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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between altruism and employee commitment of local government area staff in Rivers State. The study a cross sectional survey design, solicited responses from the employees of the 23 local government areas of Rivers State using the simple random technique. The sample size for this study was 379 from the given population of six Local Government Areas. After data cleaning, data of 316 respondents were finally used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics and the Spearman rank order correlation were used for data analysis and hypothesis testing. Empirical findings revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between altruism and employee commitment of local government staff in Rivers state. The study thus concluded that altruism bears a positive and significant influence on employee commitment and all the dimensions and measures show significant positive relationships. We recommended that local government authorities should strive to show devotion to organizational members through acts of benevolence, care and concern, in order to be assured of their high level of commitment to work.

Keywords: Altruism, Employees' Commitment, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment

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INTRODUCTION

Workers' commitment has been observed to be of prime importance to managers and researchers, and is acknowledged to be a crucial factor in achieving organizational success. Consequently, it is argued that "in the management discourse, commitment is a central variable, given that more committed people tend to devote higher efforts to work, thus contributing to organizational performance" (Rego and Cunha, 2007:4). It therefore implies that in order for organizations to be successful, employees need to be committed to, and be passionate about their work (Kinjerski and Skrypnek, 2006a). Accordingly, "organizational commitment continues to be a topical issue in management research and continues to engage the attention of practicing managers" (Gbadamosi, 2003, p.274). Recognizing the sources of organizational commitment has therefore become increasingly important for organizations, and it is argued that over thirty years of research has been done to investigate how commitment influences organizational life (Overberghe, et.al., 2003). This view is corroborated by the assertion that "organizational commitment (OC) has been seen as one of the most important variables in the study of management and organizational behavior in the last three decades (Liu, 2000).

In today's business world, altruism is not a commonly discussed topic. Competition is tense not only among different industries, but also within companies. Striving to gain more profit, business somehow gives the impression that it turns everyone against each other for the sake of survival. Natural selection from Darwin, survival of the fittest, instead of care about the welfare of others, seems to be a perfect description of business world nowadays (Yu- Chen,2011). Being profitable is the major means for companies to ensure organizational survival and it is common that people would use any method to keep the organization alive by reaching to its financial goal. However, many companies' missions are beyond all those financial figures. A lot of companies, whether

in western society or in eastern society, have philosophy/ mission of doing good for the world. Chevron invests in communities which mainly focuses on three areas: health, education and economic development; Coca Cola works with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to promote Arctic Home project for saving polar bears in the Arctic, whereas eastern companies tend to stay low-keyed while doing good to the society. An example would be many corporations made donations as Japanese Tsunami 311 happened. Within organizations, one can usually notice that co-workers or supervisors would help others not exactly they would financially benefit from their behaviors (Yu- Chen,2011).

These seeable phenomena break the stereotype of business world, making several questions worth to think about. Is it possible that part of human nature, being altruistic, would help companies increase the number on the financial statement? Would altruistic love be able to lead the employees to exhibit more commitment and eventually raise the level of performance? Therefore, propositions that altruistic love would increase the employee commitment level, which would eventually enhance the performance, will be addressed in the paper. This paper aims to empirically examine the relationship between altruism and employee commitment of Local government Areas in Rivers state. It will also attempt to answer the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between altruism and affective commitment of Local government Areas in Rivers state?
- What is the relationship between altruism and normative commitment of Local government Areas in Rivers state?
- What is the relationship between altruism and continuance commitment of Local government Areas in Rivers state?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

For a clearer understanding of the relationship between the variables, the researcher reflect upon

the culture and climate within the civil service especially local government areas which create misalignment to organizational values; distress, insecurity, suspicion corruption, dishonesty, materialism and not working with the soul, body and mind. By this, the researcher employs the self-determination theory in order to understand the process and mechanisms that link workplace spirituality with commitment in the study. The assumption is that there might be similar notions between individuals experiencing intrinsic motivation/need satisfaction and individuals experiencing high levels of spirituality at work. According to self-determination theory as argued by Ryan & Deci (2000), is the opportunity to satisfy the three intrinsic needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness will facilitate self-motivation and effective functioning because they facilitate internalization of extent values and regulatory processes; they also facilitate adjustment because need satisfaction provides the necessary nutrients for human growth and development (Baard, *et al.*, 2004).

The need for competence is concerned with people's inherent desire to be effective in dealing with their environment. The need for relatedness is about the universal propensity to interact with, be connected to and experience caring for other people, and the need of autonomy is concerned with people's universal urge to be a causal agent, to experience volition, to act in accord with their integrated sense of self, and to endorse their actions at the highest level of reflective capacity (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004).

