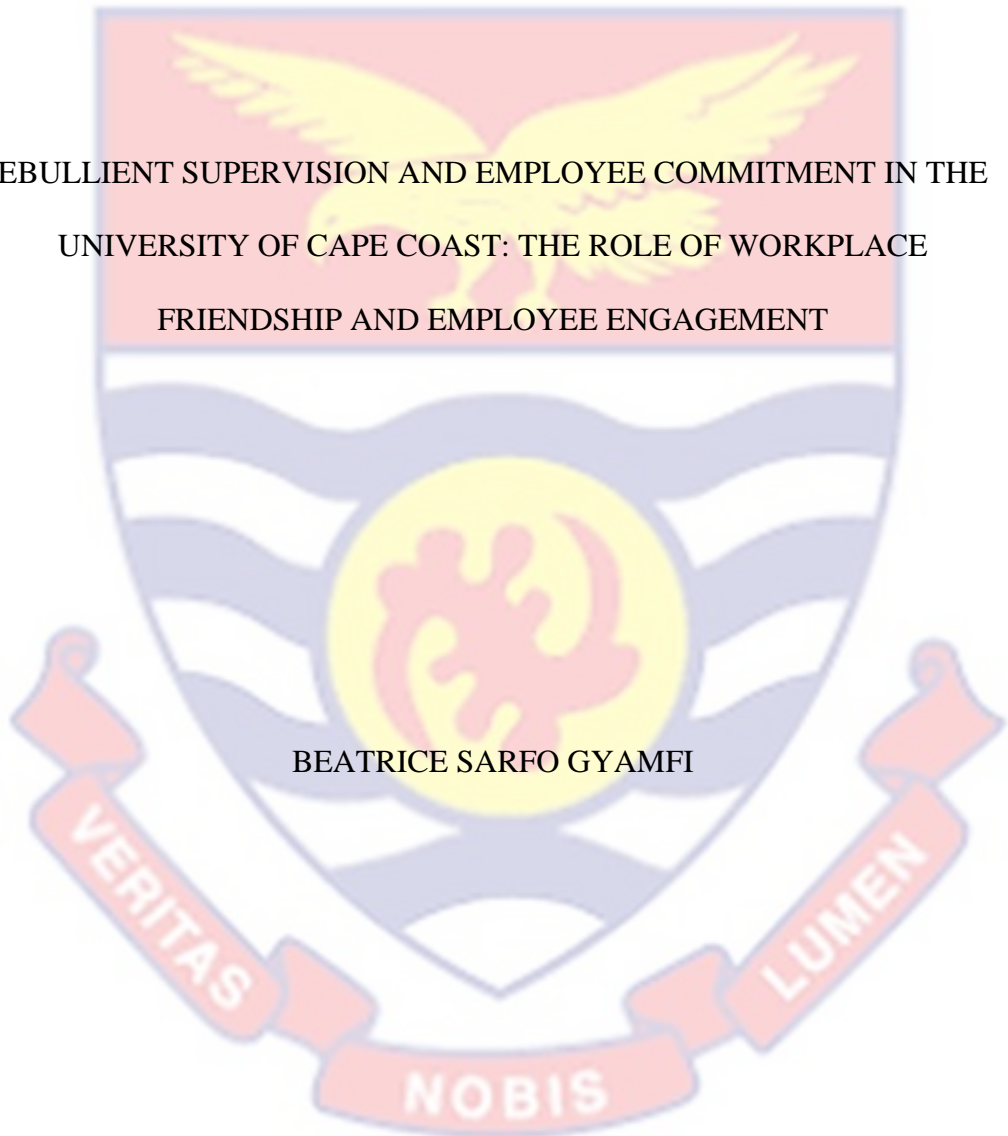


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

EBULLIENT SUPERVISION AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT IN THE  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST: THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE  
FRIENDSHIP AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

BEATRICE SARFO GYAMFI



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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST: THE ROLE OF WORKPLACE  
FRIENDSHIP AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

BY

BEATRICE SARFO GYAMFI

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Management of the School of  
Business, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Business  
Administration degree in Management

MAY 2022

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date.....

Candidate' Name: Beatrice Sarfo Gyamfi

### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised following the guidelines of supervision laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name of Supervisor: Professor Abraham Ansong

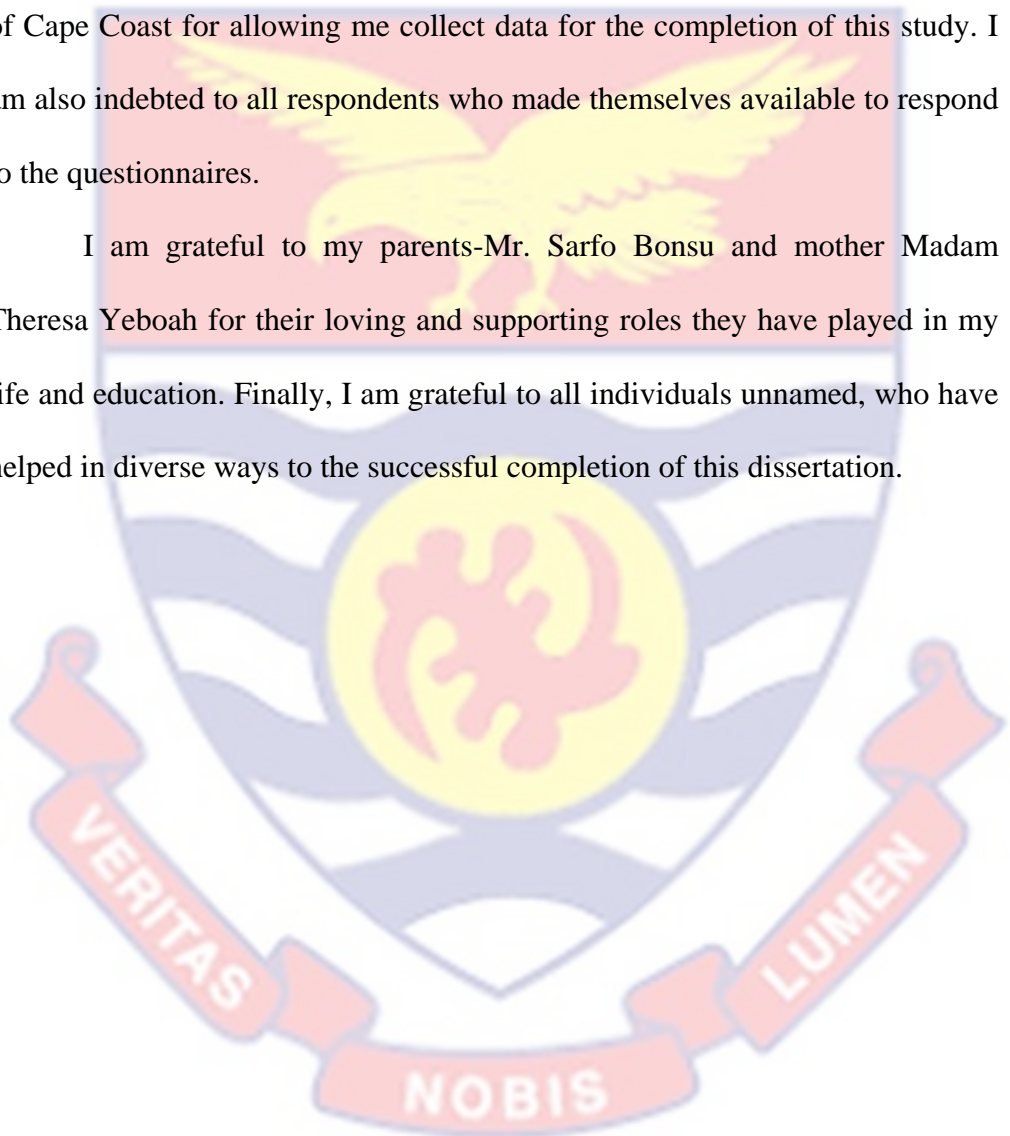
## ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of ebullient supervision on administrative staff commitment of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana through the intervening roles of workplace friendship and employee engagement. The study adopted the quantitative approach and explanatory design. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 290 administrators of the university for data analysis. The data was processed using the IBM SPSS Statistics (version 26) and SmartPLS (version 3.3.3) softwares. Inferential statistics through partial least squares structural equation modelling was used to address objective of the study. The study found that ebullient supervision and employee engagement had significant positive influence on administrative staff commitment, while workplace friendship had no significant influence on staff commitment. The study also found that while workplace friendship failed to mediate the relationship of ebullient supervision and staff commitment, employee engagement had partial mediation effect in the relationship between ebullient supervision and staff commitment. The study recommended management of the university should lay emphasis in placing persons who are ebullient to supervisory positions in the university.

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I am grateful to my parents-Mr. Sarfo Bonsu and mother Madam Theresa Yeboah for their loving and supporting roles they have played in my life and education. Finally, I am grateful to all individuals unnamed, who have helped in diverse ways to the successful completion of this dissertation.



## DEDICATION

To my caring and supportive husband, Paul Nayaga.





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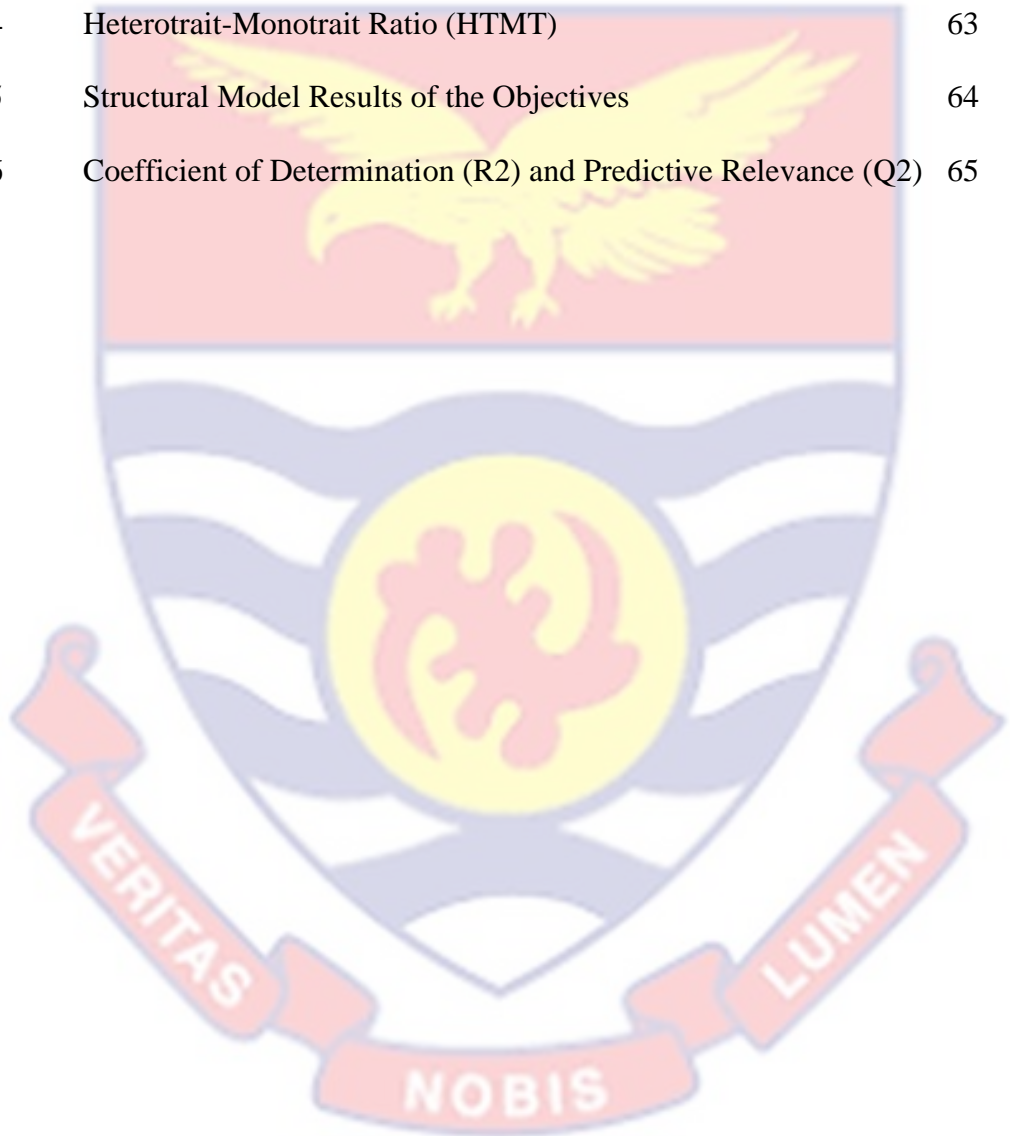
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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Employees are one of the most important assets of an organisation and with more advanced industries and specific services, high quality skills are required more, especially at a time when human resource market has become more competitive as a result of globalisation employees' commitment to their organisations highly affects their performance as well as the organisation's performance. It is the extent to which the employee is involved in his/her work and is loyal to his/her organisation (Ajibade & Ayinla, 2014). On that basis, studies are required to examine the antecedents that foster the commitment of employees in all set of organisations be it education, manufacturing or banking. This study sought to investigate the antecedents of employee commitment in the tertiary education levels.

#### **Background to the Study**

Employee commitment has been of interest to researchers and employers in various fields for the past few decades (Medina, Zerihun Kinde & Kaur, 2018; Rashid, Sambasivan & Johari, 2003). Committed employees can be utilised to gain competitive advantage against others in the industry, hence human capital commitment to an organisation has become of much importance to employers across different industries (Agwu, 2013; Messner, 2013; Mitic, Vukonjanski, Terek, Gligorovic & Zoric, 2016). Hakim (2015) defines organisational commitment as the desire and the willingness of employees to remain in the organisation and devote themselves to the success of the organisation. Similarly, Azizollah, Abolghasem and Amin (2016) have explained commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification



with and involvement in a particular organisation. Thus, these individuals have the hearty belief in and agreement of organisational principles and objectives, a willingness to apply more energy for the work of the organisation, at the same time wants to stay as a member of the organisation. Committed employees have been found to exhibit innovation, work satisfaction, high performance and less turnover (Shahid & Azhar, 2013).

According to Allen and Meyer (1996), organisational commitment manifest in forms of affective, continuance and normative. Nongo and Ikyanyon (2012) summarised the three characteristics of organisational commitment by indicating that, whereas affective commitment concerns employees' strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values, continuance commitment is willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation and finally the normative commitment is a strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation.

