

Intra-Functional Linkages and Employee Commitment in Work Organizations: A Survey of Bayelsa State Civil Service

American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities

Vol. 5, No. 1, 116-127, 2020

e-ISSN: 2520-5382



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ABSTRACT

There is emerging shift form in conceptual and theoretical focus on what workplace dimension relates with employee commitment. While it is hitherto posited that behavioural concerns are channeled by social relational action at work, the structural dynamics in terms of how they create intra functional relationship towards goals needs to be explored therefore this study scientifically examines the empirical relationship between intra-functional linkages and employee commitment. The study which was conducted within the Bayelsa State Civil Service used the questionnaire marked INFECQ to generate data primarily from a sample of 236 respondents that were obtained through a proportionate stratified random sampling. The data generated were descriptively and inferentially analyzed. The standardized β value of 0.537 & .256 from the multiple regression indicates that team work and collaboration has significant relationship with employee commitment in the civil service respectively. It shows that teamwork has strong impact than collaboration and brainstorming. It was concluded that intra-functional linkage creates a stimulating work setting that instigates employee commitment therefore, it was recommended amongst others that structural flexibility should be ensured as it helps to integrate work units where information can be commonly shared for goal.

Keywords: *Affective, Brainstorming, Collaboration, Continuance, Commitment, Linkages, Normative, Structure and teamwork.*

DOI: 10.20448/801.51.116.127

Citation | Christopher Akpotu; Konyefa, Rachel (2020). Intra-Functional Linkages and Employee Commitment in Work Organizations: A Survey of Bayelsa State Civil Service. *American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 5(1): 116-127.

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Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

History: Received: 24 June 2019/ Revised: 28 August 2019/ Accepted: 15 November 2019/ Published: 30 December 2019

Publisher: Online Science Publishing

Highlights of this paper

- The paper has highlighted the empirical relationship between intra-functional linkages and employee commitment.
- The study has emphasized structural flexibility making it possible to integrate functions to the extent that information can be shared amongst work members.
- The study highlights the fact that aside manager behavioural disposition, organisational design showcased by functional linkages stimulate commitment amongst employees in public work organisations.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a seeming downturn on employee commitment across all sectors of work organizations. Aside financial incentive that is often viewed as motivational and means of attracting commitment, there is the need to interrogate other allied and non-financial incentive modes which have been hitherto relegated. For instance, [Kalada \(2009\)](#) has viewed increased autonomy latitude for employees as means of attracting their commitment to work goals. In the public sector particularly, there is increased depression and duty withdrawal resulting from structural and functional disconnect ([Nkwoiha and Akerele, 2011](#)). This scenario no doubt impairs communication quality that results to dysfunctional outcomes. It is commonly noted that public work organization operators have notably desired functional synergy that promotes cohesiveness amongst work members. In the same vein, it has been observed that public work organizations, especially in developing nations, had barely sustained capacity to meet desired goals due to the workforce lackluster approach to assigned task task ([Alambe, 2004](#); [Emezehua, 2007](#); [Ivameji et al., 2012](#)). Again, [Bamidele \(2013\)](#) argues that much of the public institution worker have had cause to exhibit counterproductive work behaviour due to organizational designs that are characteristically, mechanistic thereby making it difficult for idea sharing, creative stimulation and co-worker support. There is evidence in organizational theory literature showing links between workplace structure and organizational performance ([Washrals, 2006](#); [Betilza, 2009](#); [Gbevron et al., 2013](#); [Jonah and Kalada, 2013](#)). Of course, much of these studies are contextually western and specifically had macro-level analysis. Though [Narayan and Gambo \(2014\)](#) had conducted an indigenous study linking workplace functional relationship climate and corporate health, it was domiciled within the private sector with its peculiar work characteristic and more so, organizational level analysis was deployed. This simply attracts the need for further works in terms of scientific inquiry in the area of organizational design and its implications on work outcomes. Against this backdrop, this study investigates the nature of empirical link between intra-functional linkages and employee commitment in public work organisations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Intra Functional Linkages

The intra functional linkages discourse is attentive to the relationships and integrations between tasks, function, departments and strategic units that promote flow of information, ideas and shared experiences. The phenomenon of linking work function and units within organization has evolved through mechanisms ranging between concrete and virtual. However, this paper has identified the intra functional linkage conceptualization of [Kosil and Veepa \(2011\)](#) as typical of Unit or Functional Premises for linking work members. They represented linkage with teamwork, brainstorming and functional collaboration.

