

Inspirational Leadership and Employee Commitment in Bayelsa State Civil Service

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Abstract

This paper examined the relationship between inspirational leadership and employee commitment. The study population consisted of twenty-five thousand, seven hundred and eighty-nine (25,789) civil servants drawn from the States' Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) Program report of 2021. The study adopted a sample size of three hundred and ninety-four (394) civil servants. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the data and the findings revealed that inspirational leadership significantly influence employee commitment. It is concluded that inspirational leadership positively and significantly relates to employee commitment. The study recommended that in a bit to improve employee commitment, Bayelsa state civil service should make deliberate efforts to improve the technical, theoretical, conceptual, and moral abilities of leaders; they should ensure leaders have an inspirational role by encouraging civil servants to accept problems and see them as opportunities; and inspire them to believe in the power of working together to achieve goals, as this will guarantee best outcomes. It will also foster civil servants' dedication to achieving longer-term objectives and use of creativity in solving tasks.

Keywords: Inspirational leadership, employee commitment, affective commitment, normative commitment, continuance commitment.

1.1 Introduction

The concept of organizational commitment was first introduced in 1956 by Whyte. He described the concept “as a situation where an employee in an organization not only works for the organization, but also commits himself to the organization and feels as if he belongs to it” (Whyte, 1956). It was also defined as a type of “commitment resulting from his recognition of the cost or lost side bets associated with the discontinuance of his efforts or activities in the organization as well as other values such as time, position and money he’s gained during his employment” by Becker (1960). It is very important to an organization because it provides information about the level of commitment that the employees’ feel towards their organizations (Lam et al., 2015).

Employer commitment can also be defined as the people’s identification with and involvement in the company (Lee et al, 2015). According to Lee et al. (2015), commitment from employees can be expressed by at least three criteria like "Belief in the company’s mission and vision. Second is employee commitment: The employee’s ability and desire to put in considerable effort to achieve the company’s mission and core values, and thirdly a commitment to stay with the company.

Commitment can be described as feelings of obligation or emotional attachment (Shin et al., 2015). But in recent years, more researchers have opined that commitment is a multidimensional phenomenon (Schweizer & Patzelt 2012). Allen and Meyer (1990) came up with the first model, which has attracted some attention. Their three-component model was derived from the fact that existing conceptions of commitment in those years captured at least three distinct themes: a cognitively affective emotional attachment to an organization (affective commitment); an awareness of financial expenses associated with leaving an organization (continuance commitment); and a moral commitment to stay in an organization (normative commitment).

What should be pointed out here is that not all employee loyalty goes hand in hand with inspirational leadership and organizational excellence (Meyer, 2016). A worker with low affective and normative commitment, for instance, but high continuance commitment won’t deliver performance gains if there is an inspirational leadership process.

Inspirational leadership has been a new and important concept in business, and affects employee motivation, satisfaction, and the whole organization’s performance. It is connected to transformational leadership which is the leadership capability for elevating and directing followers through vision, motivation and personal commitment (Bass, 1999). Inspirational leadership is seen as a sub-type of transformational leadership. Bass (1999) defines transformational leaders as those who effect real change in their followers by energizing them to move beyond their own self-interest for the organization. Inspirational leaders create a vision, generate a connection and promote innovation and creativity (Northouse, 2018). They bring energy and charisma to inspire workers and feel like they are part of something.

Inspirational leaders have a distinct and persuasive vision that corresponds to their followers’ values and aspirations (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996). It has been found that great leaders are emotionally intelligent and thus able to control both their own feelings and the feelings of others (Goleman, 1998). This skill sets you up to build good interpersonal relationships and have a positive work culture. Inspirational leaders help employees become active in making decisions and giving them a say (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This empowerment increases employee loyalty and company ownership.

Evidence of inspirational leadership boosting many organizational outcomes is building in number. Wang et al. (2011) meta-analysis concluded that transformational leadership had a clear correlation with employee performance: the behaviours of inspirational leaders increase employee engagement and productivity. Chaudhry and Javed (2012) also showed that transformative leadership actions significantly increase job satisfaction and employee engagement. Their findings reveal that inspirational leadership contributes to an organization through employee motivation. Also, Gunter and Gunter (2018) showed that leaders who clearly articulate a vision have a greater impact on employees' emotional connection to the organization, and consequently, higher levels of commitment. In view of the above, this study seeks to examine the relationship between Inspirational leadership and employee commitment in Bayelsa State Civil Service.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The civil service has been criticized as an institution with a myriad of problems. Notable amongst these problems is the poor attitude to work displayed by the civil servants. Although, they have blamed their attitude to inadequate salaries, poor working conditions and uncertainty of their future retirement benefits after retirement (Rasul & Rogger, 2018). The bureaucratic bottlenecks experienced within the civil service have also made it possible for some indolent civil servants to slow down the pace of work. The frequency at which political appointees within the various ministries are changed often results in policy summersault and inconsistency. This has its negative consequence on the civil servants who feel disgruntled and begin to exhibit lackadaisical attitude towards the job (Ipole et al., 2018).

