TEAM TRUST AND EMPLOYEE AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT IN BAYELSA STATE CIVIL SERVICE

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Abstract

As today's civil service moves towards achieving goals and objectives in making the lives of citizens better, there is a need to understand such actions from the perspective of teamwork. This study reveals the extent to which team trust would influence the much needed affective commitment of civil service in Bayelsa state. Propensity to trust, perceived trustworthiness and corporative behaviour are dimensions of team trust. The study covers four parastatals in Bayelsa state namely; Bayelsa State Civil Service Commission, Bayelsa State Council Of Arts And Culture, Bayelsa State Environmental Sanitation Authority And Bayelsa State Hospitals Management Board. Thirty copies of research instrument were distributed to each of these parastals and Multiple regression was used to test the stated null hypotheses. The findings revealed that both propensity to trust and perceived trustworthiness significantly influence affective commitment while corporative behaviour had a negative influence. The study recommends trainings and re-training of staff within the civil service, ensuring leadership by competence and integrity as well as encouraging teamwork amongst workers.

Keywords: Team trust, affective commitment, propensity to trust, perceived trustworthiness, Civil service, Bayelsa.

Introduction

Commitment refers to an individual's attachment and loyalty to his or her organization, firm or entity (Dawley, Stephens and Stephens, 2005). Affective commitment refers to an employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in his organization (Powell and Meyer, 2004). However, if the employees feel alienated to their job, they may only do the minimum amount required and this isn't a desired outcome for civil service in Bayelsa State. The working conditions shouldn't create a climate of silence that makes people feel helpless and inadequate. Otherwise, the employees may continue to work in the organization because they ought to or they have to. They lose their self confident, motivation and willingness to change the undesired issues, and their beliefs on organizational goals. The employees may be reluctant to talk about the issues that can be interpreted wrongly by the managers and seen as a threat. In their opinion, there may be no possibility to change the undesired organizational conditions and therefore they may refuse to take an action. This is referred to as 'learned helplessness'. According to Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky (2002), there have been various researches that have analyzed the relationship between affective commitment and effective performance of organizations. These researches revealed that the predictors of affective commitment generally occurred in three categories: organizational characteristics, personal characteristics, and work experiences. In this study, we shall empirically evaluate how team trust can bring out the much needed affective commitment among civil servants in Bayelsa State.