2.2. Teamwork

Contemporarily, there is emerging consensus on the vital role of team as a strategic alternative for attaining work goals timely and innovatively ([Fapohunda, 2013](#); [Heartfield, 2016](#); [Obiekwe and Zeb-Obipi, 2018](#)). teams

though variously defined, are deliberately created to innovatively and efficiently accomplish work goals while at same time promote information and knowledge sharing amongst team members. [Jamil \(2009\)](#) noted that a work team is an aggregation of work member across work levels and skill that ensures qualitative dispensing of assigned tasks and responsibilities that ensure qualitative dispensing of assigned tasks and responsibilities. [Kochowshi and Ulgen \(2006\)](#) posits that teams are commonly noted for a diverse but robust knowledge formation which are objectively integrated for inclusive goal attainment. [Bela and Jo \(2012\)](#) theorized that team which are made of more than two and three work members are socially integrated to the extent that they are willing to share knowledge that facilitates and enrich their capabilities. Essentially, work teams are created for targeted and strategic goal that requires knowledge coalition from members for effectiveness. Team from these perspectives can possibly blur the deficiency that would ordinarily have been associated with individual members when solely assigned tasks. A common theme associated with teamwork is the interdependence of members and this cumulate to strength for team members ([Ayoko and Callan, 2009](#)). Though teams have been largely adduced as strategic to organizational goal attainment, [Mohammed \(2018\)](#) observed that at the micro level, team instigates dissatisfaction amongst member as it does not perish isolated assessment of individual involvement in task accomplishment and this often leads to social withdrawals. This conceptual focus requires that team must be effectively managed especially where they are constituted across functions with inherent knowledge and skills diversity.

[Lekwe and Mercy \(2017\)](#) argues that teamwork instigates a prosocial behaviour thereby facilitating prospects at goals. These plausible positions on groups notwithstanding ([Baer, 2012](#)) argues that teamwork attracts extra supervisory roles on managers who are required to be attentive sufficiently to avoid indolence amongst member who believed that other team members can undertake their responsibilities. [Mariano and Casey \(2015\)](#) had associated teams with dysfunctional outcomes due to characteristic soldiering. These views however set the platform for more incisive understanding of teamwork as an operational mode for linking work units and employee work commitment therefore, it is hypothesized thus;

Ho: There is no significant relationship between teamwork and employee commitment.

2.3. Brainstorming

There are multiple positions in the brainstorming literature that have shown its enormous capacity to functionally contribute to workplace outcome, either at the micro or macro levels ([Shin and Zhou, 2003](#); [Taylor and Greve, 2006](#); [Taggar and Ellis, 2007](#); [Wang and Noe, 2010](#); [Mueller et al., 2012](#); [Yammarino et al., 2012](#)). Workplace structuring restricts tasks and activities to units and departments that often places skills limitation on different units. However, [Korde and Paulus \(2017\)](#) expressed that while structural rigidities have inflamed these limitations, contemporary workplace dynamics requires the flexibility that should encourage workflow across functions to facilitate goals. This simply suggests that individual work members or functional units can be expressly linked to the extent that ideas can be shared in the form of brainstorming. Brainstorming ensures unit or individual linkage that supports capacity to innovatively achieve targeted goals ([Baruah and Paulus, 2018](#)). Solving organizational problem through brainstorming is no less attempt at creating a robust portfolio of thoughts that facilitate the building of self-confidence amongst work members and at the same time ensuring functionality and goals attainment. [Carmeli and Paulus \(2015\)](#) is of the view that co-worker support is won through brainstorming as it provides capacity to improve on the psychosocial impetus of members who ordinarily have knowledge gaps on areas of concern. Linking work functions through such interactional mode escalates pro-social action ([Ajeleye, 2013](#)). The point of note here is that it simply expressed the principle of the sum of the whole that is greater than units which

fast track effort at reaching goals speedily. While this thinking subsists theory building in the area of desired employee behavioural disposition towards such linkage mode, therefore, it is hypothesized thus;

Ho: Brainstorming does not relate with employee commitment.