The level of government intervention in the day-to-day administration of the civil service is also worrisome. The civil servants are not given the necessary freedom to carry out government policies effectively. Successive governments change head of departments as well as policies and programs thus negatively impacting on the commitment of these civil servants. It is no longer news that the civil service is known for wasting financial and manpower resources and retaining unproductive workers with the creation and duplication of ministries, departments and positions with similar functions. This has not only led to wastage of public funds; it has forced most supposedly employed civil servant to treat their jobs with levity believing that the other staff and/or ministry having similar job role will handle the job (Nwinyokpugi, 2015).

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study.

- i. What is the relationship between inspirational leadership and affective commitment in Bayelsa State civil service?
- ii. What is the relationship between inspirational leadership and continuance commitment in Bayelsa State civil service?
- iii. What is the relationship between inspirational leadership and normative commitment in Bayelsa State civil service?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The following null research hypotheses were formulated and were tested:

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between inspirational leadership and affective commitment in Bayelsa State civil service.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between inspirational leadership and continuance commitment in Bayelsa State civil service.

HO₃: There is no significant relationship between inspirational leadership and normative commitment in Bayelsa State civil service.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Inspirational Leadership

According to Hornby (2003), inspiration is the process of being cognitively aroused to act or feel, particularly to act in a creative manner. It is that notion or concept that an artist has in mind but keeps hidden in their subconscious because they haven't yet succeeded in visualizing it in the outside world. Thrash and Elliot (2004) described inspiration as a mood of motivation that encourages people to carry out their ideas. According to his opinion, inspiration is an internal motivation with a strong cognitive component (Böttger et al., 2017). When fresh concepts and ideas are communicated, leaders are inspired (Thrash & Elliot, 2004). Hinsch et al. (2020) claimed that inspiration is difficult to achieve without at least some degree of realism. Therefore, by imagining a new reality, leaders should provide employees with realistic experience.

Buheji and Thomas (2016) regard inspiration as a currency and hold the belief that inspiration comes in a variety of forms and degrees. These various inspirational currencies demonstrate the capacity of an individual, an organization, a community, or even the government to inspire others. The ability to produce or exchange the currency of inspiration, as well as other crucial currencies associated with it, such as the currency of invention or creativity, the currency of knowledge, or the currency of learning, can affect an organization's ability to respond to development requirements and problems.

Employees that work for inspirational leaders are motivated to push themselves beyond their comfort zones and engage in their tasks above the basic requirements. Avolio and Bass (1995) and Sosik et al. (1998) argued that leaders have an inspirational role when they encourage their followers to accept problems and see them as opportunities. When a leader conveys his task and ideas to his team members and inspires them to believe in the power of working together to achieve the goals, he or she demonstrates leadership inspiration. They therefore guarantee the best outcomes. Such leaders put a strong emphasis on their teams' dedication to achieving longer-term objectives and use creativity in their task-solving. Leaders who are inspired will be able to inspire their followers and employees to be enthusiastic about and committed to the goals and objectives of the company. According to Popa (2012), a leader's capacity for inspiration allows him to convert and communicate a vision with complete zeal and assurance.

Den Hartog et al. (2002), described inspiration as acting in a way that people would want to follow, where there is two-way communication and where relationships and efforts are valued. In order for their team members to fulfil the organization's beliefs and goals, these leaders create a demanding environment, maintain team motivation, and instill optimism in them (Bass et al., 2003). He holds that a leader's inspiration and other motivating aspects of the workplace culture have a significant impact on how devoted a worker is to his or her goals and to their organization.