The importance of trust in organizations has been associated with the changes in the way of thinking and functioning of organizations during the last decades of the millennium. Traditional management forms have given place to more collaborative approaches that emphasizes coordination, sharing of responsibilities and the participation of the workers in the decision processes. New emphasis is given on interpersonal and group dynamics at the workplace, where trust is seen as one of the critical elements. If trust is absent, no one will risk moving first and all parts will sacrifice the gains from collaboration and cooperation in increasing affective commitment (Costa, 2000). The concept of trust has received considerable attention in organizational and applied psychology research over the past few decades. Trust is both an interpersonal and collective phenomenon and is expressed at three levels within organizations: individual, teams, and organizational (Costa, Roe, & Taillieu, 2001). Particularly at the level of the work group or team, interest in studying trust has grown considerably, as organizations have moved towards flatter and more team-based structures (Lui & Ngo 2004). The increasing importance of interpersonal and group dynamics in achieving effective collaboration has contributed to raise trust in the research agenda. More than ever, organizations look to invest in conditions that facilitate trust among members in order to survive (Luo, 2002), foster adaptability and innovation (Harrison, Newman and Roth, 2006), enhance their competitive advantage (Costa, et al., 2001), and facilitate positive team working conditions within organizational structures that are becoming increasingly reliant upon ad hoc and ongoing project teams and collaborative working practices (Edwards, 2001).
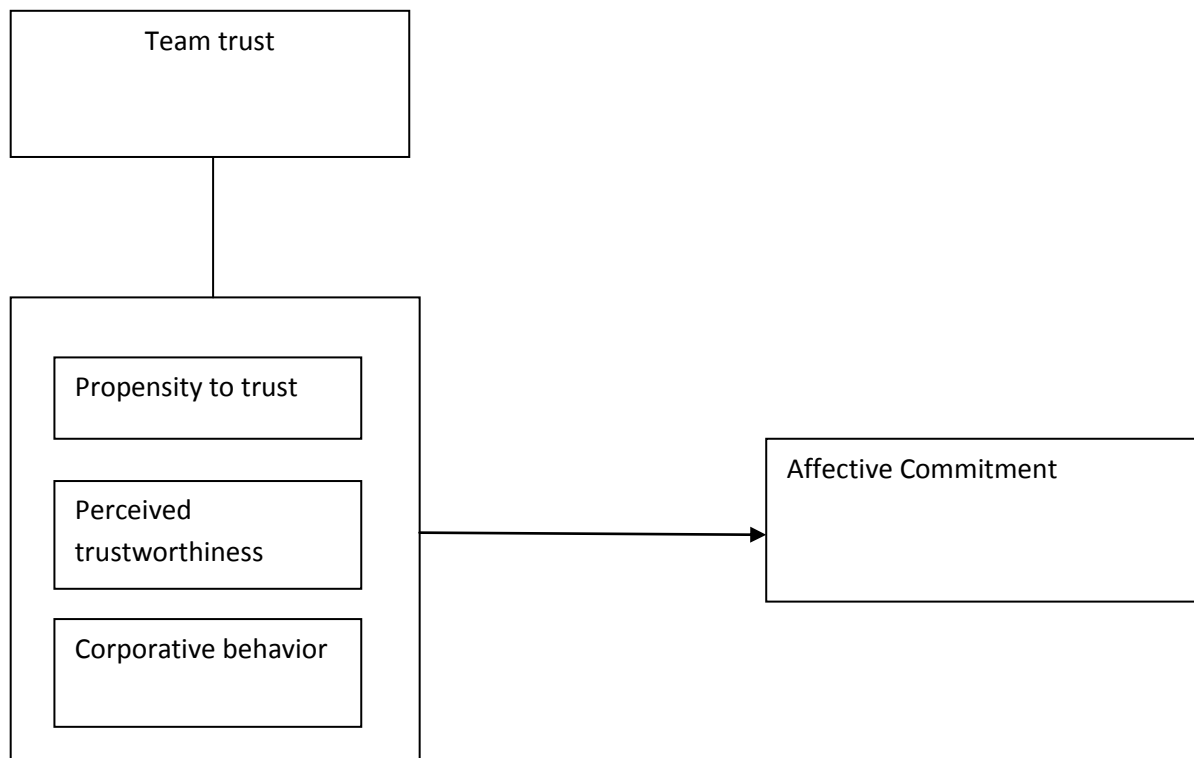
Conceptual Framework

Fig 1. Conceptual Framework
Adapted from the works of Costa (2001) and Jaros (2007)

Research Hypotheses

$H0_1$:   Propensity to trust does not influence affective commitment
$H0_2$:   Perceived trustworthiness does not influence affective commitment
$H0_3$:   Corporative behavior does not influence affective commitment

Literature Review

The theoretical framework for this study is anchored on social exchange theory.

Social exchange theory (SET) is among the most influential conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behavior. Its venerable roots can be traced back to at least the 1920s (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002) bridging such disciplines as anthropology, social psychology and sociology. For Shore & Coyle-Shapiro (2003), the dominant emphasis was the individual behavior of actors in interaction with one another. His primary aim was to explain fundamental processes of social behavior (power, conformity, status, leadership, and justice) from the ground up. Homans believed that there was nothing that emerges in social groups that cannot be explained by propositions about individuals as individuals, together with the given condition that they happen to be interacting. In his effort to embrace this form of reductionism, he parted company very clearly with the work of Blau (1964) who built into his theory of social exchange and social structure an analysis of "emergent" properties of social systems. Homans (1961) defined social exchange as the exchange of activity, tangible or

intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons. Cost was viewed primarily in terms of alternative activities or opportunities foregone by the actors involved. Reinforcement principles derived from the kind of behaviorism popular in the early sixties (e.g., the work of B. F. Skinner) were used by Homans to explain the persistence of exchange relations. Behavior is a function of payoffs, whether the payoffs are provided by the nonhuman environment or by other humans. Emerson (1976) subsequently developed a psychological basis for exchange based on these same reinforcement principles. Homans explained social behavior and the forms of social organization produced by social interaction by showing how Y's behavior reinforced Z's behavior (in a two party relation between actors Y and Z), and how Z's behavior reinforced Y's behavior in return. This was the explicit basis for continued social interaction explained at the "sub-institutional" level. The existing historical and structural conditions were taken as given. Value is determined by the actor's history of reinforcement and thus also taken as given at entry into an exchange relation. Homans' primary focus was the social behavior that emerged as a result of the social processes of mutual reinforcement (and the lack of it). Relations could also terminate on the basis of the failure of reinforcement. Because this study considers trust as a vital element which determines the actions of group members as they work as team, this theory is justified.

The Concept of Team Trust

Trust as a concept has been defined in multiple ways by several researchers. Although each researcher had used slight variations, most empirical studies seem to conceptualize and measure trust as an expectation or belief that one can rely on another person's actions and words and/or that the person has good intentions toward oneself (Williams, 2001). As Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky (2002) have noted, trust is most meaningful in situations in which one party is at risk or vulnerable to another party. Most researchers agree that trust is as a highly complex, multidimensional, and abstract phenomenon containing distinct but related components (Yoon & Suh, 2003). Most definitions and models of trust include both individual and relational components, respectively regarding the trustor and his/her relationship with the trustee(s) (Wild, 2004). Propensity to trust and trustworthiness have been the two most mentioned and measured components of trust. According to Mackensie, Podsakoff, and Jarvis (2005), these components constitute formative indicators of a higher order construct (in this case trust) since they reflect dispositions and perceptions underlying the construct. The behaviours of trust, identified in several conceptualizations and measures of trust (Luo, 2002) are viewed as reflective indicators, and are the result of the action to trust or not.

Propensity to trust

Decisions about trust must often be made before enough time has passed to gather data on trustworthiness. Tzafrir (2005) argued that trust depends not just on past experience but also on dispositional factors such as personality. Rotter (1967) was among the first to discuss trust as a form of personality, defining interpersonal trust as a generalized expectancy that the words or promises of others can be relied on. This personality-based form of trust has been referred to by other scholars as dispositional trust (Kramer, 2012), generalized trust and trust

propensity. McKnight et al. (2002) argued that trust propensity has taken on a new importance as cross-functional teams, structural reorganizations, and joint ventures create new working relationships more frequently. After all, trust propensity is likely to be the most relevant trust antecedent in contexts involving unfamiliar actors (Kuvaas and Dysvik, 2009). However, an unanswered question is whether trust propensity continues to impact trust once trustworthiness has been gauged. Tzafrir (2005) noted that trust should always be connected to "good estimates of others' trustworthiness". However, Mayer and Gavin (2005) argued that trust propensity creates a filter that alters interpretations of others' actions. In this way, "observations are theory-laden", retaining the impact of trust propensity even after trustworthiness can be inferred. McKnight et al. (2002) made a similar claim, arguing that information on trustworthiness only opens the door to trust without actually constituting it. The cognitive element in trust is characterized by a cognitive "leap" beyond the expectations that reason and experience alone would warrant— they simply serve as the platform from which the leap is made.