2.4. Collaboration

Collaboration is a deliberate attempt to share resources, which includes, ideas, skills, materials and others that enhance the attainment of common goals. According to [Marrone \(2010\)](#) collaboration is the mutual engagement amongst participants in a coordinated manner to solve a problem. It can be undertaken amongst work members, functional units and organizations ([Langfred, 2000](#)). It provides the basis for functional interface and lending need support that engenders group and team goals. Distinctively, collaboration, unlike teams, does not necessarily require shared skills and expertise but it is anchored on willingness to unify and strengthen capacity to attain desired ends. This means that functional units and department within can be linked through collaborative strategy towards synergizing action at goal. [Melana and Furo \(2014\)](#) insists that collaboration amongst work function is contemporary within organizations strategies that provide for competitive advantage. [Lybrian \(2015\)](#) relied on collaboration strategies amongst firm to gain industry position considering the heightened level of competitiveness. [Gilbert et al. \(2010\)](#) noted that collaboration is value expressed through behaviour unification amongst collaborating entities, groups, units and organization. [Ibom \(2009\)](#) argues that collaboration undermines work hierarchy and create commonness of purpose. These notwithstanding, [Paulus and Coskun \(2013\)](#) observed that collaboration often time suffer mission drift, duplication often lacks sustenance of the momentum required. Essentially, much of the exposition on collaboration and its workplace antecedent has been linked to macro level outcomes thereby limiting its functionality scope. The work of [Paulus et al. \(2011\)](#) however took a turn in the discourse of linked it with students whose behavioural characteristic are at variance with employees with different relational climate, therefore, this study is focused on such workplace micro level and it has hypothesized thus;

Ho: Collaboration does not relate significantly with employee commitment.

2.5. Employee Commitment

The concept of employee commitment has been vastly discussed in organizational behaviour literature and its centrality in ensuring optimization of the utility of employee has also attracted a consensus ([Batemern and Strasser, 1984](#); [Allen and Meyer, 1990](#); [Amit and Schoemaker, 1993](#); [Barney et al., 2001](#); [Simon et al., 2011](#)). As competition amongst firms grows and the need for timely response to market demand is heightened, a committed workforce is a strategic alternative to drive strategic actions targeted at goals. [Luthans \(2002\)](#) posits that employee commitment is attitudinal therefore defines it as innate desire to remain a member of a particular organization which is associated with high willingness to voluntarily undertake responsibilities and tasks for the organization. It entails concrete belief and acceptance of the values, mission, objective and goals of the organization. [Ruona \(2000\)](#) defined employees' commitment as showing seamless loyalty to the survival and sustainability of an organization the employee belongs. In other words, the well-being of the organization as it competes within its environment firmly channels the employee attitude towards positive and favourable contribution for functional outcomes. [Medigan et al. \(1999\)](#) characterized committed employees as those that work diligently and conscientiously while at same time provides values, promote the organization services, products and ensure continuous process improvement. [Newstron and Davies \(2002\)](#) viewed employee commitment as the degree to which an employee identifies with the organization with a strong will to sustain his participatory capacity. Commonly, the various definitions are aptly inclined to describing employee commitment beyond the mundane daily involvement rather a sustained, passionate

and deliberate involvement to optimize the organization capacity to achieve goals. It ensures the willingness to continually contribute to the attainment of the mission and goals of the organization.