Altruism

Altruists choose to align their well-being with others - so they are happy when others thrive, sad when others are suffering. Essential in establishing strong relationships, most societies acknowledge the importance of altruism within the family. By motivating cooperation rather than conflict, it promotes harmony within communities of any size. Of course, peace within communities does not necessarily herald peace between communities,

and the two may even be inversely related - witness for example, the way in which social strife tends to decrease within countries at war.

Altruists broaden their perspectives in an effort to overcome the artificial categories that break up the complex web of life. Altruism is the abdication of claims of power over others. To state that "None of us are worth more and none are worth less than anyone else" is almost a truism, but modern technology has given a new urgency to all such appeals for altruism. Life on earth is being destroyed at an alarming rate, and evidence is mounting of impending disasters such ecological collapse and climate change that threaten us all. Until a fundamental shift of consciousness occurs, such disasters can only get worse. Communications technology - and WWW in particular - is boosting altruism and establishing a global consciousness. It is encouraging to see how easily individual acts of altruism can have a global impact (e.g. Wikipedia, free software, or give away websites). In spite of massive investment by the corporate world, a mentality shift in the IT sphere is well underway from scarcity to abundance.

Altruism love represents a self-sacrificing love and as Lantos (1999) said, this type of love emphasizes others and therefore de-emphasizes one's self interest, it involves forgiveness, trust etc. Altruistic love is given unconditionally to employees *visa vice* from the organization in pursuit of a common vision that drives out and removes fears associated with worry, anger, jealousy, selfishness, failure and guilt and gives one a sense of membership – that part of spiritual survival/well-being that gives one an awareness of being understood and appreciated. Spirituality based on altruistic faith/hope and love is hypothesized to result in an increase in one's sense of spiritual well-being (e.g. calling and membership) and ultimately positive organizational outcomes. According to the spiritual leadership theory, altruistic love is also given unconditionally from the organization and is received in turn from followers in pursuit of a common vision that drives out and removes fears associated with worry, anger,

jealousy, selfishness, failure and guilt and gives one a sense of membership – that part of spiritual survival/well-being that gives one an awareness of being understood and appreciated.

Workers' Commitment

This concept has attracted a great deal of attention from both scholars and practitioners within and outside the discipline of management sciences. Meyer (2000) pointed out, "of the several work attitude variables studied by organizational psychologists, only job satisfaction has received more research attention than organizational commitment". This wide interest is possible due to the impact of organizational commitment on a wide range of attitudes and behaviours with organizational relevance, such as intention to leave, turnover, punctuality, organizational change and performance (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). For some other scholars, one of the most cited models of organizational commitment was developed by Allen and Meyer. It differentiates three commitment components: affective (emotional attachment to the organization), continuance (perceived costs associated with leaving the organization) and normative (feelings of obligation towards the organization). Each of these components contributes to strengthening the likelihood that the employee will remain in the organization, but the nature of each mind set differs from the others.

Measures of Workers Commitment

Affective Commitment

According to Meyer & Allen (1991) affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to identification with, and involvement in the organization based on positive feelings, or emotions, toward the organization. The antecedent for affective commitment include perceived job characteristic where there is task autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety and supervisory feedback, organizational dependability that mean extent to which employees feel the organization can be counted on to look after their interest, and perceived participatory management

that they can influence decisions on the work environment and other uses of concern to them (Madi et al, 2012). They further asserted that the use of these antecedents is consistent with the findings by Rowden (2002) that these factors all create rewarding situations, intrinsically conducive to development of affective commitment.

Normative Commitment

According to Madi, et al (2012) normative commitment refers to an employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organization where it based on the employee having internalized the values and goals of the organization. Normative commitment is said to reflect a sense of obligation on the part of the employee to maintain membership in the organization (Meyer & Smith, 2000; Bal, et al, 2014). It has also been conceived that the potential antecedents for normative commitment include co-worker commitment where it includes affective and normative dimensions as well as commitment behaviour, organizational dependability and participatory management. And that coworkers' commitment is expected to provide normative signals that influence the development of normative commitment. It is worthy to mention that organizational dependability and participatory management are key issues that will foster and install a sense of moral obligation to reciprocate to the organization

Continuance Commitment

Bal, et al (2014) opined that continuance commitment is based on the perceived costs associated with discontinuing employment work with the organization. Kanter (1968) referred to continuance commitment as a cognitive orientation where costs are considered when leaving or remaining with the organization. Continuance commitment is seen as the commitment that is based on the cost that the employee is associated with when leaving the organization (due to high cost of leaving). And the potential antecedents of continuance include age, tenure, career satisfaction and intent to leave. Age and tenure can be seen as adopted predictors of continuance commitment, as

a result of their roles as substitute measures of investment in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). In the view of Madi *et al* (2012), tenure indicates non-transferable investments that means close working relationship with co-workers, retirement investments, career investments and skills peculiar to the particular organization while age can be negatively related to the number of available job opportunities. Career satisfaction was said to provide a more direct measure of career related investments which could be at risk if the individual leaves the organization.

Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Workers' Commitment

Worker' commitment can be defined as a psychological state that characterizes an employee's relationship with the organization and reduces the likelihood that he / she will leave it (Allen and Meyer, 2000). This is wide interest on organizational commitment, possibly this is due to the impact of organizational commitment on a wide range of attitudes and behaviours with organizational relevance, such as intention to leave, turnover, punctuality, organizational citizenship behaviours, attitudes toward organizational change and performance (Allen and Meyer, 1996,; Meyer and Herscovitvh, 2001). This means that a given employee can be affectively, normatively and instrumentally committed to the organization.

Affective commitment develops when the employee becomes involved in, organizes the value-relevance of, and/or derives his / her identity from the association with the organization. For example, employees tend to be affectively committed if they feel that the organization treats in a fair, respectful and supporting manner. Continuance commitment develops when the employee recognizes that he / she stands to lose investments in the organization, and / or perceives that there are no alternatives other than remaining in the organization. Normative commitment develops when people internalize the organization's norms through socialization; receive benefits that induce them to feel the need to reciprocate and / or to accept the

terms of a psychological contract. Another important feature of the model is that all three components have implications over permanence or withdrawal.

Distinctly, employees with strong continuance commitment will feel no tendency to contribute to the organization beyond what is needed to keep their jobs. Moreover, if continuance commitment is the primary tie that bonds employees to their organizations, this attachment may lead to undesirable work behavior (Allen and Meyer, 2000). Finally, the model predicts that employees who feel an obligation towards the organization (normative commitment) tend to want to make positive contributions. As observed by Allen and Meyer (2000, 294), because obligation does not carry the same feelings of enthusiasm and involvement brought by affection. This reasoning leads to a simple yet powerful argument: to reach higher performance, organizations need to develop affective and normative bonds with their employees, and to discourage continuance commitment.

The foregoing argument gave rise to the following hypotheses:

- H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between altruism and affective commitment of Local Government Areas in Rivers State.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant relationship between altruism and normative commitment of Local Government Areas in Rivers State.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant relationship between altruism and continuance commitment of Local Government Areas in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, the cross sectional survey research design was used because it enabled the gathering of data and enhanced interpretation made based on the data gathered. There were 23 Local Government Areas in Rivers State. Due to the impracticability to study all the 23 Local Government Areas due to the large population, the

simple random technique was adopted by the researcher to select six (6) Local Government Areas based on the geographical scope, two from each geographical zone. Thus, the target population comprises employees from six (6), Local government areas with the population size of 7,257, as obtained from the open registry office of the

Local Government Service commission. The sample size of 379 was determined using the Taro Yamen formula. Descriptive statistics and Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used for data analysis and hypothesis testing with the aid of the SPSS Package version.

Table 1: Reliability statistics for the instruments

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Altruism	0.736	6
Workers' commitment	0.872	5

Source: SPSS, Data Output, 2017.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Bivariate Analysis

Secondary analyses from the results of the hypotheses were presented with test conducted using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient at 95% confidence level which was

adopted as a criteria for the probability for either accepting the null hypotheses at ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypotheses formulated at ($p < 0.05$). In clear terms, the test covers the six hypotheses postulated for the study (i.e. H_{01} and H_{03}) which were bivariate and stated in null form.

Test of Hypothesis One

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between Altruism and Normative Commitment.

Table 2: Correlation result for Altruism and Normative Commitment

			Altruism	Normative Commitment
Spearman's rho	Altruism	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.524**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	316	316
	Normative Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.524**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	316	316

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

Source: SPSS 21.0 Data output, 2017

The results shown in table 2 above, with *rho* value = 0.524, meant that a moderate positive relationship exist between altruism and normative commitment. This relationship was significant at $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ significance level. This means that the previously

stated null hypothesis was hereby rejected and the alternate accepted and this implied that there is a significant relationship altruism and normative commitment of Local Government employees in Rivers state.