Organizations are also increasingly concerned with the psychological factors of employees as a source of competitive advantage. In particular, focusing on employees' well-being provides opportunities for innovation and autonomy that can change and enhance organisational climate and significantly increase organisational performance (Kuvaas and Dysvik, 2009). One way of promoting the well-being of employees is through improving HRM policies and practices, which are crucial in developing trusting relations within and across organizations (Aryee ,Budhwar & Chen, 2002). Within the HRM and performance debate, it is argued that understanding the role of employees' attitudes and behaviours may provide greater clarity in the management of human resources. Kramer (2012) explored personality and performance relationships using 'traditional' personality factors; however, given the significance of trust in relation to a range of work outcomes and to HR management (Stewart, 2003). The need to consider a broader range of individual differences that may impact on such relationships is critical. One element of trust that is attracting renewed interest is an individual's predisposition or propensity to trust, and the potential significance of these traits for effective HRM practice. However, the benefits of having employees with a high trust propensity are relatively underexplored because of contention around how propensity is defined and the paucity of valid and reliable measures of the construct.

Perceived Trustworthiness

As trust is studied in different disciplines such as psychology, sociology and marketing, and in different contexts like organizations (Trifts & Ha¨ubl, 2003), romantic relationships or buyer–seller relationships, a multitude of definitions of trust exist. However, most scholars agree that trust has three major constituents: (a) uncertainty about the outcomes of an interaction, (b) personal harm as a possible outcome of the interaction and (c) lack of influence on the outcomes (Cho, 2006). Trust has been conceptualized both as a trait and as a state. A prominent example for trust as a trait is Rotter's (1967) interpersonal trust, which describes a generalized expectancy about the behaviour of others. Empirical results, however, suggest that in a particular situation the influence of trust as a trait is limited compared to the

attributes of the trustee (Garbarino & Lee, 2003). Attributes of the trustee are emphasized in state-oriented approaches; they focus on trust towards a specific interaction partner. Aryee, Budhwar & Chen (2002) provide a framework for integrating these two conceptualizations of trust towards a particular interaction partner. In their model, perceived trustworthiness encompasses three dimensions: ability, benevolence and integrity. Ability refers to the trustee's competence to fulfil promises given. Benevolence denotes that the trustee is interested in the trustor's well-being. Integrity means that the trustee follows a set of desirable principles. McKnight et al. (2002) have built upon this model and included a fourth dimension: the predictability of the trustee's behaviour. Beliefs about these four dimensions of perceived trustworthiness affect the degree of trust (as willingness) towards the trustee. Other authors have carved out these dimensions too, but not necessarily under the same names or in the same composition.

According to Flores and Solomon (1998), "In the ideal case, one trusts someone because he or she is trustworthy, and one's trustworthiness inspires trust". Clearly, then, the concept of trustworthiness is central to understanding and predicting trust levels. Gabarro (1978) conducted a longitudinal study of how managers develop working relationships with their subordinates. He conducted interviews with newly appointed managers over a 3-year time period, focusing specifically on the "bases of trust". One of those bases was competence or ability, which captures the knowledge and skills needed to do a specific job along with the interpersonal skills and general wisdom needed to succeed in an organization (Gabarro, 1978). Another of those bases was character, a multifaceted construct that subsumes concepts like honesty, fairness, openness, caring motives and intentions, and predictability. Mayer et al.'s model separates character into two components. The first component is benevolence, defined as the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good for the trustor, apart from any profit motives, with synonyms including loyalty, openness, caring, or supportiveness (Aryee et al., 2002). The second component is integrity, defined as the extent to which a trustee is believed to adhere to sound moral and ethical principles, with synonyms including fairness, justice, consistency, and promise fulfillment. Although the relevance of ability, benevolence, and integrity may seem intuitive, it remains unclear whether each has a unique impact on trust levels. It may be that either ability or character is sufficient for fostering trust but that both are not needed. Although that expectation seems reasonable, there are theoretical reasons to expect ability and character to have unique relationships with trust. First, ability captures the "can-do" component of trustworthiness by describing whether the trustee has the skills and abilities needed to act in an appropriate fashion. In contrast, the character variables capture the "will-do" component of trustworthiness by describing whether the trustee will choose to use those skills and abilities to act in the best interest of the trustor. Such "can-do" and "will-do" explanations for volitional behavior tend to exert effects independent of one another.