These multiple perspectives notwithstanding, they tend to present an omnibus conceptualization which Meyer and Allen (1997) had opted to dissect into three representative dimensions on the concept. They include affective commitment, involving employee emotional involvement and attachment, continuance commitment, involves cost related attachment and the normative commitment that involves obligatory feeling to remain with the organization.

2.6. Intra-functional Linkages and Employee Commitment

There is no shortage of empirical and theoretical works examining the relationship between workplace structure and organizational outcomes (Noah, 2008; Kingiri and Mescie, 2010; Marko and Sridievei, 2010; Kok *et al.*, 2014). Much of the traditional management theories have established the need for a structure that defines roles and functions as a means of attaining optimal productivity and overall performance (Farh *et al.*, 2010; Cropley and Cropley, 2012; Edmondson and Lei, 2014). the connectivity of the function towards achieving amongst goal has also been attended to in literature especially when examined against the backdrop of the synergy that is needed either in dynamic or competitive circumstance for prompt responses and adapting. Employee commitment is indeed required as a value-added behaviour which results from strategic organizational effort targeted at stimulating it for goals. Attracting employee commitment according to Scott and Wildman (2015) is imperative for strategy implementation, therefore, recommends structural fits that encourage adaptability and intra relationship amongst all work members. Jara *et al.* (2015) in their study of commitment triggers identified work culture and regard as major manager leadership style as other triggers of employee commitment. These study outcomes notwithstanding precludes structural characteristic and their ability to initiate and influence outcomes.

The intricate capacity of structure to ensure a relational climate across levels and function is interestingly observed in Pyoria (2007). This is typically expressed in the shared relation like teamwork, shared thoughts, collaboration, idea exchange, brainstorming and others. So far, there is dearth of empirical assertion on the extent to which such functional relationships and modes is likely to channel commitment outcomes amongst employee therefore this study has conceptualized a relationship using the framework below.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study primarily investigates the empirical link between intra functional linkages and employee commitment in work organisations. It examined the theoretical domain of the constructs. From the operationalization of the predictor variable, the dimensions are; teamwork, brainstorming and collaboration. For the dependent variable, which is employee commitment, the measures are affective, continuance and normative. These are diagrammatically expressed thus.

3.1. Measurement Scale

The study questionnaire items were all adapted from existing scales in extant literature. Teamwork scale 8 items were adapted from Mary (2007) brainstorming 6 items were from Lindsay (2016) 8 item scale and collaboration, 6 items were from Vijarat (2013). For the criterion variable, which is employee commitment, the Palsie (2012) 14-item scale was applicable. All the scales were based on the 5 points Likerts scale ranging from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree).

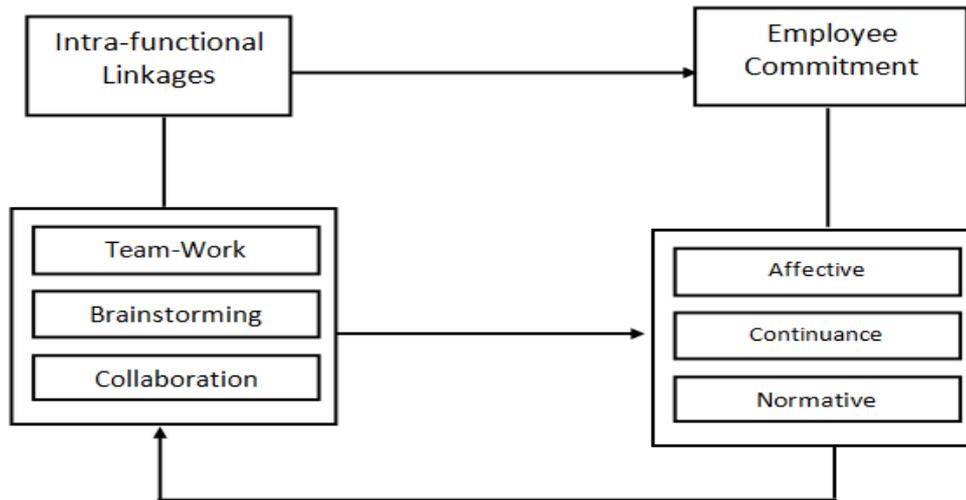


Figure-1. Conceptual framework showing the relationship between intra functional linkage and employee commitment.