Inspirational leaders build attainable strategies for accomplishing their objectives and then mobilize support for those plans by explaining them to their people in a convincing and understandable way (Walumbwa & Lawler, 2013). This is thought to inspire workers to collaborate in order to achieve a common objective and meet or exceed predetermined goals, or what is commonly known as extra role performance (Uzonna, 2013). By focusing on a greater cause and raising followers' intrinsic desire, dedication, and effort, which results in performance improvement, inspiration is concerned with motivating employees to a higher level of contribution and productivity (Minja & Barine, 2014). According to Bass; and Riggio (2006), inspirational leaders are able to instill a strong sense of teamwork among their followers, motivating them to achieve the stated organizational goals. Through motivation,

supportive leaders share the value-based ambitions of the organization's members, enhancing value congruence between the company and its employees (Brown & Treviño, 2009). This helps followers to be more closely identified with the goals and objectives of the organization and to match their performance with that of the organization. In addition to using inspiring motivation, leaders can inspire their teams to work harder and produce more (Barrick et al., 2015). By inspiring others, the leaders encourage junior-level staff to express their thoughts and perspectives, increasing the number of exchanges within the company (Datche & Mukulu, 2015).

2.2 Employee Commitment

"Employee commitment" was first used by Porter et al. (1974). Since that time, the mental bond that a person has with the organization has taken precedence over significant "side bets" in discussions about commitment. The school of emotional dependency attempted to describe commitment as a type of mentality centered on "monetary agreement." Theoretically, commitment was defined as the overall quality of a person's relationship with and connection to a particular organization by Mowday et al. (1979), Porter et al. (1974), and their supporters. From that vantage point, they made clear that the essential components of employee commitment in an organization were strong acceptance, participation, and loyalty. Porter and Steers (1982) put out the idea that commitment may be a substitute for job satisfaction and disproved the idea that commitment could occasionally be a greater predictor of turnover than job satisfaction itself.

Kiesler (1971) and Salancik (1977) defined commitment as a person's bond to behavior, whereas Buchanan (1974) defined it as an emotional connection to an organization that is distinct from the relationship's functional value and a clear desire for a committed employee to remain a member of the organization.

According to Akhigbe and Obomeghie (2021), an employee's commitment to their employer is a bond that binds them together to the point where they are willing to sacrifice their own desires in order to advance or realize the firm's objectives. Employee commitment, as defined by Caught et al. (2000), is the state in which a staff member has vowed to support the company's goals and involves various levels of employee involvement, identification, and loyalty.

Commitment serves as a counterbalance that keeps behavior on track when the fairness and anticipation prerequisites are either violated or impossible to satisfy (Scholl, 1981). It has the potential to balance out people's behavior in situations where they may otherwise be persuaded to alter it (Brickman, 1987). When someone is committed, they are under an obligation to uphold that commitment despite shifting mental states (Brown, 1996).

2.3 Affective Commitment

The term "affective commitment" refers to a worker's emotional connection, identity, and attachment to the company and its objectives. The three components of affective commitment are the development of an emotional attachment, identity, and a desire to continue belonging to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 2004). According to Meyer et al. (2004), identification and commitment will develop based on employees' personal willingness to remain with the company. Huseyin (2018), described affective commitment as the bond a person has with the employer. It is a mental condition that expresses attachment to or sentiments of identification with the object of the commitment (Saha & Kumar, 2018).

Porter et al. (1974) explained that the three components of affective commitment—beliefs, willingness, and desire toward the organizational goal—are what bind employees emotionally

to the organization. According to a study by Mowday et al. (1982), affective commitment can be characterized according to personal and structural traits, employment history, and work experience. An efficient workplace environment makes employees happy, which in turn strengthens their emotional ties to the company (Jang & George, 2011). Affective commitment is crucial for enterprises to build a strong desire among employees to remain with the company and accept its goals and values (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

The necessary prerequisite for affective commitment is perceived job features – task autonomy, task importance, task identity, skill diversity, and supervisory communication, organizational reliability (ie, the extent to which workers think that the organization can be trusted to defend their interests) and perceived participatory management (ie, that they have a say in decisions about the work environment and other issues that matter to them) (Madi et al., 2012). Affective commitment, according to Bal et al. (2014), entails a strong emotional connection and involvement with the company. According to Tamunomiebi (2019), affective commitment is a type of loyalty that depends on the emotional bonds a worker forges with a company during positioned job experiences.

2.4 Continuance Commitment

Commitment is described as a balancing force that acts to maintain direction in behavior when fairness and expectancy requirements are ineffective or impossible to satisfy. According to Brickman (1987), commitment has the potential to counteract people's tendencies to behave differently in situations when they could otherwise be persuaded to do so. As an obliging force, commitment demands that the person upholds the commitment despite shifting mental states (Brown, 1996). According to Kuok and Taormina (2015), continuance commitment refers to whether employees feel they must continue working in the organization.