Corporative Behavior
Cooperative behaviours correspond to a number of positive actions that reflect the willingness of being vulnerable to others whose actions one does not control and involve ''engaging in some form of cooperation'' with them (Sherony and Green, 2002). These

behaviours include reliance on others, acceptance of influence, communication openness, information sharing and acting in a spirit of cooperation (Sullivan, Mitchell and Uhl-Bien, 2003). Research has shown that these behaviours are extremely related to one another, i.e., either they occur simultaneously or one behaviour leads to another. Therefore, these behaviours are often considered as complementary. Within teams, cooperative behaviours refer to the extent team members rely on each other, communicate openly about their work or themselves, accept the influence from each other, and are personally involved with the team. Recent developments inside and outside organisations have sparked new research questions about the behaviour of team members within modern work organisations. These organisational changes come under various headings –the flexible workplace, the socio-technical revolution, and the post-Fordist firm (Tyler, 2001). Their consequences for the workplace are just as variously denoted with phrases like employability, empowerment and "every worker a knowledge worker". To react on changes of a dynamic outlet market responsibility for attaining production goals are transferred from supervisors to teams, such as management-teams, project groups or self-managing teams (Uhl-Bien, Graen and Scandura, 2000). Within these teams, employees enjoy a considerable amount of autonomy, perform challenging tasks and experience alignment between personal and organisational goals. The flip side of this autonomy is that managers expect employees within a team to work together, participate voluntarily, cooperate willingly and submit to the mutual informal control needed to keep the organisation running. In order to keep organisations running these attitudinal and behavioural employees' outcomes like commitment, trust, cooperation and conflict handling are becoming more important. Furthermore, conflict handling of employees and managers has far-reaching effects on the effectiveness of the organization (Van Emmerik, and Sanders, 2004). Although it is well known that these attitudinal and behavioural employees' outcomes are important for the organization, these outcomes share the problem that they cannot be tackled by means of labour agreements.

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment (AC) is the affective component of organizational commitment and is defined as an employee's level of organizational identification as well as feelings of attachment to and high degree of involvement in the organization (Mayer et al, 2006). Affection for your job occurs when you feel a strong emotional attachment to your organization, and to the work that you do. You'll most likely identify with the organization's goals and values, and you genuinely want to be there. If you're enjoying your work, you're likely to feel good, and be satisfied with your job. In turn, this increased job satisfaction is likely to add to your feeling of affective commitment.

In addition to AC, organizational commitment (OC) comprises two other forms of commitment: continuance and normative commitment. Importantly, among the three forms of OC, AC is the strongest predictor of outcomes of interest to organizations such as turnover intentions, absenteeism, job performance, and organizational citizenship behavior (Dawley, Stephens and Stephens, 2005). Furthermore, AC is the only form of OC that may exert a positive influence on employee well being as a result of being negatively related to both

stress and work-family conflict (Coyle-Shapiro and Morrow, 2006). In sum, organizations and employees may benefit from organizational initiatives that can positively influence employee levels of AC. Mentoring is a vehicle through which AC can be positively influenced. Mentoring can be appraised by protégés as a positive or a negative experience (Chen and Francesco, 2003). Consequently, the direction and strength of the relationship between mentoring and AC are likely to be affected by the quality of mentoring. Bergman (2006) conducted a longitudinal study over a two-year period that revealed that mentoring was positively associated with AC at the end of the study. Another study conducted in the public accounting arena offered evidence of positive links between mentoring and the three forms of OC, with AC being most strongly related to mentoring (Allen, 2003). Thus, one might expect that protégées who are more satisfied with their mentors exhibit higher levels of AC than those who are less satisfied.