Recently researchers have emphasised the role played by supervisors who create fun at workplace as a significant mechanism for sustaining the commitment of employees (Djastuti, Rahardjo, Irviana & Udin, 2019) and other organisational outcomes such as employee engagement (Ford, Guzzo, Abbott & Bowen, 2019), job satisfaction and performance (Tews, Michel & Bartlett, 2012). Ford et al. (2019) who termed such traits of supervisors as ebullient supervision, noted that any supervisor who through actions and behaviours creates a fun work environment for employees can make an important contribution to employee commitment and organisational success. Thus, managers who encourage corporate cultures that promote play, humour, and fun at work are similarly salting a key ingredient for energised and



productive work environments (Lundin, Paul & Christensen, 2000). According to Ford et al. (2019, p. 151), “an ebullient supervisor is one who through words and deeds helps create a work environment that is considered by a subordinate as a fun place to work”.

Precisely, having a fun work environment can lead to increased employee enthusiasm, group cohesion, employee satisfaction, organisational citizenship, mutual trust, commitment and reduction of complaints about boredom. This is affirmed in the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) which provides the basis for resource availability in the organisation. The theory recognises the importance of a supervisory style that is represented by the behaviours and actions of an ebullient leader towards creating a work environment characterised by humour and fun (Ford et al., 2019; Hobfoll, 2001). Glasser (1994) posits that fun is a needful resource people seek to make use of at work, thus, an ebullient supervisor who provides a conduit to attainment of this valued resource by creating a fun work environment through structuring social, interpersonal or task activities at work can enhance employee commitment.

From a social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) perspective, workplace friendship also enhances work-related support and resources exchange between employees and supervisors necessary for effective execution of employee’s tasks (Zhuang, Chen, Chang, Guan & Huan, 2020). Workplace friendship has been reported as necessary because it offers a sense of happiness and wellbeing to employees in the organisation (Nielsen, Jex, & Adams, 2000). These friendships have been highlighted by scholars like Akila and Priyadarshini (2018), and Khaleel, Chelliah, Khalid, Jamil and

Manzoor (2016) as the social, personal and organisational interrelationships that bind employees and the organisation together and have implications on the degree of connection an employee has with the organisation. Ting and Ho (2017) postulated that workplace friendship positively affect job- and organisational involvement, which may then enhance employee commitment.

Berman et al. (2002) defined workplace friendship as nonexclusive voluntary workplace relations that resolves around reciprocated trust, commitment, mutual liking and shared interests and values among organisational members. Cemaloglu and Duykuluoglu (2019) add that workplace friendship is a long-term voluntary relationship set up at the workplace based on trust, loyalty, affection, common interests and values that helps people deal with daily life struggles in an organisation. This suggests that a supportive function of workplace friendship can assists employees to grow in their careers by means of forming network connections, workplace adjustments and information sharing platforms that could enhance employee commitment and performance (Jiang, 2017; Mao & Hsieh, 2012).

In addition, Trofimov, Bondar, Trofimova, Miliutina and Riabchych (2017) reported that employees' commitment to their work and the organisation in furtherance of performance can also take place when they perceive the work as engaging. de Sousa and van Dierendonck (2014) defined it as a positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterised by behaviours of vigour, dedication and absorption. Work engagement is harnessing of organisational members' selves to their work role and which reflects the willingness of the job holder to stay committed to the job (Abu-Shamaa, Al-Rabaya & Khasawneh, 2015; Khan, 1990). Notably, engaged

employees derive a positive and persistent state of mind that includes a personal interest in one's work as well as satisfaction and enjoyment from the work itself, which may serve as drivers for their emotional and psychological attachment to the organisation (Taxer & Frenzel, 2015; van Beek, Hu, Schaufeli, Taris & Schreurs, 2012).

Other researchers such Hansen, Byrne and Kiersch (2014), and Agyemang and Ofei (2013) as pointed that engaged employees are highly energised and resilient in performing their job, put their heart into their jobs with persistence and willingness to invest effort, and exhibit strong work involvement. They experience feelings of significance, enthusiasm, passion, inspiration, pride, excitement, and challenge from their work, and fully concentrate and immerse themselves in their work without noticing that time passes (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). These postulations by the aforementioned scholars fall within the framework of the job demand-resource model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which submits that several elements, “physical workload, time pressures, recipient contact, physical environment, and shift work (job demands), feedback, rewards, job control, participation, job security, and supervisor support” (job resources) can lead to employee engagement and disengagements. In respect of these, one could suggest that when employees are engaged with their work, commitment could be enhanced.

Yousaf, Atif Riaz, Ahmad, Ehsan and Mirza (2011) averred that though scholars and policymakers are concerned with employee commitment in general, their concern for public sector is high than in the private sector. This is because, the public sector has been touted with inefficiencies,

corruption, favouritism and nepotism and general lack of employee commitment (Ntliziywana, 2017). The current study is situated within the public sector specifically, the University of Cape Coast. The University is operating with the vision to become a university that is strongly positioned, with a world-wide acclaim. As a University, many units, sections, departments and colleges that are stocked with lecturers, administrators, security personnel and other casual workers work together for effective attainment of the overall goal of providing quality education to students and becoming the worldwide acclaim. More, particularly, the administrative staff of the university are such important body that facilitate effective running of all units, sections, departments, schools, faculties and colleges within the university. Their roles include processing of administrative documents, managing student activities, curriculum choices, financial aid, student recruiting, admissions, scholarships and student affairs, public relations initiatives and more. As a result, staff commitment to the goal is paramount to the attainment of the overall university's objective.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Many public sector institutions are facing many problems regarding employee's commitment towards their job as a result of the job characteristics, work environment and compensations. More specifically, employees in the higher education including universities have since exhibited low commitment, dissatisfaction and feel deprived due to the nature of their job characteristics and design comparative of their counterparts in private sector (Kumasey, Bawole & Hossain, 2017). For many occasions the administrative staffs of Ghanaian public universities including University of Cape Coast have gone on



several strikes calling for better conditions of service and good work environments (Nyan, 2017). These agitations have many implications on the commitment levels to their job and which also affect the level of service and the achievement of national interests.

Although evidence suggests that employee commitment to the organisation could be improved through human resources management practices such as training (Khan & Iqbal, 2020; Ocen, Francis & Angundaru, 2017; Nkosi, 2015; Ashar, Ghafoor, Munir & Hafeez, 2013), compensation (Ahmad, Kura, Bibi, Khalid & rahman Jaaffar, 2019; Hoque, Awang, Siddiqui & Sabiu, 2018; Alamelu, Surulivel, Motha, Amudha & Selvabaskar, 2015; Nawab & Bhatti, 2011) and career development (Napitupulu et al., 2017; Li, Tong & Wong, 2014; Shujaat, Sana, Aftab & Ahmed, 2013), less attention has been paid to the role of supervisors such as ebullient supervision and other internal factors such as workplace friendship and engagement.

Ford et al. (2019) and Becker and Tews (2016) have lauded workplace fun exhibited by ebullient supervisors at work as an effective strategy for attracting employee commitment and other related employee behaviours. Again, in their study, Han, Kim and Jeong (2016) found that workplace fun to have a significant influence on employee commitment and performance of hotel employees in the USA. The implications reached from their study indicated that workplace fun initiated by the supervisors are an effective means to promote the commitment and eventual performance of frontline work teams at hotels. From the above, the importance of supervisors, especially those who create fun environment, on employee commitment to the achievement of organisational goals becomes apparent and critical goals

(Abasilim, Gberevbie & Osibanjo, 2019; Keskes, 2014) and should be investigated further.

Furthermore, because literature has attributed workplace friendship (Potgieter, Ferreira & Coetzee, 2019; Yu-Ping et al., 2020) and employee engagement (Kim et al., 2017; Al-Rabayah & Khasawneh, 2016) as essential contextual factors that influence employee commitment, they may serve as good indirect links for ebullient supervision and employee commitment. Again, studies on ebullient supervision are still evolving, the few of those, are concentrated in the developed countries (Djastuti et al., 2019; Ford et al., 2019) neglecting the developing countries such as Ghana. Hence, this study investigates the role of ebullient supervision at influencing the commitment of administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast. The study also seeks to examine the mediation roles of workplace friendship and employee engagement in the nexus between ebullient supervision and employee commitment.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to examine the role of ebullient supervision on commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The research objectives of the study include the following. To:

- i. analyse the influence of ebullient supervision on commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast.
- ii. analyse the influence of workplace friendship on commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast.



- iii. examine the influence of employee engagement on commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast.
- iv. assess the mediation role of workplace friendship in the nexus between ebullient supervision on commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast.
- v. assess the mediation role of employee engagement in the relationship between ebullient supervision on commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The study sought to address the following research hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between ebullient supervision and administrative staff's commitment.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between workplace friendship and administrative staff's commitment.

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and administrative staff's commitment

H4: Workplace friendship mediates the relationship between ebullient supervision and administrative staff's commitment.

H5: employee engagement mediates the relationship between ebullient supervision and administrative staff's commitment.

### **Significance of the Study**

Investigating ebullient supervision and employee commitment across the tertiary education levels can be of prime interest to the education sector, the government and policymakers. It helps the institutional managers such as Vice Chancellors, Provosts, Deans, and Heads of Departments to identify how

to relate with the employees and to formulate appropriate policies that will help attract the commitment of the administrators in the universities. The results of the study will also help employers know the values and beliefs and expectations such as workplace friendship and employee engagement that will make them feel enthused to offer their best on the job.

Moreover, being a pioneering study on the topic in Ghana the results and recommendations from the study will set the pace in developing and discussing contextual solutions to economic issues in another context. There is no doubt that the existing literature will see the contribution of this study as to how ebullient supervision (leaders with fun) behaviours contribute to employees' commitment through the intervention of workplace friend and employee engagement. The study will also contribute to theory; social exchange, and how leaders with fun at work and other factors such as employee engagement and workplace friendship collaborate to influence employees' commitment in the higher education levels in Ghana.

### **Delimitation**

The study was conducted in the university of Cape Coast with respondents being the administrative staff of the university. The limitation of the study to the administrative staff was due to the premise that such workers deal directly with all other workers of the university. Thus, their roles are paramount in university affairs. Also, the variables considered in the study were ebullient supervision, workplace friendship, employee engagement and employee commitment. The study utilised the partial least squared equation modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis.

### **Limitation**

This study like any other study was not without limitations. The study required that the researcher gathers relevant information from all the potential respondents in order to get thorough understanding about how the constructs are related to each other. However, there are instances where some respondents were not willing to cooperate with the researcher in terms of responding to the questionnaire on time. Furthermore, time and cost prevented the current study from employing the mixed research approach. Although, the findings of the study are helpful, a qualitative study alongside the quantitative method would have given more insight into the phenomenon. Despite the challenges enumerated above, the researcher followed the required research processes that ensured that the study's result was not affected.

### **Organisation of the Study**

The dissertation is organised into five chapters. Chapter one, illustrates the background and statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, and a set of research questions and hypothesis. It also includes the scope and significance of the study and the organisation of the thesis. Chapter two, review of relevant literature on the subject of ebullient supervision, workplace friendship, employee engagement, and staff commitment. Chapter three, the research methods, presents the methodological framework adopted for the study. It covers the research design, a description of the study area, characteristics of the target population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, fieldwork, as well as data processing and analysis.

Chapter four presents the findings from data to be collected from the employees of the firms and make necessary inferences from the results.

Chapter five is the summary, conclusions, and recommendations which draws together all aspects of this research in a concise manner. It also explores the possibility of extending this research in the future.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to outline arguments made by prior researchers concerning the constructs under the study. A literature review is a comprehensive overview of prior research regarding a specific topic (Denney & Tewksbury, 2013). The chapter opens a discussion on the relevant theories that underpin the study and have been adopted in extant literature to expand knowledge in the field. The chapter further reviewed the concepts such as ebullient supervision, workplace friendship, employee engagement and employee commitment concepts. The chapter also covered an empirical review of studies done on the variables whiles presenting the direction of the study on the pictorial conceptual framework to aid readability and understanding.

#### Theoretical Review

Many theories and models can be deployed to explain the constructs contained in this study. However, the most applicable theory and model from which inferences can be drawn to illustrate the interrelationships among the constructs of the study are the social exchange theory and the job demand-resource model.

#### Social Exchange Theory (SET)

The SET was propounded by Blau (1964) to illustrate how two parties in a relationship seek either party interest through exchanges. According to the famous author, social exchanges are necessary for maintaining good relationships among individuals (i.e., employers and employees) in an



establishment. The theory further suggests that when one party does good or seeks the welfare of the other party, the later will feel obliged to reciprocate another good to the former.

Moreover, Peter (2016) advanced that SET is based on the principle that people enter into relationships in which they can maximise benefits and minimise costs. This stipulates that certain workplace antecedents like a fun supervisor or ebullient leader and work engagement can lead to improved employee attitudes, behaviour and employee commitment (Cropanzano et al., 2001). The premise is that if supervisors take care of employees by providing them fun and making them engaged (Hassan & Ahmed, 2011) in the workplace, the employees, in turn, will view that as beneficial, advantageous, and fair to them and may reciprocate by offering their spirit to the tasks and organisation.

In the context of this study, SET contributes to explaining why employees who perceive their supervisors as creating a fun environment and develop a feeling of obligation to reciprocate with commitment. Previous research has also indicated that fun at workplace elevates workers' performance by promoting employees' affective commitment and individual creativity (Duarte et al., 2021; Ribeiro et al., 2018). Consequently, this will develop the employees' propensity to perform effectively and respond with positive attitude, behaviour, and action – thus, become actively engaged (Paterson et al., 2014). Furthermore, subordinates working under an ebullient supervisor's guidance may feel, in accordance with the norm of reciprocity, the need to improve their performance to repay the leader's positive



behaviours and thus balance the exchange relationship (Wang et al., 2014; Ribeiro et al., 2018).

### **The Job Demands – Resources (JD-R) Model**

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model developed by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001) is among the most frequent used models to explain job demands and resources of an organisation and how they could influence the engagement of employees. The JD-R model also attempts to explain how the conditions of job demands and job resources can influence illness and organisational commitment (Llorens, Bakker, Schaufeli & Salanova, 2006). The model serves as a flexible theoretical tool for conceptualising key aspects of the work environment, explaining and predicting a wide range of work-related outcomes, including stress, burnout, employee engagement, organisational commitment, job satisfaction or productivity (Bakker, 2011).

The two broad job characteristics that relatively and independently influence employee well-being such as engagement and stress are job demands and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). According to Demerouti et al. (2001), whereas job demands are defined by the job aspects that require sustained effort and that are associated with physiological and psychological costs, job resources are described as factors functional in achieving work goals, reducing job demands or stimulating personal growth and development.