3.2. Validity and Reliability

The constructs examined in this study were assessed for validity and reliability. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was applied in assessing the reliability of the dimension and measures of the predictor and criterion variables respectively. The test indicated alpha values ranged between 0.648 to 0.868. Reliability alpha in this circumstance is based on Nunally (1980) alpha threshold of 0.70. The total alpha coefficient for all variables is 0.82 which is highly considered. However, for the construct with alpha value of 0.648, the Auckie (1974) reliability threshold was applicable. The details of alpha results are presented in Table 1.

Table-1. Reliability results.

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach alpha
1. Teamwork	8	0.821
2. Brainstorming	6	0.868
3. Collaborating	8	0.648
4. Employee commitment	14	0.792
5. Intrafunctional/EC	36	0.822

In order to check the validity of the examined constructs, factor analysis was carried out. Data suitability was confirmed relying on Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measures of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The KMO is expected to be more than 0.50 (Meyer, 2003) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity should also be significant @ p < 0.001. The KMO in this instance is 0.78 and the Bartlett's test is significant. Principle component analysis alongside varimax rotation was conducted and factor loadings less than 0.50 were removed as prescribed by Hatch and Schultz (2006). The varimax rotation showed the factor that explains 26.411 percent of the variance. Five items were eliminated as they were below the threshold of 0.50 which also means that they are not linked with any of the factors. The factor analysis Table 2 presents.

The regression result indicated in Table 3 shows an R coefficient of 0.63. This simply indicates that a positive relationship exists between intra-functional linkages and employee commitment. It further shows from the R² of 0.398 that 39% of the regressand outcome is owed to the regressor when other variables are held constant outside the model.

Table-2. Showing factors analysis of the examined constructs.

Items	IL ₁	IL ₂	IL ₃
I enjoy work when I do it with assigned colleagues in other unit/department	.621		
I am interested in putting my best whenever we work as a team	.743		
I enjoy work when other departments are involved	.784		
I am lazy at work because I rely on team members	.677		
Our working together as a team with other departments makes us work harder	.841		
I understand the goal better as a team	.713		
The different department partner to share available resources		.814	
Engaging different department/unit over job tasks makes us work harder		.699	
We give more attention to getting tasks done when other departments work with us		.746	
We don't normally engage other departments/units to achieve special tasks		.882	
We cross departmental boundaries to get work done		.836	
We commonly brainstorming and share work ideas/skills together			.814
We don't allow learning from other work units/departments			.762
We join other work units/department to share experiences for improvement			.803
I like meeting with colleagues in other departments/unit to share knowledge			.772
I am not allowed to discuss my work tasks with workers of other units/departments			.604
I am interested in finding out better means of achieving tasks from colleagues in other units/departments			.718

Percentage variance explain: 26.41
 KMO: 0.78
 Bartlett's Test: Sig @ P<0.001

Table-3. Regression results for intra-functional linkages and employee commitment.

R	R ²	AdjR ²	Std Error	F	Sig
0.631	.398	.394	.61997	262.142	.000

Source: SPSS Window Output, 2019.

Table-4. Regression coefficients of the dimensions of the predictor variable and the criterion variable.

	Std Co-efficient (B)	t-value	Sig
Teamwork	0.537	11.604	0
Brainstorming	0.214	5.166	0
Collaboration	0.256	7.412	0

Note: Dependent variable: Employee commitment.

From Table 4, the estimated coefficient shows that teamwork has more impact on commitment having $\beta = 0.537$ and $t=11.604$ and it is significant. Collaboration was the next with $\beta = 0.256$ and $t=7.412$.