Allen and Meyer developed the theory of continuance commitment. Beginning with Becker's side subject theory (1960), it is characterized as the propensity of a person to remain employed notwithstanding expenses that could result from that person leaving the company and a lack of alternatives (Chen & Francesco, 2003; Kavi, 1998). Organizations and managers do not like this kind of commitment since the individual feels that his investments will be lost if he leaves the organization or is left with no other choice (Ince and Gül, 2005; Allen and Meyer, 1990).

Meyer and Allen (1984) described it as "the extent to which employees feel committed to their organizations by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving (e.g., investments or a lack of attractive alternatives)" According to Becker (1960) "side-bet" theory, when people do actions (at work) that make quitting more expensive, they are essentially "investing" in their commitment. In other words, workers are "betting" on their time and energy on mastering a job skill for the company that might not be easily transferable to other businesses. To succeed, you must stick with your current employer rather than finding a new one. The perceived value that the employer places on the employee's job will determine how long they stay with the organization.

2.5 Normative Commitment

The term "normative commitment" refers to a satisfied sense of an employee toward the organization, and it is a measure of that individual's obligation and devotion to the company (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Normative commitment is organic and develops in society because of other commitments like marriage, family, and religious obligations, among others. These

commitments compel the workforce to recognize their ethical duties inside the company (Meyer & Allen, 2004).

Employees that hold a normative commitment feel obligated to stick with their companies. In reality, the degree to which people are dedicated to their organizations because they have a moral obligation to do so is a sign of normative commitment (Meyer et al., 1990). The normative commitment is an attitude of duty to move the organization forward. It is assumed that employees who exhibit a higher level of normative commitment feel obligated to stay with the company. Normative commitment is defined by Coyle-Shapiro (2008) as the dedication of an employee to the organization and their loyalty to it. The extent to which a worker understands specific requirements in order to continue working for the company (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Allen and Meyer (1990) stipulate further that normative commitment may also happen if the worker receives "compensation ahead of time" (such as paying for school or other educational expenses) or incurs significant costs in leaving their employment (such as fees or expenses associated with job searching).

According to Phungula et al. (2022), The phrase "moral obligation to continue working for the organization" is used to describe normative commitment. Because they owe the company a debt of loyalty, employees stick with the company. According to recent studies, adhering to organizational policies and processes results in normative commitment. Employee loyalty to their associated organizations is influenced by personal, societal, and familial values. Employees that feel owed by the company for the possibilities and benefits offered tend to be very committed to it. Normative commitment is the term used to describe a person's relationship and identity with an organization. Employers obviously need devoted, engaged workers to compete in today's market. He contends that loyal employees are the organization's strategic resources. However, normative commitment can be utilized as a tool to encourage employees. The duty of Human Resources Business Partners (HRBPs) and line management is to guarantee that people are motivated and engaged. Employees grow to be so devoted to the company that they would stop at nothing to ensure that it achieves its highest degree of success. Because of the chances and benefits offered by the company, employees may feel obligated to it, which could explain their devotion. High normative commitment is associated with low staff retention and high job satisfaction (Bothma, 2020). Normatively committed employees are more inclined to do so willingly in service to the organization's goal. Extremely normatively committed employees are pressured to be moral and to abide by the rules to support the company's needs and ends.

3.0 Methodology

The population of this study is made up of all civil servants from twenty-two (22) ministries in Bayelsa state who are captured in the Report of 2021 Biometrics Register. For this, the study population is twenty-five thousand, seven hundred and eighty-nine (25,789) civil servants. This figure is obtained from the States' Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) Program report of 2021. The study adopted a simple random sampling technique and derived a sample size of three hundred and ninety-four (394) civil servants.

3.1 Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses to address the relationships between inspirational leadership and the measures of employee commitment are reflected in the following hypotheses:

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between inspirational leadership and affective commitment in Bayelsa State civil service.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between inspirational leadership and continuance commitment in Bayelsa State civil service.

HO₃: There is no significant relationship between inspirational leadership and normative commitment in Bayelsa State civil service.

The relationship between the variables – inspirational leadership and the measures of employee commitment (affective, continuance, and normative commitments), are revealed to be significant. The results show that inspirational leadership significantly contributes and enhances outcomes related to employee commitment such as affective commitment (with $\rho = 0.911$ and $P = 0.05$), continuance commitment (with $\rho = 0.101$ and $P = 0.05$), and normative commitment (with $\rho = 0.450$ and $P = 0.05$).

