



Mediating role of Affective Commitment on the relationship between Employee's Innovative Behavior and Task performance; Lesson from Nigeria Public sector.

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Abstract

The current development in knowledge, rapid changes in technology and environmental dynamic made it compulsory for organizations to search for workers with Innovative Behaviors, with a view to sustain their survival. This paper, examined the effects of employee innovative behavior on task performance and the mediating effects of commitment among the two variables. Stratified random sampling method was used select 250 participants from public sector organizations in northwestern Nigeria. Data was collected through a questionnaire and analyze with PLS SEM. The detail about the findings, implication and limitations are discussed at the end.

Keywords: Mediating role of Affective Commitment on the relationship between Employee's Innovative Behavior and Task performance; Lesson from Nigeria Public sector.

Introduction

Employees play one of the most essential roles in creating and maintaining as well as ensuring the survival of organizations. This is achieved through performing their assigned duties/tasks effectively. However, the current development in knowledge, rapid changes in technology and environmental dynamic has continued to mount pressure on organizations to inculcate an innovative attitude among their employees with a view to sustain their long run survival and success (Xiangyin & Yishuang, 2014; Chan & Amran 2013; Nandin, 2012). As such, employees are the main driving force of innovation, and there is a need for organizations to pay attention their innovative behaviors (Xiangyin & Yishuang, 2014). Expecting innovative behavior from workers also requires commitment (Muhammad, 2012). Therefore, for organizations to succeed, the interplay of the two concepts employee innovative behaviors and commitment is highly needed.

Employee innovative behavior, commitment and task performance are concepts which mutual relationships are often examined in relevant literature. There are many researches indicating the relationships between EIB and TP (Balkar1, 2015;

Farid, Hakimian, and Ismail, 2017; Middelkoop, 2016). Other studies try to establish relationship between EIB and other organizational variables for example, Innovative Work Behavior and leader member exchange (Gubta, 2014). Factors Influencing Innovative Behavior (Faiza, Danjuma & Wajiga, 2018), Employee Innovative Behavior and Thriving at Work (Riaz, Yusen Xu & Hussain), Job design and Innovative behavior (Mohamad, Siti, Nur Izzati, & Shamila, 2017), Person-organization fit relationship with innovative performance of employees (Chen and Gao, 2017), Transformational leadership, innovative work behavior, and employee well-being (Mohammad, 2013), Self-leadership skills and innovative behavior at work (Abraham, Ravit and Jacob, 2006) among others.

Based on the above background, the situation of EBI among public servants in Nigeria is still unknown. Driven by this gap, this study was undertaken with the aim of examining the relationship between employees' innovative behavior and tasks performance to be mediated by normative commitment. The study was also aimed to contribute to the expansion in employee innovative behavior, commitment and task performance literature. Four sections made up this paper apart from the introductory part, second section is devoted to a literature review, and next part discusses methodology, while findings, discussions and conclusions are contained in the last section.

Literature Review

Task performance (TP); Task performance refers to the core technical behaviors and undertakings involved in the job (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007; Borman, Penner, Allen, & Motowidlo, 2001; Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, Schaufeli, De Vet, & Van der Beek, 2013). Task performance behaviors contribute directly or indirectly to the organization's technical core processes, that is, processes through which goods and services are produced. Line jobs generally contribute directly to the technical core. While staff jobs in personnel and in accounting or finance contribute indirectly



(Van Scotter, & Motowidlo, 1996). The basic features of task performance include maintaining situation consciousness, effecting control actions, performing communication tasks and operating facilities. Each component of task performance has a specified minimum level of performance, and there are consistent management procedures for supervisors who fail to perform any of these actions at the required standard (Griffin, et al., 2007). Task performance is predicted by a collection of variables that reflect proficiency in task activities. They include formal training, job knowledge, experience, cognitive ability, perceptual ability, and psychomotor ability Van Scotter, & Motowidlo, 1996).

Employees Innovative Behavior (EIB)

According to Yomna and Sandra (2017), employee innovative behavior can be defined as all employee actions that are geared toward outlining, generating, and application of valuable and new ideas at the organizational level. Employee innovative behavior comprises of developing new technologies, new product ideas and introducing new ideas or changes in administrative processes that aims at enhancing worker's efficiency as well as implementation of new ideas and technologies to work procedures (Kleysen, & Street, 2001; Yuan, & Woodman, 2010). Jong and Kemp (2003), opined that EIB involves of several practices and actions such as influential investigation, idea generation, opportunity discovery, championing, and implementation. In his submission, Abraham, et al., (2006), identified three stages of EIB, the first stage, is the recognizing a problem and offer new ideas that will overcome the problems. The second stage is to develop the new ideas by justifying how effective they are, and build up support for the ideas within and outside the organization. Lastly, the new ideas need to be exhibited by producing a model or prototype of the idea that can be practiced, applied or implement within a work role, a group, or the organization as a whole.