These two broad categories may include several variables, some of these variables are relatively general (such as autonomy, work pressure or social support), while others are more dependent on the specific work domain (Bakker & Demerouti 2014). The JDR model argues that the impact of job

demands and job resources on occupational well-being arises through relatively autonomous “dual processes” that have different impacts on stress and employee engagement (Bakker & Demerouti 2014; Schaufeli & Bakker 2004; Hakanen et al., 2006). It appears that job demands predominantly influence experienced stress through a “health impairment process” related to exerted effort and energy, whereas job resources predominantly influence employee engagement through a “motivational process” related to the fulfilling of basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence (Bakker & Demerouti 2014, p. 9).

Thus, using the JDR framework, when ebullient leaders by their characteristics seek to clarify job roles, provide social support, growth and career advancement opportunities, autonomy, performance feedback, while also taking efforts to facilitate the reduction of workload work-home interference or job insecurity (Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Boyd et al., 2011; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006) could lead to employee engagement and commitment.

### **Conceptual Review**

This section reviews the concepts to help enhance our knowledge concerning the constructs used in this study. The constructs are ebullient supervision, workplace friendship, employee engagement and employee commitment. The definitions given in the literature concerning constructs will be addressed followed by a discussion of its application.

### **Ebullient Supervision**

The concept of ebullient supervision is still new and take its root from the concepts of fun exhibited by leaders or supervisors at work place

(Petelczyc, Capezio, Wang, Restubog & Aquino, 2018; Karl, Peluchette & Harland, 2007). In many cases scholars have often referred ebullient supervision as synonymous to fun or play at work (Plester Cooper-Thomas & Winqvist, 2015). Following the recommendation of Podsakoff and colleagues (Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2016), other scholars had to clearly define the construct and offered certain characteristics. According to Fort et al. (2019, pp. 151) an ebullient supervisor is “one who through words and deeds helps create a work environment that is considered by a subordinate as a fun place to work”.

Fluegge-Woolf (2014) argue that fun at work involves any social, interpersonal, or task activities at work of a playful or humorous nature which provide an individual with amusement, enjoyment, or pleasure. The conceptualisation is consistent with other descriptions, including that of Lamm and Meeks (2009), who define workplace fun as playful social, interpersonal, recreational, or task activities intended to provide amusement, enjoyment, or pleasure. Such activities are indicative of a fun work environment, which, according to Ford et al. (2019), intentionally encourages, initiates, and supports a variety of enjoyable and pleasurable activities that positively impact the attitude and productivity of individuals and groups. Ebullient supervisors facilitate and promote a socially engaging, amusing and spontaneous positive events in the workplace; and such events are essential in humanising for employees (Tews, Michel & Bartlett, 2012).

Statler, Heracleous and Jacobs (2011) posit that fun is a need people seek to fulfill at work, and as such an ebullient supervisor is one who provides a conduit to achievement of valued resources by creating a fun work

environment through structuring social, interpersonal or task activities at work. While there is a large and growing literature on the benefits of creating positive psychological capital led by Luthans (e.g., Luthans, 2002) and the ways in which supervisors can help employees thrive at work (Paterson et al., 2014), there has been far less effort dedicated to understanding what a supervisor does to make working fun or the impact an ebullient supervisor can have on beneficial employee and organisational outcomes such as commitment.

Moccia (2013) also pointed that fun work environments led to increased employee enthusiasm, group cohesion, employee satisfaction, organisational citizenship, mutual trust, and reduction of complaints about boredom. Furthermore, organisations where employees are having fun had an easier time recruiting and retaining employees. Thus, based on the response from these HR professionals, having fun at work has many upside benefits and no meaningful downsides. This includes humor (one of the components of this study's measure of fun), which some research has shown to have dysfunctional outcomes (Tremblay & Gibson, 2016). Thus, the effects of ebullient supervisors displaying behaviours and taking actions that create a fun work environment may yield a fun work environment with a positive effect on subordinates' work-related attitudes and psychological health.

Scholars have studied fun at work in different settings. For instance, in a study focused on the hospitality industry, Tews, Michel, and Bartlett (2012) examined the impact of three forms of fun in the context of applicant attraction. They asked a sample of undergraduate job seekers to evaluate hypothetical recruiting scenarios that included three forms of fun: fun



activities, fun coworker interactions, and fun job responsibilities. Their results demonstrated that fun was a stronger predictor of applicant attraction than compensation and opportunities for advancement.

In a later study with Becker (Becker & Tews, 2016), the authors examined the impact of 12 fun activities on employee engagement, constituent attachment, and employee turnover with a sample of 205 employees from 11 hotels. The results indicated that fun activities were related to both engagement and constituent attachment but not turnover. While there are other scholars supporting the value of fun at work (Han, Kim & Jeong, 2016; Pryor, Singleton, Taneja & Humphreys, 2010), some argue that more research is needed to validate the outcomes claimed (Owler, Morrison & Plester, 2010). Additional support comes from Pryor et al. (2010) who concluded from their research review that workplace fun positively affects key performance indicators such as safety, quality, productivity, worker retention, and achieving goals. Likewise, Han et al. (2016) reported that fun work activities both create a fun work environment and enhance interpersonal trust and group cohesion. Other writers seek to expand the definition to better describe both what fun is and how it affects organisational outcomes (Plester, Cooper-Thomas & Winquist, 2015).

Concerning the measurement of ebullient supervision, the earliest reported systematic study to offer insights into what a supervisor might do to create a fun setting (to be an ebullient supervisor) is seen in a survey of human resource (HR) managers reported by Ford and colleagues (Collison et al., 2002; Ford et al., 2003). This research was based on an extensive review of the practitioner literature to create a questionnaire that was sent to a sample of



HR managers from the Society of Human Resource Managers (SHRM), a large HR manager's professional association. They were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed that the items most frequently mentioned in the literature characterised a fun work environment.

The 10 items measured were recognition of personal milestones, social events, celebrations of professional achievements, opportunities for volunteerism, stress relief activities, games, humor, friendly competitions, opportunities for personal development, and office entertainment. Responses were factor analysed and found to all load on the same factor. The respondents were also asked to list in an open-ended question other things that their organisations did to promote fun. The majority of things listed represented various ways of celebrating personal milestones or having a special social event with food. The authors concluded from their data that “a fun work environment intentionally encourages, initiates, and supports a variety of enjoyable and pleasurable activities that positively impact the attitude and productivity of individuals and groups” (Ford et al., 2003, p. 22).

In a later study, Fluegge-Woolf (2014) developed a four-dimensional measure of fun, including socializing, celebrating, personal freedoms, and global fun. Socializing refers to friendly social interactions among coworkers; celebrating refers to marking special events and having social gatherings at work; personal freedoms refer to employees being afforded flexibility and autonomy regarding workplace attire, playing music, and playing around at work; and global fun refers to an overall evaluation of whether an organization has a fun work climate. Extending earlier work by McDowell (2004), Fluegge-

Woolf (2014), found that fun has a positive impact on employee commitment, task performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB).

From this point Ford et al. (2019) came out with a 15-item comprehensive scale for ebullient supervision measured on a 7-point Likert type scale. Respondents were asked to respond to the questions with their current supervisor in mind. The survey was pilot tested twice to ensure the questions were understandable. The conclusion reached in their study revealed that an ebullient supervisor is one that creates a fun work environment through enabling these types of activities and actions.

### **Workplace Friendship**

The idea of workplace friendship was first introduced by Hackman and Lawler (1971) as one of the dimensions of job characteristics in organisations. This dimension was included to permit exploration of the impact of the interpersonal characteristics of job design. Hackman and Lawler found that friendship opportunities available in organisations enhance coworker and supervisor interactions. Fast forward, Riordan and Griffeth (1995) also noted that friendship opportunities at the workplace can foster job involvement, job satisfaction and can decrease the propensity for the employees to turnover. Interpersonal relationships in an organisation comprise work relationships and workplace friendships (Mao et al., 2012; Mao & Hsieh, 2017).

Workplace friendships that include a voluntary and personalistic focus among employees differ from work relationships, which are characterised by imposed and work-role bonds (Morrison & Wright, 2009; Sias, Smith & Avdeyeva, 2003). That is, employees with workplace friendships develop friendships by choice, treat each other as whole persons, and offer assistance

reciprocally and mutually (e.g. two-way-direction nature); employees with work relationships treat each other as work-role occupants and provide support compulsorily (e. g. unidirectional nature) (Mao et al., 2012; Mao & Hsieh, 2017). Therefore, workplace friendships provide resources and support more actively than work relationships do. Although both are crucial predictors of employee job effectiveness, but they are usually considered conceptually distinct.

Biçer and Büyükyılmaz (2017) defined workplace friendship as how much employees perceive that their jobs allow them to talk with, and establish informal relationships with other employees and supervisors. This suggests that employees can interact with their supervisors and co-workers about job-related matters, such as the job tasks that need to be done and the best way to accomplish these tasks. In addition, workers can interact frequently about nonrelated job tasks, such as the weather, current events, and leisure pursuits and how stressful or interesting their jobs are (Zhuang, Chen, Chang, Guan & Huan, 2020).

According to Bader, Hashim and Zaharim (2013, p. 218), workplace friendships is a term used to describe the “nonexclusive voluntary workplace relations that involve mutual trust, commitment, reciprocal liking and shared interest and values”. In view of the authors friendship at work is not just an “acquaintanceship,” but carries more value and quality because the workers feel more relaxed and air their opinion about issues surrounding their job and ways to improve upon them. Nougrou (2017) stated that friendship at work is voluntary, reciprocal and equal, which distinguishes it from other workplace relationships, such as supervisor-subordinate relationships, which are

involuntary and may not be reciprocal or equal. The scholar, therefore, noted that a "friend at work" is someone with whom people choose to have a relationship because they find the relationship enjoyable and can socialise with them even outside of work and/or with whom they share personal information or other interests beyond their job. Thus, when institutional managers create an atmosphere of "friendship" at work will breed courtesy among colleagues at work, and so doing lessen the pressures that come with performing one's job (Kohan, Safari & Teimouri, 2018; Ozbek, 2018; Rumens, 2017).

Practitioners and academics have focused on workplace friendship, possibly because of the positive outcomes of workplace friendships in organisations. For example, Nielsen, Jex, and Adams (2000) reported that workplace friendships are negatively related to turnover intention. Mao et al. (2012) demonstrated a positive relationship between workplace friendships and perceived job significance. Sias, Heath, Perry, Silva, and Fix (2004) showed that the deterioration of workplace friendships increases emotional stress and turnover and decreases the ability to perform tasks. Asgharian, Anvari, Ahmad and Tehrani (2015) reported that workplace friendship is positively associated with job satisfaction. Therefore, workplace friendship is a crucial determinant of employee behaviours such as commitment and organisational effectiveness.

To measure workplace friendship, several instruments have been proposed and used over time. Riordan and Griffeth (1995) adapted six items from the Job Dimensions Instrument (JDI) developed by Hackman and Lawler (1971) to measure friendship opportunities, or how much employees perceived that their jobs allowed them to talk with and establish informal relations with



other employees. The major limitation of this scale is that it only measures the opportunities for friendships versus their actual existence. This is a limitation because an employee can have the opportunity to make friends at work but not take advantage of these opportunities. Wright (1974) also developed the Acquaintance Description Form (ADF) to measure several dimensions of friendship such as the level of interdependence and difficulty of maintenance at the workplace. The main limitation of the ADF is that it was not specifically designed to assess the quality of workplace friendships; rather, it was designed to assess the quality of friendships in general. However, Nielsen, Jex and Adams' (2000) instrument seems to capture key indicators of workplace friendship including friendship opportunities, prevalence and quality as proposed by early scholars. The scale was initially made of 35 items, and after running confirmatory factory factor analysis on the items were reduced to six. The present study adopts this scale to examine how workplace friendship in educational institutions in Ghana could foster certain work behaviours.

### **Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement has become an important matter of concern for leaders and the managers in organisations across the globe and they recognise it as a vital element that affects the organisational effectiveness, well-being, innovation and competitiveness (Welch, 2011). The interest and numerous discussions on employee engagement have been increasing in human resource development, psychology, management, occupational health care communities and recently in the education sector (Bakker et al., 2011; Naidoo & Martins, 2014). Historically, employee engagement dates back to the work of Kahn (1990), who defined it as the concurrent manifestation and expression of an



individual's ideal self in task behaviours that encourage a connection to work and to others, a connection to the personal presence (physical, cognitive, and emotional) and a connection to active, full role performance. According to the scholar, the work-engaged person maintains a personal identity separate from one's work role and does not sacrifice this identity through a strict identification with a chosen occupation.

Even though the concept has gained more interest in recent years, is still difficult to define and consensus has not been reached. Some scholars have attempted to describe it as vigour, dedication and absorption. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) postulated that engagement is characterised by absorption in one's work, which allows for effortless concentration, a clear mind, as well as a sense of enjoyment and engrossment. Furthermore, employees who are absorbed in their work will be focused and may find themselves experiencing flow or loss of self-consciousness and distortion in time, thinking that time is passing faster than usual (Schweitzer, 2014). Ogboso and Amah (2016) also noted that vigour is the feeling and resilience one experiences with his job that propels them to persist when confronted with challenge and difficulty. Moreover, an employee who is experiencing employee engagement is dedicated, with a sense of pride and enthusiasm that pervades all work-related tasks (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Putting the three together, Jeeve, Oppenheimer and Konje (2015) defined employee engagement as a positive attitude toward work characterised by vigour (high levels of energy and perseverance), dedication (work involvement, enthusiasm, and inspiration), and absorption (work immersion and concentration). From the point of view of van Beek et al. (2012),

employee engagement demonstrates one's positive and persistent state of mind that comprises personal interest in one's work as well as satisfaction and enjoyment from the work itself. In other words, it is a term used to describe the extent to which the employees are involved with, committed to, enthusiastic and passionate about their work (Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2017).

Dauids (2011) noted employee engagement to be resulting in positive job-related attitudes, reduced work stress, good mental health, acquisition of job and personal resources as well as intriguing intrinsic motivation and good work performance. When an individual is engaged, they are described by Schaufeli (2013) as being in gear or showing an intensified level of emotional involvement, a comfortable state of mind and elimination of the work-related stress. Schaufeli (2012) also concurred that those employees who are engaged feel more committed to the organisation, are less often absent, and they do not intend to leave the organisation because such employees seldomly get stressed or bored with their job. Moreover, Bakker and Schaufeli (2015) and Salanova, Del Líbano, Llorens and Schaufeli (2014) stipulated that engaged employees experience positive emotions, and enjoy very good mental and psychosomatic health, particularly, they exhibit personal initiative and have a strong motivation to `learn, willing "to go the extra mile" to perform better.