Methodology

In this study, the researcher adopted a cross-sectional survey across several parastatals in Bayelsa state. These agencies includes; Bayelsa State Civil Service Commission, Bayelsa State Council of Arts And Culture, Bayelsa State Environmental Sanitation Authority And Bayelsa State Hospitals Management Board. The researcher distributed thirty (30) copies of research instrument to each of these agencies making a total of 120 copies distributed. 5 statement items on a five point likert scale was used to operationalize each of the constructs in our research instrument ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Multiple regression was used in testing our null hypotheses because the researcher's concern is the nature of cause effect relationship existing amongst variables.

Data Analyses

Table 1.   Copies of questionnaire returned

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bayelsa state civil service commission	30	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Bayelsa state council of arts and culture	30	25.0	25.0	50.0
	Bayelsa state environmental sanitation authority	30	25.0	25.0	75.0
	Bayelsa state hospitals management board	30	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

In table 1, we realize that out of the 120 copies that were distributed, all the copies were returned which makes it a 100% return rate.

Table 2.   Respondents' gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	76	63.3	63.3	63.3
	female	44	36.7	36.7	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Our study shows that our respondents are distributed as follows; 76 males which constitutes 63% and 44 females constituting 36.7% making a total of 120.

Table 3.   Respondents' marital status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SINGLE	32	26.7	26.7	26.7
	MARRIED	53	44.2	44.2	70.8
	DIVOCE	26	21.7	21.7	92.5
	WINDOWED	9	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

In table 3, we also see that 32 respondents are single which makes up 26.75, 53 respondents are married which makes up 44.2, 26 respondents are divorced which makes up 21.7% while 9 respondents are widowed which makes up 7.5% of all respondents.

Table 4.   Univariate analyses for the construct "propensity to trust"

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
PTT_1	120	1	5	3.95	.858	.737
PTT_2	120	2	5	3.92	.904	.817
PTT_3	120	1	5	3.86	1.063	1.131
PTT_4	120	1	5	3.56	1.143	1.307
PTT_5	120	1	5	3.49	1.115	1.244
Valid N (listwise)	120					

Our construct "propensity to trust" is characterized by five statement items on a five point likert scale. Each of the items had a mean greater than 3.0 with a minimum entry of 1 (strongly disagree) and a maximum entry of 5 (strongly agree). This increases our confidence towards the strength of the construct.

Table 5.   **Univariate analyses for the construct "perceived trustworthiness"**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
PTW_1	120	1	5	3.49	1.115	1.244
PTW_2	120	1	5	3.57	1.043	1.088
PTW_3	120	1	5	3.85	.904	.818
PTW_4	120	1	5	3.83	.892	.796
PTW_5	120	1	5	3.94	.853	.728
Valid N (listwise)	120					

Similarly, our construct "perceived trustworthiness" is characterized by five statement items on a five point likert scale. Each of the items also had a mean greater than 3.0 with a minimum entry of 1 (strongly disagree) and a maximum entry of 5 (strongly agree). This also increases our confidence towards the strength of the construct.

Table 6.   **Univariate analyses for the construct "corporative behaviour"**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
CB_1	120	1	5	3.94	.853	.728
CB_2	120	2	5	4.08	.816	.665
CB_3	120	1	5	3.99	.939	.882
CB_4	120	2	5	3.94	.833	.694
CB_5	120	1	5	3.49	1.115	1.244
Valid N (listwise)	120					

Our construct "corporative behaviour" is characterized by five statement items on a five point likert scale. Each of the items had a mean greater than 3.0 with a minimum entry of 1 (strongly disagree) and a maximum entry of 5 (strongly agree). This increases our confidence towards the strength of the construct.