Commitment

Organizational commitment refers to a zeal which employees are willing to maintain and continue as members of a particular organization (Allen and Meyer 1990). Commitment has been found as one of the critical elements that can contribute towards the organizational productivity. The concept of commitment has been followed by diverse approaches for instance, Saher, (2012), identified some 25 concepts and measures that are related to commitment. While Blau & Boal (1987) contended that two approaches can be used in defining commitment which are behavioral and attitudinal

approach. However, the most popular models of organizational commitment are that developed by Meyer and Allen (1991), which conceptualizes organizational commitment in terms of three distinct dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative. They theorized that, employees with a strong affective commitment remain because they want to, those with strong continuance commitment because they need to, and those with strong normative commitment because they feel they ought to do so. This paper is, however, confined to the affective dimension of commitment. As pointed out by Faiza, et al., (2018) that, affective commitment is one of the strongest predictors' innovative behavior as well can enhance employee attitude and productivity.

Affective commitment

Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli, (2001), define Affective commitment (AF) as the worker's sensation of emotional link or attachment to the organization. Workers who possessed affective commitment are normally considered to be more dedicated and loyal to the organizational goal and objectives (Iqbal, Tufail and Lodhi, 2015). Similarly, workers with affective commitment are said to have more sense of belonging and have the zeal to work effectively towards achievement of organizational goals (Casimir, Ngee Keith, Yuan Wang, & Ooi, 2014). Saher et al., (2012) argued that workers that possessed high levels of affective commitment have greater feelings of belongingness to their organization and are more psychologically attached to it. Therefore, employees with a strong affective commitment continue with the organization because they want to do so (Allen & Meyer 1996). Hence, affectively committed employees are more concerned with the wellbeing of their organization and are more motivated to support the organization (Faiza, et al., 2018).

Employees Innovative Behavior (EIB) and Task performance (TP)

Previous studies have revealed that a positive relationship exists between employee innovative behavior EIB and task performance (Nandin, 2012; Chan & Amran, 2013). Janssen (2000) argued that EIB can contribute to dealing with job demands, thereby increasing job performance of employees and also functions as a coping mechanism on employees' level to adjust to higher job demands. Rosenbusch, Brinckmann & Bausch (2011) examined the relation between innovation and performance. Empirical evidence was disclosed that innovation can increase performance of a company. Campbell, Gasser and Oswald (1996) empirically demonstrated that organizations can



indeed benefit from employee innovative behavior. In their research, they also established a significant relationship between innovation specific behavior and organizational performance. The empirical evidence found by Rosenbusch et al. (2011) and Campbell et. Al (1996) shows the relevance of Researching EIB and job performance on an individual level of employees as being an important part of this process. However, some studies observed that employees working in positions in which innovativeness is not required, may be less motivated to apply new ideas for the reason that they do not consider news ideas or processes as helpful to their work (Chan & Amran, 2013). Whatever, the case may be, administrators/managers and employees are supposed to work closely together towards implementing innovation and both try to improve overall organizational performance. Based on the above discussion, this paper hypothesis that;

H1. *Positive relationship exists between employees' innovative behavior and task performance.*

Employees Innovative Behavior (EIB) and Affective Commitment (AC)

Past studies on commitment and innovative behavior has shown that, significant positive relationship exists between the two constructs though there are very limited studies (Nor Hazana, Alina, Eta, & Nor Aziaiti,2011; Jafri, 2010), examined the direct link between organizational commitment and innovative work behavior and establish that only affective commitment is positively related to innovative work behavior. Zannad and Rouet (2003), investigated the level of organizational commitment among workers in innovative companies and found that affective commitment is more pronounced in innovative organizations whereas Rhoades, Eisenberger, and Armeli, (2001), argued that perceived support can lead to affective commitment and innovative behaviors. In a related development, Faiza, et al., (2018); Camelo-Ordaz, García-Cruz, Sousa-Ginel,

and Valle-Cabrera, (2011); Noori and Rosdi, (2017) and Hoi, Cundiff, Kim and Akhatib, (2018), found out that Affective commitment is highly connected to work outcomes, such as EIB, satisfaction, happiness among others. That explained why Faiza et al., (2018); Xerri, and Brunetto, (2013), concludes that workers that are strongly attached or committed to their organization are more likely to perform effectively and develop new ideas to aid the organization in accomplishing its desired goals. Based on the above statement, this paper hypothesis that