From the viewpoint of Singh and Chopra (2018) engaged employees deliver superior service quality, as perceived by their customers report fewer errors, are less often involved in occupational injuries and accidents, show more innovative work behaviours, and are better rated by their supervisors in terms of effectiveness, job performance and fewer stress levels than their less engaged colleagues. Therefore, engaged employees are characterised by a

passion for their work and are “pulled” to work. In line with this notion, employee engagement is associated with freedom in carrying out work activities and participating in work-related decisions, indicating that engaged employees can often participate in activities that they value and find interesting (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018).

Concerning the measurement of employee engagement, the Utrecht Employee engagement Scale (UWES) revised by Schaufeli and Salanova (2007) has been the popular tool that measures three areas of employee engagement representing behavioural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. These three dimensions correspond to worker engagement themes of vigour, dedication, and absorption, respectively, in the current work.

### **Employee Commitment**

During the 1990s, commitment continued to be a major focus of researches. It is a psychological state that characterises the employee’s relationship with the organisation (Zerihun Kinde & Kaur, 2018). This has implications in terms of continuing his or her membership in the organisation. A committed employee is one who stays with the organisation under any favorable or unfavorable circumstances affecting the organisation (Malaysia, 2016). Furthermore, Beheshtifar and Herat (2013) defined employee commitment as the degree to which an employee identifies with the organisation and wants to continue actively participating in it.

Palihakkara and Weerakkody (2019) posit that employee commitment is about an employee’s loyalty to the organisation, the willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation, the degree of goal and value congruency between the employee and the organisation, and the employee’s desire to

remain employed by the organisation. Over time organisations build up physical and human resources thereby developing a capability to use these resources to provide different kinds of services. Subsequent research (Barney et al., 2011) focused on the importance of tacit knowledge, i.e. things that an organisation has learnt but about which it may be unconscious as it is uncodified knowledge being with individual employees or with a group of employees.

Studies have shown that organisational commitment has other benefits to the organisation like low turnover, organisational citizenship behaviour, increased satisfaction and performance that can be used to transform higher education institutions (Ozsahin, Zehir, Acar & Sudak 2013). Committed employees can contribute to the organisation's overall wellbeing (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). Inter alia, it increases organisational effectiveness, reduce turnover and most importantly make things work even in circumstances where the environment is not conducive and there are limited resources (Meyer & Allen, 1990; Shahid & Azhar, 2013).

According to Al Zefeiti and Mohamad (2017), an organisation with highly committed employees is more successful than an organisation with less committed employees. On the other hand, employees with low organizational commitment exhibit unwanted behavior such as arriving late at work, detachment and absenteeism (Ozsahin et., 2013). Therefore, if employees are committed, they can be on time and contribute more to the organisation. This is supported by Haque, Fernando and Caputi (2019) revealed that there is strong correlation between organisational commitment and job performance and withdrawal behavior. Thus, if employees are not committed to their work



this might affect the organisational performance negatively to foster change and adapt to the dynamic environment (Ozsahin et al., 2013).

In trying to measure commitment, Allen and Meyer (1990) also proposed a three-component model of commitment, which integrated affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. In view of the authors, affective commitment refers to employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. The continuance commitment refers to commitment based on the costs the employees associate with leaving the organization. As such, in this type of commitment, the fewer viable alternatives employees have, the stronger will be their continuance commitment to their current employer. Normative commitment refers to employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organisation.

### **Affective Commitment**

Affective commitment is argued to have three subcomponents, "(1) the emotional attachment to the organisation; (2) the identification with the organisation and (3) the involvement in the organisation" (Ribeiro, Yücel & Gomes, 2018, p. 2). According to Al Zefeiti and Mohamad (2017), affective commitment occurs when an individual is intensely attached to the organisation and to the duties that they perform. The authors further propose that the affective commitment is primarily based on the emotional ties that develop due to the positive experiences in the organisation. An employee who is affectively committed to the organisation aligns his goals with the organisational goals and wishes to remain with the organisation (Qing et al., 2019). Therefore, affective commitment has relevance to this study as it may assist in getting an employee's view on their attachment to the organisation.



Affective commitment fosters a sense of belonging and is generally related to an employee who is emotionally attached to the organisation. Such individuals exhibit greater capabilities to be involved in the activities of an organisation and are always ready to put in extra effort beyond their duty towards the achievement of the organisation's goals (Nazir, Qun, Hui & Shafi, 2018). Moreover, individuals who prefer to stay in the organisation will be more motivated than those who are forced in some way to be with the organisation (Xerri, 2013). Consequently, it has been observed that employees who have a greater level of commitment towards their organization always come up with creative solutions to work-based problems, and as such, demonstrate a greater tendency towards innovative behaviours (Nazir et al., 2018).

### **Continuance Commitment**

Meyer and Allen (1990) postulate that continuance commitment is the degree to which employees feel committed to their organisation by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving. The employees fear the loss of any benefits or advantages that they have or that their organisation may offer, hence they choose to stay. Employees remain in their work because they feel they need to stay with the organisation. Al Zefeiti and Mohamad (2017) described continuance commitment (CC) as perceived costs associated with leaving the organisation. This indicates that when employees bear higher cost of leaving organisation, they are more committed to their organisations not because they want to, but because they have to.

Furthermore, they believe that the threat of losing attractive benefits such as favourable organisational culture is one of the perceived costs of leaving an organisation (Marcoux, Guihur & Leclerc, 2021). Marcoux et al. (2021) submit that employees who have a remarkable position in their organisation do not want to lose due to the highly paid they get, thus, they do not leave their organisations easily due to the higher amount of benefit they lose in case of quitting their job. Moreover, employees who have limited opportunities for alternative employment that offer better packages, certainly, remain with their current organization because they have to remain. Continuance commitment can be increased when organisation has a clear root for a promotion (Töytäri, Rajala and Alejandro, 2015), a good reward system, an obvious plan for career development, being consistent in their operations as well as involving their employees in matters of key decision making.

### **Normative Commitment**

Normative commitment is based on the perceived obligation to stay with the organisation (Kaptijn 2009). Normative commitment is said to develop as a result of the employees' beliefs that have been internalised through the socialisation processes (Van Dyk, 2011). One may feel that they need to stay because of the investments the company has made on them; hence they stay even when they are unhappy. Normative commitment (NC) in the field of management has been described as the obligation to remain in a particular organization (Yousef, 2017). Employees in this type of commitment remain with their organization because they feel that they should to do so for moral reasons, not because they want or need to (Bashir & Long, 2015).

Nongo and Ikyanyon (2012) asserted that although some employees intentionally leave their organisations to make them suffer, while, others do not accept leaving their organisations if they are in dire need to them. Likewise, Azadi et al. (2013) see that employees are less likely to leave an organisation if their values indicate that are inappropriate to do so. Moreover, Meyer et al. (1989) have found that committed employees are more likely to remain with the organization and strive towards the organization's mission, goals and objectives.

Having identified the three different types of organisational commitment, it can be argued that employees with a strong affective commitment remain with the organisation because they want to desire to remain, those whose primary link to the organisation is based on continuance commitment remain with the organisation because they feel they need to do so for material benefits perceived cost of leaving (Denison & Neale, 2011)) and those with a strong normative commitment remain because they feel they ought to do so perceived obligation to remain (Shoaib, Zainab, Maqsood & Sana, 2013). Accordingly, Meyer and Allen (1997) suggest that one can achieve a better understanding of an employee's relationship with an organisation when all three forms of commitment are considered together.

### **Empirical Review**

This empirical review section is developed in line with the study's specific objectives. The review will help provide arguments and findings of prior researchers as well as outlining areas of consensus and disagreement thereby help avoid previous errors committed by the earlier scholars. The

review will also guide refine the problem statement and development of hypotheses.

### **Ebullient Supervision and Employee Commitment**

Ford et al. (2003) discovered that there are literally hundreds of workplace fun activities in use across the USA by asking 572 human resource professionals. The categories of the activities included recognition of personal milestones (e.g. birthdays and hiring anniversaries), social events (e.g. picnics, parties and social gatherings), public celebrations of professional achievements (e.g. award banquets), opportunities for community volunteerism (e.g. civic groups), stress release activities (e.g. exercise facilities and massages), humor (e.g. cartoons, jokes in newsletters and e-mails), games (e.g. darts, bingo and company-sponsored athletic teams), friendly competitions among employees (e.g. attendance and sales contests), opportunities for personal development (e.g. quilting class and book club) and entertainment (e.g. bands, skits and plays; Ford et al., 2003)

Becker and Tews (2016) studied the impact of fun activities among entry-level employees in the hospitality industry. Specifically, the research examined the impact of 12 fun activities on employee engagement, constituent attachment, and employee commitment. The study drew a sample of 205 employees from 11 hotel properties in the United States. The results demonstrated that the fun activities overall were significantly related to engagement and constituent attachment, and commitment.

Han et al. (2016) also investigated the relationship between workplace fun and employee performance and commitment in hotels. The conceptual model of the study was tested based on responses from 271 frontline hotel



employees (including managers) in the USA, who had full-time work tenure of more than three months in a three-star or above-rated hotel. The study revealed that workplace fun activities enhance team performance by promoting employees' workplace fun experience and by facilitating interpersonal trust and group cohesion, which, in turn, reduce intra-group conflict and stimulates interpersonal citizenship behaviours and employee commitment respectively. The study concluded that workplace fun initiatives by the management are an effective means to promote the commitment and performance of frontline work teams at a hotel.

In Choi et al.'s (2011) study, the conceptual model was tested based on responses from 234 hospitality students in the US who are Generation Yers and had worked in the hospitality industry for more than 3 months. This study revealed that Generation Y employees' attitude toward workplace fun exhibited by supervisors positively affects their commitment to work. In turn, Generation Yers' experienced workplace fun showed direct effects on their job satisfaction, task performance, and interpersonal citizenship behaviours. The study also noted that workplace fun encouraged by supervisors predicted job satisfaction significantly and enhanced employees' task performance and interpersonal job satisfaction.

### **Workplace Friendship and Employee Commitment**

Yu-Ping et al. (2020) drew from the social identity theory to explore the workplace friendship and adopted the social support theory to examine the effects of workplace friendship on affective commitment, helping behaviour, as well as turnover intention. Research respondents of this study were civil affairs workers in Tainan and Chiayi County, Taiwan. Random sampling was



used to collect anonymous questionnaires from 391 of the employees. The results of structural equation modeling (SEM) demonstrated that workplace friendship had positive influences on affective commitment and helping behaviour and a negative influence on turnover intention.

According to Potgieter et al. (2019), employees' psychological attachment to their organisation remains an important topic of inquiry for organisations concerned about improving their talent management practices for the purpose of retaining valuable human capital. Thus, their study explored the constructs of job-embedded sacrifice, workplace friendship and career concerns as potential underlying explanatory mechanisms of employees' affective, continuance and normative commitment towards the organisation. Organisational attachment theory was utilised as theoretical framework to study the relations among the variables. A non-probability convenience sample (N = 200) of academic and administrative staff members employed in a South African higher educational institution participated in the study. A cross-sectional, quantitative research design approach was followed. Multiple regression analysis was performed. The study found that workplace friendship positively predicted affective, continuance and normative commitment.

Akila and Priyadarshini (2018) also stated that friendships play a role in different aspects of our life. These friendships within organisations might hinder or facilitate both the organisational and employee functioning. Therefore, their study examined the different degrees of friendship (work spouse, special peer, collegial peer and information peer) that exist in organisations and their effect on the employee's job commitment and intention to leave. Principally, the study investigated the influence of different types of

friendships on the employee's job commitment and intention to leave. A questionnaire was constructed using a friendship scale, commitment scale and intention to leave scale. The samples for the study are professionals who are working in the service industries. Snowballing and convenient sampling technique was used to collect data. The results indicated friendship at workplace influenced staff commitment positively and intention to leave negatively.

In another study conducted by Chao (2018), the author analysed workplace friendship and organisational commitment relationship and to ascertain whether such relationship could reduce the turnover rate of employees in the hotel industry. The sample was carried out in January and February of 2018 by high star hotel employees, 300 valid questionnaires were collected, and the PROCESS analysis method was used to verify the hypothesis. The results show that workplace friendships have a significant impact on organizational commitment and job performance, and organisational commitment has a significant impact on job performance, and organisational commitment also shows complementary mediating effects. The friendly workplace atmosphere will affect the performance of the employees, and then affect the hotel's operating conditions and results.

Khaleel, Chelliah, Khalid, Jamil and Manzoor (2016) sought to explore the outcomes of friendship at workplace and employee commitment. Based on the prior literature the study proposed a conceptual framework including Friendship at workplace, job embeddedness and employee engagement. The literature on friendship at workplace, job embeddedness, employee engagement and the related theories were backing as starting-point for

constructing the conceptual model for the study. with a sample of 224 respondents, the study used SEM to treat the objective set for the study. The findings indicated that friendship at workplace was positively related to employee commitment, engagement and job embeddedness.

### **Employee Engagement and Employee Commitment**

Abu-Shamaa et al. (2015) conducted a study on the effect of job satisfaction and work engagement on organisational commitment in manufacturing companies, Nigeria. The study drew a sample of 505 employees from the companies. A questionnaire was constructed using an engagement scale, commitment scale and job satisfaction scale. An empirical study was conducted to validate the variables' relationship to organisational commitment, and the results indicated that both constructs have a positive impact on the employee commitment.

In another study of 294 frontline employees from a Jordan banking sector, Albdour and Altarawneh (2014) revealed that job engagement and organisational engagement were positively associated with the affective and normative components of organisational commitment. However, it was also found that job engagement had a negative influence on continuance component of organisational commitment. In their study, a simple random sampling technique was deployed to gather data from 383 employees of the banks studied and analysed using regression.

Agyemang and Ofei (2013) investigated employee work engagement and organisational commitment using a comparative approach of private and public sector employees in Ghana. One hundred and five (105) employees of three public and three private institutions with analogous characteristics in the

Accra Metropolis of Ghana were purposively sampled. Pearson product-moment correlation and independent t-test were the statistical tools used in analysing the data collected. The findings of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and employee commitment. Employees of private organisations have a higher level of employee engagement and organisational commitment than employees in public organisations, and long-tenured and short tenured employees did not differ in commitment levels.

Kirk-Brown and Dijk (2011) investigated the relationship between work engagement and work performance in 604 employees in Australia. Of these, 92 had chronic illnesses. They also looked at the mediating role of psychological safety. Hierarchical regression was used to analyse questionnaire data. UWES-17 was used to measure work engagement; a 16-item scale including organisational citizenship behavior individual and organisation was used to measure performance and a 7-item scale to measure psychological safety. Work engagement had a positive relationship with performance for both groups but the relationship was partially mediated by psychological safety only for the employees with chronic illness.