The results generated herein point to the nature of the relationship between inspirational leadership and employee commitment. Evidence from the analysis demonstrates the usefulness and imperatives of inspirational leadership in driving commitment of civil servants within Bayelsa state civil service. In line with the observed outcome of the tests on the bivariate hypotheses, the following results on the tests are stated:

- i. Inspirational leadership is significantly associated with affective commitment in Bayelsa State civil service.
- ii. Inspirational leadership is significantly associated with continuance commitment in Bayelsa State civil service.
- iii. Inspirational leadership is significantly associated with normative commitment in Bayelsa State civil service.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Inspirational leadership and Affective Commitment

The evidence on the relationship between inspirational leadership and the measures of employee commitment demonstrates the imperatives of inspirational leadership in advancing positive employee behaviour. Inspirational leadership in this sense advances positive behaviours which further impact substantially on employee commitment. According to Stein et al. (2020) inspirational leadership helps followers to be more closely identified with the goals and objectives of the organization and to match their performance with that of the organization.

4.2 Inspirational leadership and Continuance Commitment

Den Hartog et al. (2002), described inspirational leadership as acting in a way that people would want to follow, where there is two-way communication and where relationships and efforts are valued. Employees that work for inspirational leaders are motivated to push themselves beyond their comfort zones and engage in their tasks above the basic requirements. Leaders who are inspired will be able to inspire their followers and employees to be enthusiastic about and committed to the goals and objectives of the company. According to Popa (2012), a leader's capacity for inspiration allows him to convert and communicate a vision with complete zeal and assurance.

4.3 Inspirational leadership and Normative Commitment

Mahendru and Sharma (2006) argued that a leader's inspiration and other motivating aspects of the workplace culture have a significant impact on how devoted a worker is to his or her goals and to their organization. Inspirational leaders build attainable strategies for accomplishing their objectives and then mobilize support for those plans by explaining them to their people in a convincing and understandable way (Walumbwa & Lawler, 2013). This is thought to inspire workers to collaborate in order to achieve a common objective and meet or exceed predetermined goals, or what is commonly known as extra role performance (Uzonna,

2013). By focusing on a greater cause and raising followers' intrinsic desire, dedication, and effort, which results in performance improvement, inspiration is concerned with motivating employees to a higher level of contribution and productivity (Minja & Barine, 2014).

5.0 Conclusion

The relationship between inspirational leadership and employee commitment is revealed to be positive and significant. The findings of this study demonstrate the role of inspirational leadership as critical for the employees' level of affective, continuance, and normative commitment. In line with the results, the study concludes as follows:

Inspirational leadership, which motivates and encourages people to carry out their ideas in the organization, is essential for employee commitment as it significantly increases employees' desire to remain with the company and accept its goals and values and strengthen employees' emotional ties to the company in such a manner that enhances the employees' affective, continuance, and normative commitments.

6.0 Recommendations

The relationship between inspirational leadership and employee commitment is established herein as significant and can be considered as positively impacting and facilitating employee commitment features such as affective, continuance, and normative commitments. Thus, in line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

- i. Bayelsa state civil service should ensure that prospective and existing leaders should inspire their civil servants. Through inspiration, leaders should raise civil servants to higher levels of motivation and morality as this will have a positive impact on the civil servants.
- ii. The Bayelsa State Civil Service should ensure that they produce leaders who are creative and knowledgeable as this can affect an organization's ability to respond to development requirements and problems.
- iii. Bayelsa state civil service should make deliberate efforts to improve the technical, theoretical, conceptual, and moral abilities of leaders; they should ensure leaders have an inspirational role by encouraging civil servants to accept problems and see them as opportunities; and inspire them to believe in the power of working together to achieve the goals, as this will guarantee best outcomes. It will also foster civil servants' dedication to achieving longer-term objectives and use of creativity in solving tasks.

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Appendix

Table 1: Relationship between inspirational leadership and measures of employee commitment

			Correlations			
			INSPIRATION	AFFECTIVE_COMM	CONTINUANCE_COMM	NORMATIVE_COMM
Spearman's rho	INSPIRATION	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.006	-.087	-.040
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.911	.101	.450
		N	359	359	359	359
	AFFECTIVE_COMM	Correlation Coefficient	.006	1.000	.121*	-.091
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.911	.	.021	.084
		N	359	359	359	359
	CONTINUANCE_COMM	Correlation Coefficient	-.087	.121*	1.000	-.153**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.101	.021	.	.004
		N	359	359	359	359
	NORMATIVE_COMM	Correlation Coefficient	-.040	-.091	-.153**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.450	.084	.004	.
		N	359	359	359	359

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

Source: Research Data (SPSS Output), 2024