Test of Hypothesis Two

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between Altruism and Affective Commitment.

Table 3: Correlation result for Altruism and Affective Commitment

			Altruism	Affective Commitment
Spearman's rho	Altruism	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.466**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	316	316
	Affective Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.466**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	316	316

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

Source: SPSS 21.0 data output, 2017

The results shown in table 3 above, with *rho* value= 0.466, means that a moderate positive relationship exist between Altruism and Affective commitment. This relationship is significant at $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ significance level. This means that the previously

stated null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate accepted and this implies that there is a significant relationship Altruism and Affective commitment of Local Government employees in Rivers state.

Test of Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between Altruism and Continuance Commitment.

Table 4: Correlation result for Altruism and Continuance Commitment.

			Altruism	Continuance Commitment
Spearman's rho	Altruism	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.594**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	316	316
	Continuance Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.594**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	316	316

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

Source: SPSS 21.0 data output, 2017.

The results shown in table 4 above, with *rho* value= 0.594, meant that a moderate positive relationship exist between Altruism and Continuance Commitment. This relationship was significant at $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ significance level. This meant that the previously stated null hypothesis was hereby rejected and the alternate accepted and this implied that there is a significant relationship Altruism and Continuance commitment.

the sample of Local Government Areas of Rivers State. The moderate positive values of (0.524), (0.426) and (0.594) show the strength of the relationships between the variables. Furthermore, the *p*-value (0.00) is less than the level of significance of (0.05); therefore we reject the null hypotheses and conclude that a positive and significant relationship exists between altruism, affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The test of hypotheses four , five and six as shown in tables (2, 3 and 4) respectively depicts that a strong and positive relationship exist between altruism and each of the employees commitment in

Our finding agrees with the views of Fry (2003) that the characteristic features of altruistic love are thus attributed to being responsible for increased sense of membership in leaders and followers’ .These

characteristic features of altruistic love include forgiveness, kindness, integrity, empathy and compassion, honesty, patience, courage, trust and loyalty, and humility. Accordingly it is believed that “altruistic acts lead to that ‘warm glow’ and sense of moral satisfaction that comes from helping (or, at least, not harming) others” (Lantos, 1999) and as such, “the Judeo-Christian tradition sums it up in the maxims ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself’ and ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Lantos, 1999, p.224). It is thus argued that altruistic love increases workers’ sense of membership (Fry, 2003), and gives them a reason to be optimistic.

Ahiazu and Asawo (2009) argued that there is empirical evidence to the effect that compassion elicits commitment in organizational members (Lilius, *et.al.*, 2005). Buttressing this view, is the assertion that “frequent experiences of positive emotion at work may lead to pleasant emotional associations with the workplace” (Lilius *et.al.*, 2005, p.10).

Our finding corroborates the results from the study by Ahiazu and Asawo (2009) which found that in the Nigerian manufacturing industry: (1) as organizational members’ feeling of wholeness, harmony, and wellbeing increase due to the level of care and appreciation at work, they substantially identify with, get involved in, and get emotionally attached to the organization; (2) organization-members’ commitment based on their recognition of the cost associated with leaving the organization is only minimally influenced by their feeling of wholeness, harmony, and wellbeing at work; and (3) as organization-members’ feeling of wholeness, harmony, and wellbeing increase due to the level of care and appreciation at work, they substantially develop a sense of obligation towards the organization. It is worth reiterating that “frequent

experiences of positive emotion at work may lead to pleasant emotional associations with the workplace” (Lilius, *et.al.*, 2005). They identified from their study that this seems to be the case in the Nigerian manufacturing industry as organizations are very much characterized by sufficient levels of humaneness, mutual care, trust-worthiness and honesty, and therefore have members that are emotionally glued to their organization. These acts of altruism exhibited in the Nigerian manufacturing industry are first and foremost demonstrated by organizational leaders, which accordingly trickle down to other organization-members.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From empirical findings, the study thus concluded that as employees in Local Government Areas in Rivers State exhibit high altruistic values, epitomized in charitable actions of organizational members, workers’ affective, normative and continuance commitment is significantly increased.

From the foregoing the following, recommendations were preferred:

- This study buttresses the fact that one way to substantially increase employee’s emotional involvement at work is to substantially enhance the stock of altruism within the organization.
- Virtues of unselfishness, self-sacrifice and selflessness, and philanthropy are hereby recommended as important components for positively raising the level of workers poignant state at work.
- The study therefore recommends that Local Government authorities should strive to show devotion to organizational members through acts of benevolence, care and concern, in order to be assured of their high level of commitment to work.

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