### **The Mediating Role of Workplace Friendship in Ebullient Supervision and Employee Commitment relationship**

The concept of workplace friendships is multifaceted, diverse, and somewhat ambiguous. Berman et al. (2002) described it as a voluntary, person-specific, informal, and reciprocal relationship between employees working in an organization. The concept hinges on a colleague being viewed as a whole person (Sias et al., 2004) rather than just someone doing their job.



Workplace friendships generate a sense of community, trust, and shared values between coworkers. It is associated with characteristics such as intimacy, open communication, open access to information, and timely assistance (Sias & Cahill, 1998). It helps individuals to cope with stressful work situations by providing social and emotional support (Sias, 2009) and they play a role in achieving positive organisational outcomes (Rai & Agarwal, 2018).

There is evidence to suggest that ebullient supervision is important to employee outcomes if it is directed at all team members since they will respond by supporting each other (Hackney & Perrewé, 2018). Also, friends at work are a means of growing one's social resources (i.e., emotional support, informational support, and instrumental support) and decrease the risk of resource depletion (Rai & Agarwal, 2018). Conversely, an employee with minimal networking skills and who has limited opportunities to interact with colleagues will be unable to expand his/her social resources. Workplace friendships help employees to keep informal networks functional within the organisation to enhance their commitment when they have an ebullient supervisor (Choi, Tran & Park, 2015).

### **The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in Ebullient Supervision and Employee Commitment relationship**

Supervisors with fun at work may function as a job resource and provide individuals with a break or recovery period from work, thus increasing their work engagement (Fluegge-Woolf, 2014). Consequently, enhanced work engagement may be linked to greater individual commitment. Employee engagement has been shown to relate to commitments (Abu-Shamaa et al., 2015; Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014). Fluegge-Woolf (2014) used the job-



demands resources model to study whether fun at work enhanced work engagement. Arguing that the social and interpersonal nature of fun at work may serve as a job resource and, thus, enhance work engagement.

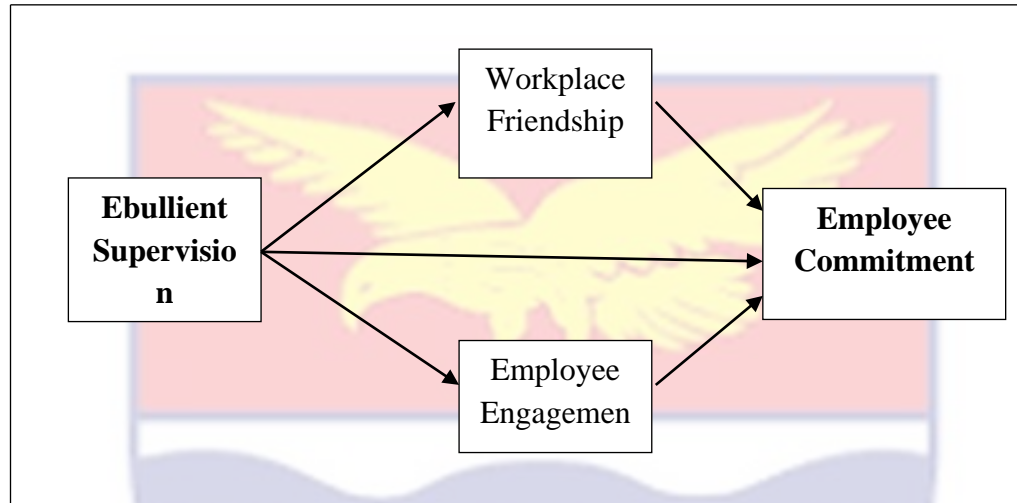
Fluegge-Woolf (2014) studied employees and supervisors and found support for her prediction that fun at work was positively related to work engagement. In a later study investigating how fun increased engagement, Plester and Hutchison (2016) conducted 59 structured interviews of New Zealand employees and reported that fun at work increased job engagement. Thus, it could be suggested that when supervisors promote an environment at work characterized by fun for which the employees can interact freely and pick interpersonal relationships, then these attitudes may result in the engagement of employees and that could also have implications on commitment.

Moreover, Sendawula, Kimuli, Bananuka and Muganga (2018) concur that people who are highly engaged in an activity feel excited and enthusiastic about their role, say time passes quickly at work, devote extra effort to the activity, identify with the task and describe themselves to others in the context of their task. This therefore means that engaged employees are interested in the success of an organisation and also identify with this success (Rashid, Asad & Ashraf, 2011).

### **Conceptual Framework**

One of the important components of the research is how well to represent one's ideas diagrammatically for easy comprehension of readers. Guntur (2019) argued that the conceptual framework forms the "blueprint" of every research and gives clarity and direction to the ideas being expressed in

such research. Grant and Osanloo (2014) emphasised the importance of a conceptual framework by stating that, it is the foundation upon which research is constructed. Based on the purpose and the guiding objectives of the study, the conceptual framework for this present study is presented in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework*

Source: Author's Construct (2021)

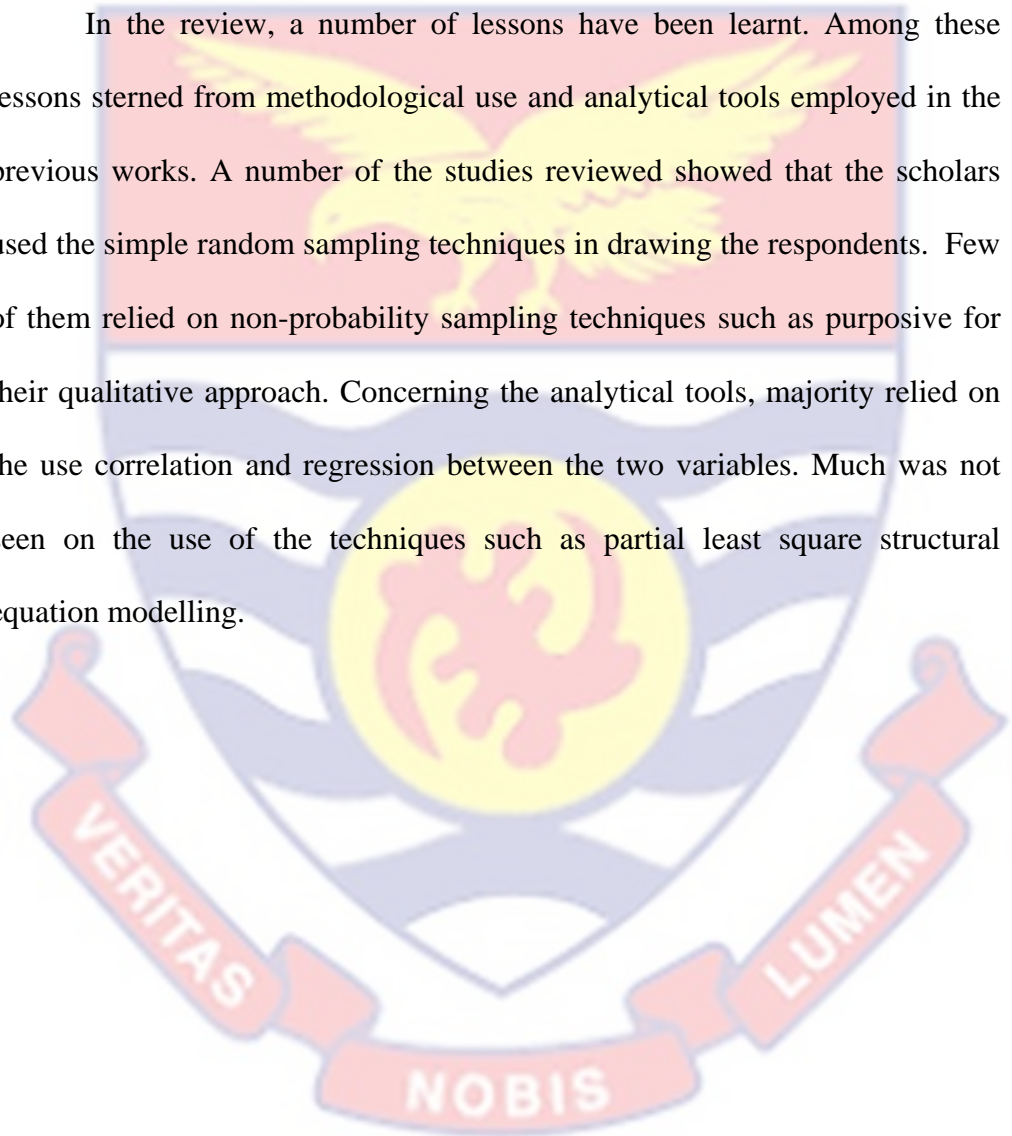
The conceptual framework illustrates the interrelationships of ebullient supervision, workplace friendship, employee engagement, and employee commitment among the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. As depicted in the Figure 1, ebullient supervision serves as the independent variable, employee commitment as dependent variable, and whiles workplace friendship and employee engagement both mediating or intervening variables. According to the framework, it is expected that workplace friendship and employee engagement will mediate or otherwise the relationship between ebullient supervision and employee commitment.

### **Chapter Summary**

The chapter reviewed the literature on theoretical, conceptual and empirical issues relating to ebullient supervision, workplace friendship,

employee engagement, and employee commitment among the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. Important issues and lessons from the review informed the conceptual framework of the study. The review further proved beneficial in the research methods section, analyses, presentation of findings, discussions, conclusions and recommendations.

In the review, a number of lessons have been learnt. Among these lessons stemmed from methodological use and analytical tools employed in the previous works. A number of the studies reviewed showed that the scholars used the simple random sampling techniques in drawing the respondents. Few of them relied on non-probability sampling techniques such as purposive for their qualitative approach. Concerning the analytical tools, majority relied on the use correlation and regression between the two variables. Much was not seen on the use of the techniques such as partial least square structural equation modelling.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used to carry out this study. It therefore identifies how the research was undertaken and the rationale behind each of the methods that was used. The elaborated elements under this section include; research design, research approach, research area, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrument, data collection procedure, reliability, validity, data analysis and ethical issues.

#### Research Approach

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), there are three broad approaches of research, namely; quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods. While quantitative approach enables the researcher to examine associations between variables, qualitative approach deals with small aspects of social reality (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Saunders et al. (2016) advanced that the difference between quantitative methods of research and qualitative methods of research may be influenced by the nature of data used for the study. Whereas numeric data is used in quantitative research, non-numeric data is utilised in a qualitative research.

Neuman (2014) posited that the two approaches can also be differentiated in terms of the procedure used in data collection and analyses. For example, whereas in quantitative research method, questionnaire is predominantly used by researchers for data collection and also analysing data quantitatively, in qualitative research method, interview is used by researchers for data collection and the analysis is done qualitatively. Sekaran and Bougie



(2016), and Saunders et al. (2016) indicated that the third approach which is mixed method is merely a combination of the earlier two approaches. The authors further asserted that whilst the quantitative research method permits the generalisation of the sample results to the entire population, qualitative research method is not for the generalisation of the sample results to the entire population.

The current study employs the quantitative research approach. This is due to the nature and purpose of the study under consideration. The current study demands that researcher collect numerical data that would be analysed quantitatively. The current study also demands that the study's result is generalized on the entire population. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) averred those quantitative methods are often considered as deductive in nature because inferences from tests of statistical hypotheses result to general inferences about characteristics of a population. Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) are also of the view that quantitative approach to research is directed towards the development of testable hypothesis and theories which are generalizable across settings. The factors raised earlier are the reasons behind the choice of quantitative research approach against the qualitative research approach.

### **Research Design**

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a research design is a plan or a guide which specifies how data relating to a given research should be collected, measured and analysed. Kothari (2004) also posited that research designs deal with creation of decisions vis-à-vis the techniques which are utilized in gathering data, the type of strategies and instruments for sampling, and ways in which the constraints of time and cost can be dispensed. Sekaran

and Bougie (2016), and Saunders et al. (2016) categorised research design into three broad categories; namely, exploratory, descriptive and causal designs. In the view of the authors, researchers employ an exploratory design when little or no information exists about how study variables have been dealt with by earlier scholars. Furthermore, a descriptive design is utilized by scholars when they want to describe and understand the characteristics of the study variables. Finally, researchers adopt a causal design when they want to determine how one variable causes another variable to change.

This research adopted correlational research design. The correlational study design which falls under the causal design was also employed, as it helps to explore the relationships or links between the variables under study. Thus, it would help measure the extent to which the study variables are related or to determine which variables are interacting and what type of interaction is occurring.

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) argue that for causal design to be used, a researcher must be certain that a change in the dependent variable is not caused by any other variable except the variable of interest. The authors further asserted that if the study failed to establish the above condition, it could at best be considered as a correlational one. Since this study cannot conclude that employee development is the only variable that causes change in the employee performance, it can only be considered as a correlational one rather than a causal one. Creswell (2014) averred that a correlational design is a helpful design because through it, researchers can examine the relationship between the variables of interest.

### Study Area

The University of Cape Coast was established in October, 1962 as a result of a recommendation of an international commission appointed by the Ghana Government in December, 1960 to advise on the future University education in the country and the possibility of establishing a third University at Cape Coast. The College was formally inaugurated on December 15, 1962 and placed in special relationship with the University of Ghana. In 1964, the government assigned to each of the country's three Public Universities specific fields of operation, and in line with the emphasis then being place on science education, the College was renamed 'The University College of Science Education' and entrusted with the task of training graduate teachers in Arts and Science, but especially the latter for the secondary schools, teacher training colleges, polytechnics and technical universities in Ghana.

The University of Cape Coast Act, (Act 390) was promulgated for granting full university status to the College with effect from October 1, 1971. This was later re-enforced with the University of Cape Coast Law, 1992 (PNDC Law 278). The University of Cape Coast has restructured its degree programmes by de-coupling the study of professional education courses from the main degree courses. This was done to allow flexibility and choice in its course offerings and thus cater for the specific needs of students, while still focusing on its traditional mission of providing education programmes in the other Colleges.

The University is currently organised into five Colleges headed by Provosts, namely: the College of Humanities and Legal Studies; College of Education Studies; College of Agricultural and Natural Sciences; College of

Health and Allied Sciences; and College of Distance Education, and fifteen Faculties/Schools headed by Deans namely: School of Graduate Studies (SGS); Faculty of Arts; Faculty of Social Sciences; Faculty of Law; School of Agriculture; School of Biological Sciences; School of Business; School of Medical Sciences; School of Nursing and Midwifery; School of Allied Health Sciences; School of Physical Sciences; Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences education; Faculty of Science and Technology Education; Faculty of Educational Foundations; and School of Educational Development and Outreach. The vision of the University is to have a university that is strongly positioned, with a world-wide acclaim (UCC, 2016).