4. DISCUSSION

This research study has investigated workplace practices that may likely relate with employee commitment in state-owned public work organizations in Nigeria with particular reference to the Bayelsa State Civil Service. Though literature presents empirical evidence on the impact of structural designs on employee behavioural outcomes, as well as relationship of workplace structure on employee extra-role behaviour, this study created a scientific in-road by examining intra functional linkage behaviours namely teamwork, brainstorming and collaboration and their empirical link with employee commitment. Again, as noted earlier, much of the works on intra-functional linkage have been largely conducted within private work organizations therefore, a redirection of thoughts is imperative. Linkage amongst functional areas of work organizations is an important aspect of work especially against the backdrop of cohesiveness and integrativeness that is needed both for efficient utilization of

scarce resources and information sharing for goal attainment. From the results, two of the hypotheses, which include teamwork and collaboration, had very strong and significant relationship with employee commitment and brainstorming though significant, the relationship showed weak. The r values of 0.84; 0.91 and 0.34 @ $P < 0.001$ indicates this for teamwork, collaboration and brainstorming respectively.

The findings support previous studies (Ayoko and Callan, 2009; Fapohunda, 2013; Heartfield, 2016). The emphasized relationship between teamwork and employee commitment is indicative of the critical implication of teamwork in ensuring employee commitment. Teamwork undermines the isolatory experience of functional units and individual employees. It ensures that readiness of team members to commonly undertake tasks with a psychosocial continent hence the associated employee commitment. Farh *et al.* (2010) study also showed a positive correlation between teamwork and affective commitment in the banking sector. In the case of collaboration as a dimension of intra functional linkage, the relationship showing $r = 0.91$ @ ≤ 0.01 is strong and significant. This reinforces the findings of Mariano and Casey (2015) whose work showed a relationship between collaboration and employee commitment. Again, increased awareness on the need to commonly share of the mission and goals of the government ministries and parastatals by all members, units or departments notwithstanding has encouraged collaboration to the extent that employee has increasingly collaborated within functional area. It is believed that collaboration enables information sharing and other resources. That supports their collective resolve to achieving goals.

Lekwe and Mercy (2017) study outcome indicates a strong relationship between brainstorming and employee commitment in the banking sector. This is in contrast with the weak relationship ($r=0.31$ @ $P \leq 0.01$) between brainstorming and employee commitment in public work organizations. The reason simply is the strategic implication of brainstorming in ensuring innovation for heightened competitiveness in the private sector compared to the monopolistic nature of the public sector operational scope.

5. CONCLUSION/IMPLICATIONS

This study investigated the empirical link between intra functional linkages and employee commitment in the Nigerian public work organization. This is against the backdrop of the dearth of research inquires on the phenomenon in the public sector as it is the case in the private sector especially in the Nigeria banking sector. In order to examine this, research questions that bother on the dimensions of the constructs were raised and data generated and analyzed showed empirical link between intra-functional linkages operationalized as teamwork, collaboration and brainstorming and employee commitment in the state-owned organization. It is concluded from the findings that intra-functional linkages expressed as teamwork, collaboration and brainstorming are critical elements that channels behaviour relating to employee commitment. This simply signals that attracting employee commitment amidst other factor not investigated here, an integrative work culture that links all functional units is important.

Further, aside from the empirical assertions, the study findings provide for theory building. This has practical implication for management and boards of public institutions in terms of strategy and policy crafting and implementation of same. It has emphasized the need for structural flexibility that makes it increasingly possible to integrate functions to the extent that information can be shared alongside work experience. It will also promote shared values and efficient deployment of resource through collaboration in specialized area. Employee psychosocial disposition at work will no doubt be improved upon on the linkage provides for common interaction and build relationships that consolidate their belief on common goals irrespective of the individual work unit and department.

5.1. Suggested for Further Studies

In this study, what has been explored and empirically adduced is the implication of structural niceties and dynamics on employee behavioural disposition in work organisation. This is none so, against the backdrop of the characteristically mechanized public service that in most instances compel action. On this note, it is suggested that the relationship between intra-functional linkage and corporate agility be examined.

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