H2. *Positive relationship exists between Employees Innovative Behavior and Affective commitment.*

Affective Commitment (AC) and Task Performance (TP)

Researches on organizational commitment have provided strong evidence that affective commitment is positively connected with organizational outcomes such as task performance and citizenship behavior Mojtaba, Mohammad & Navid, 2014). Dixit and Bhati (2012) establish that the organizational Commitment (Affective, Normative, continuous) were positively related with sustained productivity in Auto component industry. Baba (2017), also found out that that there were positive relationships between the three commitments (affective, continuance and normative commitment) and performance of in a public sector organization. Qaisar et al. (2012) argued that organizational commitment is one of the strong predictors of employee's performance of police officers in Pakistan. Suliman and Lles (2002) examined the nature of organizational commitment in three industrial units in Jordan using job performance as dependent variable and five demographic quations. At the end, it was reported that organizational commitment is made up of three aspects (affective, normative and continua). It was found that, a significant link existed between all the three aspects and job performance. Based on the above statement, this paper hypothesis that

H3. *Positive relationship exists between Affective commitment and task performance*

H4 *Affective performance mediates the relationship between employees' innovative behavior and task performance*



Figure 1 Framework



**Methodology**

A total of 250 workers were selected from public sectors in northwestern Nigeria through stratified

random sampling. The data were collected using a self-administered questionnaires, and with the aid of research assistants. Table 1 below; show the demographic features of the participants.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents

S/N	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1	Gender	Male	151	60.4
		Female	99	39.6
2	Age	20-29 years old.	85	34
		30-39 years old.	101	40.4
		40-49 years old.	53	21.2
		50 years and above.	11	4.4
3	Marital Status	Married	168	67.2
		Single	82	32.8
4	Qualification	SSCE	42	16.8
		Diploma/NCE	124	49.6
		Bsc/HND	53	21.2
		PG	11	4.4
5	Experience	One-Five (1-5) years	67	26.8
		Six-Ten (6-10) years	150	60
		Eleven years and above	33	13.2
6	Nature of Job	Managerial	105	42
		Non Managerial	145	58

Table 1 above shows the demographic features of respondents, it indicates that most of the respondents (60.4 percent) are male as compared to their female counterparts (39.5 percent). Also, the responses were more among adult within the 30-39 years age bracket (40.4 percent); 20-29 years were approximately 34 percent, and 40-49 year age bracket were about 21.2 percent and only falls within the 50 and above age bracket were only about 4.3 percent. With regards to marital status, the respondents of this study show that the majority of the respondents are married about 67.2 while 32.8 percent of the respondents are single. On their qualification, it was indicated that, 16.8 percent possessed SSCE, 49.6 are with Diplomas/NCE, and 21.2 are Bsc/HND holders, while the percentage 4.4 holds a PG qualification. Based on working experience, about 26.8 percent has 1-5 experience, 60 percent have spent 6-10 years, while 13.2 percent has worked for 11 years and above. Equally, the respondent's nature of job, shows that, 42 percent are engaged in managerial work, while 58 percent are in the non-managerial work.

Measurements

The study comprised of Task performance (TP) as the dependent variable, while employee innovative behavior EIB independent variables, and Affective commitment (AF) will potentially mediate the relationship between the dependent and

independent variables. This study measured task performance (TP) with 7 item scale adapted from the previous works of Koopmans, et al., (2014). The measuring items for employee innovative behavior (EIB) were adapted from the prior work of Scott and Bruce (1994). While 8 item scale adapted from Allen and Meyer (1990) was used to measure Affective commitment. All the constructs were measured using a five point scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree, to 5-strongly agree.

Method of data analysis

The study carried out multivariate analysis to evaluate data using a Smart-PLS version 3.2.7 and to assess the model as well as to test the research hypotheses. The PLS-SEM modelling method was engaged in the study because of its potential to assess the entire outer model and examine the association between the target variables and their respective measurements (Hair, et, al 2016). The study used PLS-SEM algorithms to evaluate the outer model and PLS-SEM bootstrapping mechanism was engaged to assess the structural model.