### **Population**

The population of a study is defined as the elements or people to be studied and from whom data is obtained (Keller & Warrack, 2003). In other words, population is the universal set of all the existing people, units, items, or events that contain characteristics of interest as well as all the set of possible data values for a subject under study (Castilo, 2009). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010) population can be seen as the target group about which the researcher is interested in gaining information and drawing conclusions. Additionally, target population is defined per this study as a complete set of cases or elements with some common observable characteristics of a particular nature distinct from other population. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) concurs that a population is a well-defined set of people, services, elements, events, group of things or households that are being investigated.



The targeted population of this study constitutes all administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast who are made up of 1,396 administrative staff (UCC, 2019). These category of employees of the university was used because they form the frontline workers who perform sensitive duties within the university. Their role enjoins them to respond to all other workers and students in the university, as such, their commitment to work contributes immensely to university growth and development.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

According to Ofori and Dampson (2011), and Sekaran and Bougie (2016), a sample is the representative portion of the population selected for the study. Saunders et al. (2016) advanced that the rationale behind the use of sample surveys instead of census by scholars is that a complete coverage of the entire population is difficult when dealing with large population. This means that sample surveys help researchers to conduct studies in a most efficient manner when large population is involved. Using the criteria based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample determination table, a sample size of 302 staff was selected to participate in the study.

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) advanced that sampling can be broadly categorised into two main designs; namely, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. According to the authors, whereas probability sampling design permits each element of the population to have a known and non-zero chance of being selected to be included in the sample, non-probability sampling design does not allow each of the elements of the population to have a known chance of being selected.

Based on the purpose of this study, probability sampling design was deemed appropriate and was employed for the study. Furthermore, a simple random sampling technique was employed from the probability sampling techniques. This technique was deemed appropriate because it granted the researcher the opportunity to administer questions to any administrative staff of the university who form the target population without any special interest or considerations. Again, the respondents had similar characteristics as they all are employees within same institution or sector of the economy.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

Collecting data for a study involves using certain research instruments and procedures for collecting the data. In this study, a questionnaire was used in the collection of information from respondents on their respective knowledge on the constructs. A questionnaire is a written document in survey research that has a set of questions given to respondents or used by an interviewer to ask questions and record the answers (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). A questionnaire could be answered by the person from whom information is sought or through an interpreter. According to Neelankavil (2007), questionnaires guarantee greater uniformity, consistency and objectivity in data collected. They also provide privacy and convenience for respondents during completion while guaranteeing greater anonymity (Neelankavil, 2007). Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer and Tourangeau (2011) posit that there are distinct advantages in using questionnaires rather than interview methodology. One of such advantage is that questionnaires are less expensive and easier to administer than personal interview.

The questionnaire included closed-ended items, in which the questions permit only certain responses such as ‘yes’ or ‘no’ or the Likert type to choose from answers provided in the questionnaire, as well as some open-ended questions. They were grouped into 5 sections, A to E. Sections A comprised mainly closed, and open-ended questions. Close ended questions, according to Becker and Watts (1999), guarantee accurate, unidimensional, exhaustive and mutually exclusive responses. They also save time spent in completing, coding and analysing questionnaires (Becker & Watts, 1999).

Section A focused on the personal demographics, Sections B to E gathered information on ebullient supervision, workplace friendship, employee engagement, and employee commitment respectively. Likert-scale questions were employed in measuring the variables. Section B comprised scale items of ebullient supervision developed and validated by Ford et al. (2019). This scale is a 15-item scale which was developed from empirical review of literature on fun at work and how supervisors could foster it. Section C measured workplace friendship using the Workplace Friendship Scale (WFS) developed by Nielsen et al. (2000) to assess the respondents’ perceptions of friendship at work (6 items, e.g. I am able to work with my co-workers to collectively solve problems’; and I socialise with co-workers outside the workplace). Section D was scheduled for work engagement developed and validated by Schaufeli and Salanova (2007). The final section, Section E captured employee commitment developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) comprising affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. The response option was on a seven-point Likert scale

of 1 to 7 with 1 indicating poor agreement and 7 denoting excellent agreement for each of the scales.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Primary data was used for this study. Primary data are original data sources that are collected fresh and for the first time and therefore happen to be the original in nature. The primary data was collected using the survey method. This involved the distribution of questionnaires and collection of data from respondents. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, well designed questionnaires with close ended questions were used. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents by the researcher. The researcher agreed with the respondents on appropriate time for the collection of the questionnaires. The time agreed upon was strictly adhered to and this led to the successful completion of data collection. The collection of data was between June, 2021 and July, 2021. 290 out of the 302 respondents participated in the study fully making a response rate of 96 percent.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Administration of surveys should consider the aims of the study, the population under study, and the resources available to enhance the validity and reliability of the study (Mutepfa & Tapera, 2018). Reliability, according to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000), is concerned with consistency of the instrument, and an instrument is said to have high reliability if it can be trusted to give an accurate and consistent measurement of an unchanging value. A Cronbach's Alpha of 0.70 and above are regarded appropriate for checking reliability of a scale adapted (Pallant, 2016). In this study, reliability and validity of the scholars who developed the scales were good given that all the



constructs loaded above 0.70. Thus, ebullient supervision was 0.98, workplace friendship was 0.96, employee engagement, 0.98, and employee commitment was 0.87.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

The statistical aid that was employed for this study were the IBM SPSS Statistics (version 25) and Smart Partial Least Square (version 3.3.3) software. SPSS was used for data entry and processing which made the analysis quicker and appropriate. The responses gathered by the researcher were later entered into the computer using google form which aided in the extracting of data into Excel. Inferential statistics through partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to address the objectives of the study. Based on the nature and purpose of this study and the arguments made by the pioneer researchers, PLS-SEM approach deemed the most appropriate technique to be adopted for the current study's data processing and analysis.

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a second-generation statistical technique that “enables researchers to incorporate unobservable variables measured indirectly by indicator variables. They also facilitate accounting for measurement errors in observed variables” (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016, p. 3). Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) uses available data to estimate the nexuses of the path in the model to minimise the residual variance of the constructs originating internally. In addition, PLS-SEM approach helps researchers to comprehend the links that exist among the observed constructs (Hair Jr et al., 2016). In addition, PLS-SEM determines path model connections that maximize the  $R^2$  values of the endogenous variables (Hair et al., 2016). PLS-SEM is also more useful under

less developed theory conditions (Ravand & Baghaei, 2016; Rönkkö & Evermann, 2013).

SEM is made up of two key elements; measurement models and structural models. Whereas measurement models are used for construct validation and scale refinement, structural models are used to display the relationships that exist among study constructs.

### **Measurement Model Assessment**

The measurement model in PLS-SEM follows key underlying assumptions: item loadings, construct reliability and validity, convergent validity (average variance extracted) and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2016; Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015; Diamantopoulos, Sarstedt, Fuchs, Wilczynski & Kaise, 2012). These assumptions have rules of thumb that serve as guidelines to evaluate model results (Roldán & Sánchez-Franco, 2012). With respect to the item reliability, loadings above 0.708 are recommended, as they indicate that the construct explains more than 50 per cent of the indicator's variance, thus providing acceptable item reliability. Thus, indicators with loadings below the 0.708 threshold were deleted in the model unless retaining those indicators did not affect the overall reliability of the constructs (Hair et al., 2016).

For the internal consistency reliability Jöreskog's (1971) composite reliability is often used. Higher values generally indicate higher levels of reliability. Reliability values between 0.60 and 0.70 are considered "acceptable in exploratory research," values between 0.70 and 0.90 range from "satisfactory to good" (Hair et al., 2017, p. 112). However, Cronbach's alpha and rho\_A (all should have a 0.70 loading) may also be used if one assumes

that the factor model is correct. In this study, the researcher relied on values of all the measures of internal consistency because they all met the satisfactory criteria.

Concerning the convergent validity, which measures the extent to which the construct converges to explain the variance of its items (Hair et al., 2016), the metric used for evaluating a construct's convergent validity is the average variance extracted (AVE) for all items on each construct. To calculate the AVE, one has to square the loading of each indicator on a construct and compute the mean value. An acceptable AVE is 0.50 or higher indicating that the construct explains at least 50 per cent of the variance of its items (Henseler et al., 2016).

Finally, the discriminant validity, which is the extent to which a construct is empirically different or distinct from other constructs in the structural model is evaluated by use of Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion or Henseler et al.'s (2015) heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of the correlations. However, Fornell-Larcker criterion does not perform well, particularly when the indicator loadings on a construct differ only slightly (e.g., all the indicator loadings are between 0.65 and 0.85), and that researchers should rely on the HTMT ratio. As rule of thumb value of HTMT ratio less than 0.85 connotes nonexistence of discriminant validity problems (Henseler et al., 2015).

### **Structural Model Assessment**

When the measurement model assessment is satisfactory, the next step in evaluating PLS-SEM results is assessing the structural model. According to Hair et al. (2016), the basic standard valuation criteria, to be considered,

include the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), the  $Q^2$  (“blindfolding-based cross-validated redundancy measure”), effect size ( $f^2$ ) and the statistical significance and relevance of the path coefficients. As an acceptable rule,  $R^2$  of 0.25, 0.5 and 0.75 is considered as weak, moderate and substantial respectively.” In addition, “a predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 is considered as small, medium and large respectively.” Furthermore, “effect size ( $f^2$ ) of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 is seen as small, medium and large respectively.” Finally, a significant level of 5% or less or a t- statistic of 1.96 or higher is appropriate for a structural model.

### **Mediation**

The mediation effect tested for in this study is based on the procedure developed by Nitzl et al. (2016) to test mediation effects on PLS-SEM. The mediation analyses begin with testing the indirect effect (through the mediator) to assess the significance. Nitzl et al (2016) propose that it is not necessary to conduct separate tests for direct and indirect paths by applying PLS-SEM. A significant indirect effect is the only prerequisite for establishing a mediation effect. The significance of the direct effect determines the type of effect and or mediation. Hair et al. (2016) and Ramayah, Cheah, Chuah, Ting and Memon (2018) emphasised two different types of mediation, full and partial mediation. Partial mediation can be subdivided into complementary and competitive partial mediation.

Carrión et al. (2017) posit that a full mediation occurs when a direct effect is not significant, whereas the indirect effect is significant. Indicating that effect of the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable is completely transmitted with the help of the mediating variable. In a complementary partial



mediation, the direct effect and indirect effect point in the same (positive or negative) direction (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In a competitive partial mediation, the direct effect and indirect effect point in a different direction (Zhao, Lynch & Chen, 2010). There is no mediation when the indirect effect is not significant.

Additionally, Hair et al. (2016) argue that researchers may rely on the value of the Variance Accounted for (VAF, i.e., calculated as;  $\text{total indirect effect}/\text{total effect} \times 100$ ) to interpret the types of mediation. The rule of thumb is, if the VAF is less than 20 percent, one should conclude that nearly zero mediation or no occurs. A situation in which the VAF is larger than 20 percent and less than 80 percent could be characterised as a typical partial mediation and a VAF above 80 percent indicates a full mediation (Hair et al., 2016). The researcher for the analysis of mediation in this study followed the aforementioned procedure for mediation analysis.

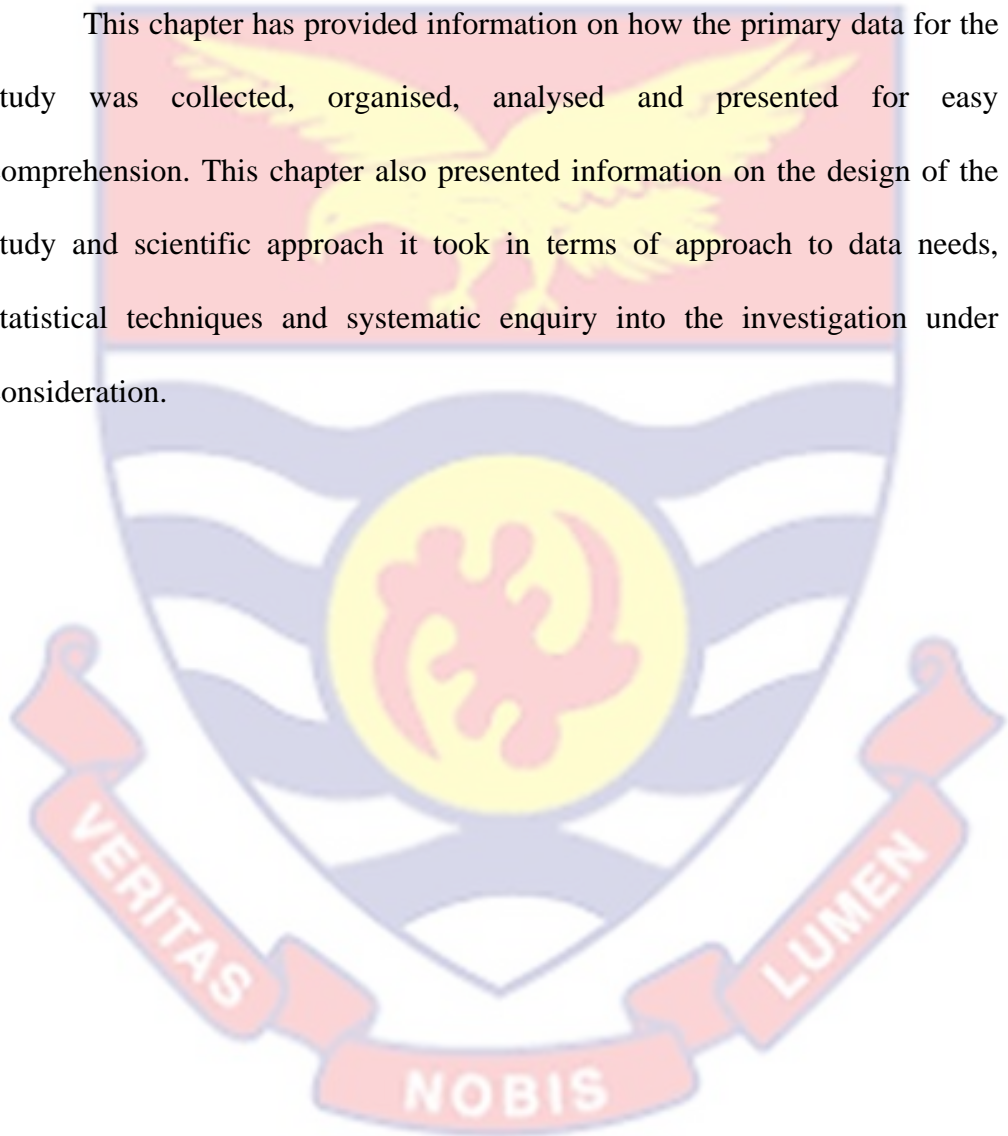
### **Ethical Issues**

According to Awases (2006), ethics is mostly associated with morality and deals with issues of right and wrong among groups, society or communities. It is therefore important that everyone who is engaged in research should be aware of the ethics concern (Rubin & Babbie, 2016). The researcher employed every effort as far as possible to avoid violation of ethical principles. Edginton et al. (2012) have identified the basic ethical consideration for research as; respondents being fully informed about the aims, methods and benefits of the research, granting voluntary consent and maintaining the right of withdrawal. In line with this claim, the rationale for the study, assurance of confidentiality and the right of withdrawal was

explained to the participants. Also, a letter of introduction elucidating the intent and authenticity of the study was sought from the Department of Management. This letter was introduced to the respondents who want to establish the authenticity of the study.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has provided information on how the primary data for the study was collected, organised, analysed and presented for easy comprehension. This chapter also presented information on the design of the study and scientific approach it took in terms of approach to data needs, statistical techniques and systematic enquiry into the investigation under consideration.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The chapter captured descriptions of the background characteristics of the respondents, followed by the assessment of the measurement and structural models of PLS-SEM, which were generated to handle the various objectives of the study, and finally, the discussions on the findings of the objectives.