Table 7.   **Univariate analyses for the construct "Affective commitment"**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
AC_1	120	1	5	3.88	.963	.927
AC_2	120	1	5	3.82	1.029	1.059
AC_3	120	1	5	3.67	1.007	1.014
AC_4	120	1	5	3.68	1.006	1.011
AC_5	120	1	5	3.49	1.115	1.244
Valid N (listwise)	120					

Finally, our construct "affective commitment" is also characterized by five statement items on a five point likert scale. Each of the items also had a mean greater than 3.0 with a minimum entry of 1 (strongly disagree) and a maximum entry of 5 (strongly agree). This increases our confidence towards the strength of the construct.

Table 8.   Model Summary further

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.577[a]	.333	.316	1.898

a. Predictors: (Constant), Corporative_behaviour, propensity_to_trust, Percieved_thrustworthiness

Our model summary shows a coefficient of 0.577 which is good, it further shows a coefficient of determinant (R square) of 0.333 which indicates that 33.3% of the outcome of affective commitment is influenced by team trust. Other factors influencing affective commitment may be variables other than team trust.

Table 9.   ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	208.694	3	69.565	19.301	.000[b]
	Residual	418.098	116	3.604		
	Total	626.792	119			

a. Dependent Variable: AFFECTIVE_COMMITMENT

b. Predictors: (Constant), Corporative_behaviour, propensity_to_trust, Percieved_thrustworthiness

Here we also see that our ANOVA output has an f-value of 19.301 which characterizes the overall fitness of our model as well as a p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha of 0.05. This shows that affective commitment is significantly influenced by team trust.

Table 10.   Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	8.551	1.252		6.829	.000
	propensity_to_trust	-.188	.060	-.303	-3.114	.002
	Percieved_thrustworthiness	.417	.086	.641	4.865	.000
	Corporative_behaviour	.049	.061	.094	.793	.429

a. Dependent Variable: AFFECTIVE_COMMITMENT

H0$_1$ Propensity to trust does not influence affective commitment
Our first hypothesis shows that propensity to trust can influence affective commitment. Although the coefficient is negative (-0.303), it also revealed a significant p-value of 0.002 which is less than alpha of 0.05. We would therefore reject the stated null hypothesis.

H0$_2$ Perceived trustworthiness does not influence affective commitment
Hypothesis two also revealed that perceived trustworthiness can affect affective commitment with a coefficient of 0.641 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha of 0.05. The null hypothesis is also rejected.

$H0_3$ Corporative behavior does not influence affective commitment

Nevertheless, our third hypothesis shows a different result. It revealed that corporative behavior does not significantly influence affective commitment with a coefficient of 0.094 and a p-value of 0.429 which is higher than alpha of 0.05. The null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that team trust as a predictor variable can influence the much needed affective commitment in civil service in Bayelsa state. The model summary presented revealed a coefficient of determinant showing that over 33.3% of the outcome of affective commitment is caused by our predictor variable. In breaking down our findings, we also realized that our first test of hypothesis had a negative coefficient, yet its effectiveness was positive as revealed in the p-value which was less than 0.05. Our second test of hypothesis had a significant coefficient as well as a p-value of 0.000 which was less than alpha of 0.05. However, our third test of hypothesis shows a negative relationship existing between corporative behavior and affective commitment. This could be as a result of affective commitment being an individual affair. A lot of staff within the civil service may have affective commitment but may not have corporative behavior because of the nature of workplace diversity.

Recommendations

i.   There should be adequate training for employees within the civil service. Such trainings should cover areas such as interpersonal communication and building corporative behaviors within the organization.

ii.   Propensity to trust amongst civil servants should be increased through integrity on the part of government and other team players within the external environment.

iii.   Team work should be encouraged in the civil service despite the diversity of workers. This would help enhance the actions of individual workers towards team targets and objectives which would lead to the general objective of the parastatal.

iv.   Leadership should be considered in the civil service as directors or permanent secretaries should be based on competence and integrity.

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