#### Background Characteristics of the Respondents

The study gathered some key information about the respondents to understand the nature and characteristics of the participants who were engaged in the survey. As presented in Table 1, these characteristics include the gender of respondents, age, educational level, and work experience. As captured in the Table 1, most of the study participants were females (58.3 %), compared to the number of males (41.7%) who were sampled for the study.

**Table 1: Background Characteristics of Respondents**

Option	Frequency	Percent %
Gender		
Male	121	41.7
Female	169	58.3
Total	290	100
Age Group		
21-30	77	26.5
31-40	88	30.3
41-50	111	38.2
51 – 60	10	3.5
Over 60	4	1.5
Total	290	100.0
Educational Qualification		

Table 1: Cont'D

Postgraduate	44	15.2
First degree	139	47.9
HND	107	36.9
Total	290	100.0
Number of years working with the university		
Less than 1 year	9	3.1
1 – 5	37	12.7
6 – 10	120	41.4
11 – 15	71	24.5
16 -20	53	18.3
Total	290	100.0

Source: Field Data (2021)

Concerning the age distribution of the respondents, Table 1 revealed that the highest number of the respondents were within the 41 – 50 years age group (38.2 %). The next age group with most respondents is 31 – 40 years (30.3%). Another important group noted was those within 21 – 30 years (26.5%). A few of them were within the over 60 years (1.5%). Observing the age distribution of the respondents indicated that the administrators in the university are within the youthful and energetic class. On the issue of academic qualifications, majority (47.9%) of the respondents had first degree qualification. Also, (36.9%) of the respondents had NHD, while (15.2%) had postgraduate degree qualifications. This means that all the respondents have undergone formal education with majority of them having higher education.

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of years they had been working with their respective companies. From the Table 1, majority (41.4%) of the respondents have worked for the university within 6 to 10 years. This was followed by (24.5%) of the respondents who indicated that they have worked for a period of 11 to 15 years. Furthermore, (18.3 %) of



them indicated that they have been working in the university within 16 to 20 years, while (12.7%) of respondents said that they have been working for between 1 and 5 years.

### **Models Assessment**

The analysis of the study's objectives was contingent upon the acceptance criteria in the measurement and structural models. As captured in the Figures and Tables in the subsequent sections, the measurement model comprising indicator loadings (IL), internal consistency (IC), convergent validity (CV) and discriminant validity (DV) was first evaluated. After which the structural model comprising correlation coefficient (R), coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), significance (p: t-statistic) predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ), and effect size ( $f^2$ ) was also presented to address the objectives of the study.

### **Measurement Model**

The assessment criteria under the measurement model are comprised of indicator loadings or item reliability (IL), internal consistency, convergent validity (CV), and discriminant validity (DV).

### **Indicator Loadings**

The indicator acceptability on the Constructs in Table 2 and subsequently in Figure 2 revealed that loadings were well within the recommended criteria of 0.70 and above. Some of the indicators that loaded below the 0.70 thresholds were retained because of the argument raised by Hair et al. (2019) that in circumstances where such items will not affect the overall reliability of the model, they can be maintained.

**Table 2: Item Loadings**

	Ebullient supervision	Workplace friendship	Employee engagement	Employee commitment
Ebullient supervision				
EBS1	0.749			
EBS10	0.725			
EBS11	0.811			
EBS12	0.848			
EBS13	0.844			
EBS14	0.837			
EBS15	0.772			
EBS2	0.785			
EBS3	0.712			
EBS4	0.742			
EBS5	0.725			
EBS6	0.739			
EBS9	0.680			
Workplace Friendship				
WPF1		0.886		
WPF2		0.902		
WPF3		0.938		
WPF4		0.910		
WPF5		0.892		
Employee Engagement				
EET11			0.804	
EET15			0.854	
EET16			0.852	
EET17			0.836	
EET2			0.721	
EET3			0.745	
EET4			0.719	
Employee commitment				
AFC1				0.812
AFC2				0.824
CCC1				0.786
CCC2				0.780
CCC3				0.787
CCC6				0.639
NMC1				0.737
NMC2				0.926
NMC3				0.564
NMC6				0.555

Source: Field Data (2021)

From Table 2, loadings for ebullient supervision were between 0.680 – 0.848, loading for workplace friendship ranged from 0.886 – 0.938, employee engagement were from 0.719 – 0.854 while those for employee commitment were between 0.555 – 0.926. As a rule of thumb prescribed by Hair et al. (2017), the indicators shown in the Table 2 were retained to ensure the reliability of the model.

### Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity

The assessment of internal consistency of the constructs was done using the CA, rho\_A and CR, while convergent validity was assessed using the AVE. The results presented in Table 3 evaluated how well the constructs measured what they were supposed to measure.

**Table 3: Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity**

	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
Ebullient Supervision	0.942	0.946	0.949	0.591
Employee Commitment	0.910	0.924	0.926	0.562
Employee Engagement	0.901	0.906	0.921	0.628
Workplace Friendship	0.945	0.947	0.958	0.820

*Notes:* CA = Cronbach's Alpha; CR = Composite Reliability; CV = Convergent Validity; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

Source: Field Data (2021)

CR is seen as the best measure of internal consistency; however, a cursory check at the values of all the other measures showed that the constructs' internal consistencies were achieved. This is because CA, rho\_A, and CR values all met the accepted threshold of 0.708 or higher (Hair et al., 2017). Again, the constructs convergent validity, which measured the extent to

which the constructs shared mutual relationship, was satisfactory. This was because Average Variance Extractors (AVE) values were reasonably higher than the minimum 50 per cent threshold ( $AVE \geq 0.50$ ).

**Discriminant Validity (DV)**

Table 4 was used to confirm that ebullient supervision, workplace friendship, employee engagement and employee commitment were distinct constructs that measured different phenomena regarding the DV.

**Table 4: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)**

	Ebullient Supervision	Employee Commitment	Employee Engagement	Workplace Friendship
Ebullient Supervision				
Employee Commitment	0.671			
Employee Engagement	0.674	0.831		
Workplace Friendship	0.835	0.613	0.626	

Source: Field Data (2021)

As a rule of thumb, HTMT, a ratio less than 0.85, connotes the nonexistence of discriminant validity problems (Henseler et al., 2015). Observations emanating from the results of Table 4 indicated that constructs were well distinguished ( $< HTMT^{0.85}$ ). Next is the structural model assessment.



### Structural Model Assessment

After a successful evaluation of the measurement model, the next was the structural model assessment, which was primarily used to examine relationships between the constructs and draw conclusions from the study's findings through the various objectives and respective hypotheses. The coefficients (R), R<sup>2</sup>, significance, P, Q<sup>2</sup> and f<sup>2</sup> were presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Structural Model Results of the Objectives**

	Beta (R)	T Stat	P Values	f <sup>2</sup>	Decision
<i>Direct effects</i>					
EBS -> EC	0.149	2.034	0.043	0.030	H1: supported
WPF -> EC	0.051	0.835	0.404	0.004	H2: not supported
EET -> EC	0.741	15.099	0.000	1.410	H3: supported
<i>Specific indirect effects</i>					
EBS -> WPF -> EC	0.041	0.834	0.405		H4: Not supported
EBS -> EET -> EC	0.459	10.272	0.000		H5: supported

*Notes:* f<sup>2</sup> of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 is seen as small, medium and large respectively; EBS = ebullient supervision; WPF = workplace friendship; EET = employee engagement; and EC = employee commitment.

Source: Field Data (2021).

According to results in Table 5, ebullient supervision (R=0.149; t=2.034; p=0.043) and employee engagement (R=0.741; t=15.099; p=0.000) variously had significant positive relationship with employee commitment,

while workplace friendship ( $R=0.051$ ;  $t=0.835$ ;  $p=0.404$ ) had no significant positive relationship with employee commitment. The results of the effect sizes demonstrated that while ebullient supervision ( $f^2=0.030$ ) caused a small effect on employee commitment, employee engagement ( $f^2=1.410$ ) made a statistically large effect on employee commitment. In addition, the column marked specific indirect effect in Table 5, established that while employee engagement played partially mediating role in the relationship between ebullient supervision and employee commitment ( $R=0.459$ ;  $t=10.272$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), workplace friendship had no mediating role in the ebullient supervision and employee commitment relationship ( $R=0.041$ ;  $t=0.834$ ;  $p=0.405$ ).

A further assessment of the structural model was done using the R-squared and Q squared. The  $R^2$  measures the extent of the variation in the endogenous variables (employee commitment) as accounted for by the exogenous variable(s) (ebullient supervision, workplace friendship and employee engagement) while the  $Q^2$  examines the predictive capacity of the R and  $R^2$  scores on the endogenous variables.

**Table 6: Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>) and Predictive Relevance (Q<sup>2</sup>)**

Endogenous variable	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Adjusted	Q <sup>2</sup>
Employee commitment	0.766	0.764	0.406

*Notes:*  $R^2$  of 0.25, 0.5 and 0.75 are considered weak, moderate, and substantial respectively;  $Q^2$  of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 is considered small, medium and large respectively.

Source: Field Data (2021).

The results in Table 6 indicated that ebullient supervision, workplace friendship and employee engagement harmoniously account for 76.6 percent ( $R^2$ , see also Figure 2) of change in the scores of employee commitment in the University of Cape Coast. Concerning the predictive relevance, ebullient supervision, workplace friendship and employee engagement put together ( $Q^2=0.406$ ) made a substantial predictive capacity on the employee commitment model.

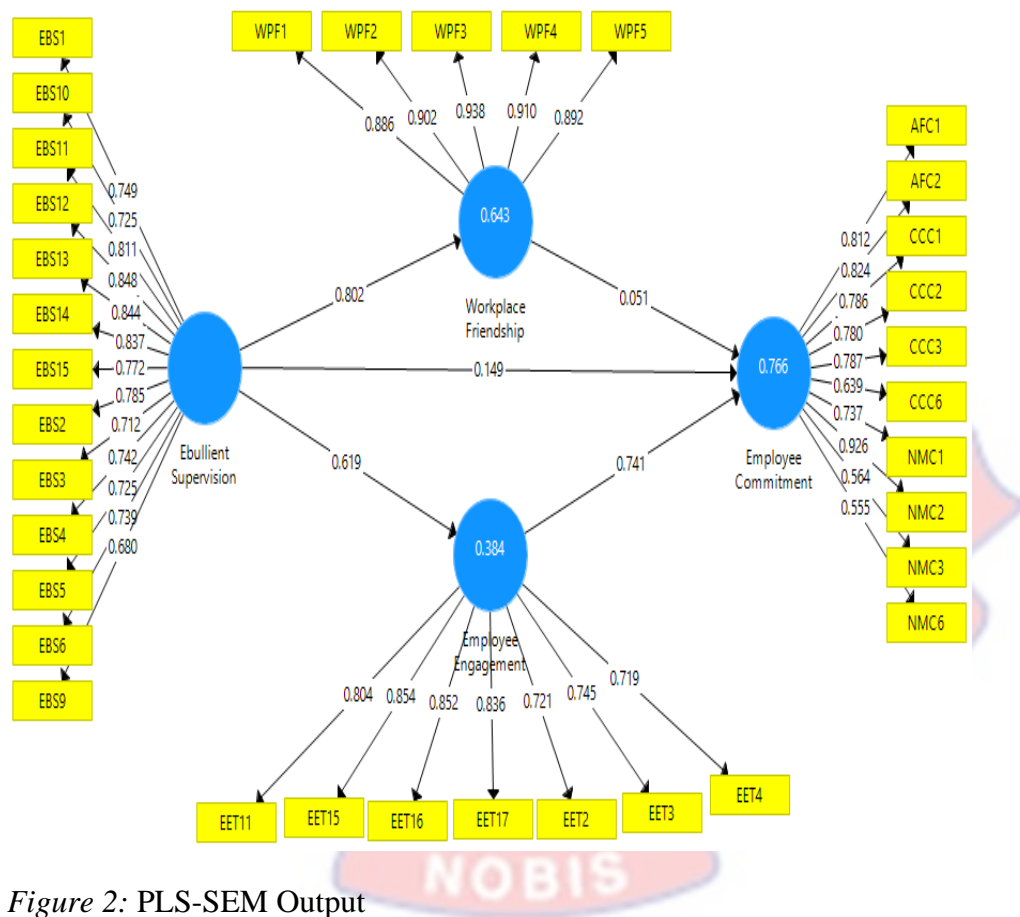


Figure 2: PLS-SEM Output

Source: Field Data (2021).

## Discussion

The following sections discussed the findings of the various objectives and their respective hypotheses of the study. In all five hypotheses were tested in the study.

### Hypothesis 1

The first objective which was hypothesised as “there is a significant positive relationship between ebullient supervision and administrative staff’s commitment”, was supported in the study. This means that ebullient supervision influences the scores of administrative staff’s commitment in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. The revelations contained in the findings are not surprising because ebullient supervisors create a work environment that is considered by a subordinate as a fun place to work freely and without intimidations. Thus, the various supervisors or leaders in the central university’s administration, colleges, schools, faculties and other operational units create an environment that is occupied with fun, the subordinate-administrators’ commitment will be enhanced. The nature of the university environment makes the administrative staff as key employees in the overall functioning of the universities.

The study corroborated with the prepositions of the social exchange theory (Ribeiro et al., 2018; Blau, 19964) which upheld that employees will reciprocate good behaviours such as commitment to the organisation in the event that they can verify their superiors care about their wellbeing by creating an ebullient work environment. Again, the view of the self-determination theorists (Ryan & Deci, 2019; Leroy et al., 2015; Deci & Ryan, 2000) was shared in this study. Thus, employees working under the supervisors with high



enthusiasm to make the workplace lovely and fun will promote employee commitment as the staff will always want to be at work to “laugh” to the humours of ebullient leaders (Fluegge-Woolf, 2014). Furthermore, the results support the findings of Becker and Tews (2016) and Han et al. (2016) who also concluded that workplace fun activities enhance employee commitment by facilitating interpersonal trust and group cohesion.

### **Hypothesis 2**

By the revelation of the result, hypothesis which connects workplace friendship and employee commitment was not supported. This means that workplace friendship is not regarded as a significant predictor of administrative staff commitment in the University of Cape Coast. The results contradict with the findings of previous studies (Yu-Ping et al., 2020; Potgieter et al., 2019; Akila & Priyadarshini, 2018), which found friendships at work as having significant relationship with employee commitment. The reasons for the contradictory results may allude to differences in the work setting and nature of job. First, in academic environment administrators are supposed to work diligently without interruptions from colleagues as such disruptions may lead to errors in the work process. Again, interactions about nonrelated job tasks, such as the weather, current events, and leisure pursuits (Zhuang et al., 2020) are usually practices that are frowned against in Ghana’s education system which do not contribute to productivity. Thus, the administrative staff of the university perceive these practices as not factors that can influence commitment.

### **Hypothesis 3**

From the research's findings, it could be expressed that hypothesis three which connects employee engagement and staff commitment has been confirmed. Thus, employee engagement is a significant predictor of staff commitment in the university. The implications are that engaged employees see the business of their organisation as theirs which they must do everything possible to contribute to its growth. Concisely, engage employees have a sense of personal identification with the organisation, share knowledge among their colleagues and project the image of the organisation. In addition, engaged employees tend to endure, accumulate resources such as information and support colleagues to be better their effort towards job commitment.

Corroborating with prior studies (Abu-Shamaa et al., 2015; Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014; Agyemang & Ofei, 2013), the scholars discovered that engaging employees in their work and organisation's missions and vision development enhance their commitment. Specifically, Agyemang and Ofei (2013) studied employee engagement and commitment nexus in private and public firms in Ghana found that significant positive association was established between the constructs. Furthermore, in study of Abu-Shamaa et al. (2015) on the link between work engagement and employee commitment among manufacturing firms' employees in Nigeria established that, employee engagement was significantly correlated with commitment.

### **Hypothesis 4**

The fourth hypothesis was connecting objective four which examined the mediating role of workplace friendship in ebullient supervision and staff commitment relationship. The results of both the direct and indirect effect

suggest that workplace friendship did not mediate the paths of the constructs. The findings are not surprising because the results of the direct relationship between workplace friendship and employee commitment was not significant. This means that because friendship at work may become a nuance to colleagues and counterproductive, the staffs of the university do not see it as one means ebullient supervisors can promote commitment.

### **Hypothesis 5**

The results further indicated that employee engagement partially mediates the relationship between ebullient supervision and employee commitment. The result proved that although ebullient supervision significantly predicts variance in the staff commitment in the university, such influence would be improved when employees are engaged with their jobs. Simply put, employee engagement among the administrative staff of the university can better improve the influence of ebullient supervision on commitment. Thus, to obtain the enhanced commitment levels of the staff in the university, supervisors should leverage on their fun traits to get the employees engaged with their work as this will eventually result in increased individual commitment.

Empirically, this stance has been expressed by some previous researchers such as Fluegge-Woolf (2014) that supervisors with fun at work function as a job resource and provide individuals with a break or recovery period from work which increase their work engagement and consequently, enhanced individual commitment.

### Chapter Summary

The chapter was developed to address the specific objectives of the research. The respondents' background characteristics were first described, followed by analysing the various objectives through PLS-SEM. All the research objectives were analysed, and findings reported and supported by empirical investigations.





## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The final chapter of the study provide summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. These subheadings were discussed based on the results and discussions as well as the deductions drawn from the results for policy making purposes and directions for future scholars in similar field.

#### Overview

The aim of the study was to examine how ebullient supervision influenced commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana through the mediating roles of workplace friendship and employee engagement. Precisely, the study pursued five objectives to address the main purpose of the study. They were to;

- i. analyse the influence of ebullient supervision on commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast.
- ii. analyse the influence of workplace friendship on commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast.
- iii. examine the influence of employee engagement on commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast.
- iv. assess the mediation role of workplace friendship in the nexus between ebullient supervision on commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast.
- v. assess the mediation role of employee engagement in the relationship between ebullient supervision on commitment of the administrative staff of the University of Cape Coast.

To examine these objectives, the researcher employed the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) for testing the corresponding hypotheses that emanated from the objectives of the study. From a respondent population of 302 subordinate-administrators from the University, 290 responded. The data was then processed using the IBM SPSS Statistics (version 26) and SmartPLS (version 3.3.3) softwares.

### **Summary**

Regarding the first objective which examined how ebullient supervision influences staff commitment, it was found in the study that there was a significant and positive influence of ebullient supervision on administrative staff commitment in the university. The study concisely noted that commitment will increase when ebullient supervision traits are emphasised among the heads of administrative units.

Another finding of the study was in regard of the second objective, which primarily analysed the influence of workplace friendship on administrative staff commitment in the university. The study established that workplace friendship had no significant relationship with administrative staff commitment in the university.

The third objective analysed the influence of employee engagement on administrative staff commitment in the university. The findings established that engaging the administrative staff of the university can impact on their commitment level.

Moreover, the study investigated the mediating role of workplace friendship in the relationship between ebullient supervision and employee commitment. The study established that workplace friendship does not

mediate the nexus of ebullient supervision and administrative staff commitment of the university.

For the final objective which was subsequently hypothesised as “employee engagement mediates the relationship between ebullient supervision and administrative staff commitment”, the findings supported the postulation by showing that employee engagement partially mediates the link ebullient supervision and administrative staff commitment in the University.

### **Conclusions**

The study examined the influence of ebullient supervision on administrative staff commitment through the intervention of workplace friendship and employee engagement in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. The findings of the study indicated that ebullient supervision and employee engagement had positive influence on employee commitment, while workplace friendship had not significant relationship with staff commitment. Again, while employee engagement played a significant mediating role in the nexus between ebullient supervision and employee commitment, workplace friendship does not. Being supported by previous empirical investigations, the study emphasised that heads of various administrative units in the university should emphasise on being ebullient so as to enhance commitment of their subordinates.

Furthermore, the study concludes that employees who find their job engaging and challenging are able to execute the job with adequate skills and competences to boost commitment. Also, work environment should be welcoming and where coworkers can interact with one another freely, share

ideas with one another and strives to solve one another's problems collectively.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations were herein stipulated;

The study recommends that management of the university should lay emphasis in placing persons who are ebullient to supervisory positions in the university. This can be done by subjecting the prospective heads of units to special recruitment procedures. Again, ebullient leadership training could also be conducted to train the various unit heads and supervisors in the university to equip them to desire to seek the good and welfare of their subordinates.

It is also recommended that management should make the employment of prospective administrators competitive in terms of identifying prospective employees who love their job and will be engaged with it when employed. When this is done those, who are eventually recruited will work with enthusiasm and happiness without strict supervision.

Finally, the study recommends that the university should admonish the heads of units to offer adequate fun environment to the employees. This is because such practices can foster and instill a cooperative spirit among employees.

### **Suggestion for Further Studies**

The scope of the study was limited to obtaining the perception of employees on ebullient supervision of their immediate supervisors through quantitative approach. Although the findings of the study were interesting, a



mixed approach to gather the opinion of the supervisors themselves on their ebullient supervision traits would have been more insightful.

This could position management of the university to know how to strategise to promote ebullient supervision.



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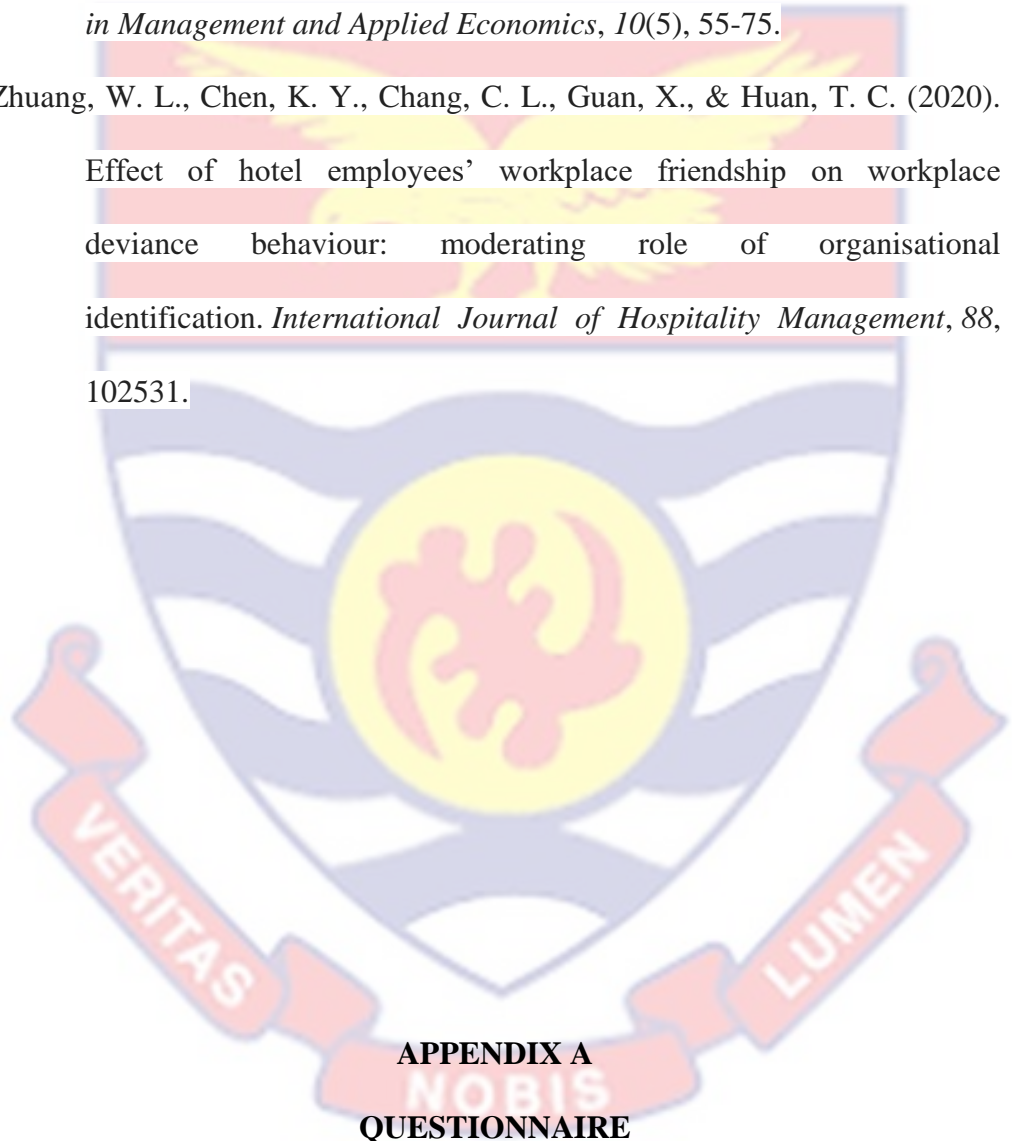


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**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON EBULLIENT SUPERVISION**

Dear Sir/Madam,

This research instrument is designed to assess the effects of Ebullient supervision and employee commitment. Any information given would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please select the appropriate options for the questions by checking their corresponding boxes.

### SECTION A: BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate column

1. Sex of respondent:

Male  Female.

2. Age (years) of respondent:

21 – 30.  31 – 40.  41 – 50.

51 – 60.  Above 60

3. Education Level:

Post Graduate Degree  First Degree  HND  
SSS/WASSCE

4. Number of years working with the university

Less than 1 year  1 – 5 years  6 – 10

years

11 – 15 years  16 – 20 years  Above

21 years

**SECTION B: EBULLIENT SUPERVISION**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on a 7-point scale, where 1 = least form of agreement and 7= highest form of agreement. Please circle (○) your answer.

S/N	Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	My supervisor greets employees in passion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	My supervisor goes out of his/her way to brighten the day at work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	My supervisor uses a cheerful tone when speaking with subordinates	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	My supervisor attempts to make people laugh	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	My supervisor finds uses for appropriate humor at work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	My supervisor will gladly take on routine task responsibilities (e.g., schedules, meetings)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	My supervisor encourages social activities after working hours	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	My supervisor helps people feel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



	enthusiastic about their jobs							
9	My supervisor tries to put people at ease	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	My supervisor smiles when someone enters his/her office for any meeting or discussion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	My supervisor lets people know that it's OK to be playful at work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	My supervisor initiates fun activities outside of work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	My supervisor praises individual wins	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	My supervisor compliments employees in front of others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	My supervisor finds reasons to celebrate (e.g., birthdays, group or personal milestones).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**SECTION C: WORKPLACE FRIENDSHIP**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on a 7-point scale, where 1 = least form of agreement and 7= highest form of agreement. Please circle (○) your answer.

S/N	Item							
1	I have the opportunity to get to know my coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I am able to work with my coworkers to collectively solve problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	In my organization, I have the chance to talk informally and visit with others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I have formed strong friendships at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I socialize with coworkers outside of the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I can confide in people at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**SECTION C: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on a 7-point scale, where 1 = least form of agreement and 7= highest form of agreement. Please circle (○) your answer.

S/N	Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	I am proud on the work that I do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	To me, my job is challenging	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	My job inspires me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I get carried away when I'm working	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	I am immersed in my work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I am enthusiastic about my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	When I am working, I forget everything else around me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	I feel happy when I am working intensely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	At my work, I feel bursting with energy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	When I get up in the morning, I feel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	like going to work							
13	It is difficult to detach myself from my job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	Time flies when I'm working	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	I can continue working for very long periods at a time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	At my job, I am very resilient mentally	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**SECTION E: EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements on the employee commitment to your establishment? Please circle (○) your answer in the box (cell) where 1 = least agreement and 7 = highest agreement

<b>Statements</b>								
<b>Affective Commitment</b>								
1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. I really feel as if this organisation's problems are my own	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. I think I could easily become as attached to another organisation as this one.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

4. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6. This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Continuance Commitment</b>								
7. I owe a great deal to this organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation now	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10. I would feel guilty if I left my organisation now	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
11. This organisation deserves my loyalty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12. I would not leave my organisation right now because of my sense of obligation to it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b>Normative Commitment</b>								
13. Right now, staying with my organisation is a matter of necessity as much as desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
14. It would be very hard for me to leave my	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	



organisation right now, even if I wanted to							
15. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organisation now	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organisation is that, leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organisation would be the scarcity of available alternatives elsewhere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