Results**Validity and Reliability of Measures**

The study used PLS-SEM algorithms to evaluate the measurement model to find out the validity and



reliability of the constructs as shown in figure 2. Previous research has established that validity and reliability are the main criteria used in PLS analysis to assess the goodness of the outer model (Hair, et, al, 2016). Table 2 below shows that the Cronbach Alpha, of all the constructs are above a critical level. With regards to composite reliability, the result ranges between 0.883 and 0.920 for the variables, as such satisfied the criteria of 0.70 and above (Hair et al., 2014). Also, the result indicated

that the average variance extracted (AVE) lies between 0.540 and 0.591, thus achieved the minimum standard of 0.50, therefore the all the latent construct's convergent validity is confirmed (Hair, et al., 2013). Table 2 also shows the result of R square assessment for both direct and mediating variables (BIE and AF), The results reveal moderate R2 values which signify meaningfulness of the results for interpretation (Ringle et al., 2015).

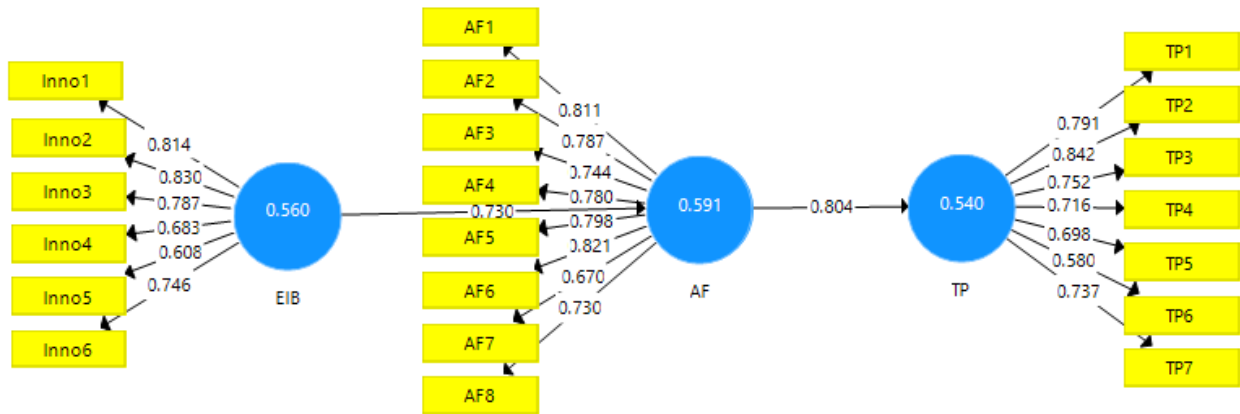


Figure 2
PLS algorithms/measurement model
Table 2
Construct Reliability and Validity

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	R square	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Affective commitment	0.901	0.532	0.920	0.591
Employee innovative behavior	0.841		0.883	0.560
Task performance	0.855	0.646	0.890	0.540

To establish discriminant validity of the constructs, Fornell–Larcker (1981) criterion was employed. The result of the assessment is indicated in Table 3 below. The AVEs are exhibited on the slanting side (in bold) and the squared inter-construct correlations are displayed on the diagonal side of the table. This shows that, the respective AVEs are greater than the squared inter-constructs correlations; as such the requirements for discriminant validity are satisfied. Further, indicator loadings were also used to justify the discriminant validity of the study.

Table 3
Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Constructs	1	2	3
Affective commitment	0.769		
Employee innovative Behavior	0.730	0.749	
Task performance	0.735	0.663	0.804





Structural Model

In this study, the structural model was evaluated using the R-squared values and path coefficients (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015). The study engaged the PLS-SEM bootstrapping 500 subsamples to determine the path coefficient significance (Figure 3). Table 4 and 5 present the results of the test of hypotheses through the path coefficients of determination, t-values as well as the p-values. The study hypotheses H1 presumes that a positive relationship between EIB and TP, results indicates a significant positive relationship between EIB and TP ($\beta = 0.586$, $t = 13.550$, $p < 0.000$); hence, H1 is accepted. Also, the result indicates a significant positive relationship between EIB and AF ($\beta = 0.730$, $t = 21.595$, $p < 0.000$); therefore H2 is upheld. Equally, the study result indicates a significant positive link between AF and TP ($\beta = 0.804$, $t = 26.081$, $p < 0.000$); therefore upholding H3. In table 5, the mediating role of AF in the relationships between EIB and TP was tested representing hypothesis H4. As expected the result reveal that Af mediates between EIB and TP, in which the result discloses a beta value ($\beta = 0.586$; $t=13.550$; $p<0.000$ which indicate a mediation of AF on the relationship between EIB and TP; hence upholding H4.

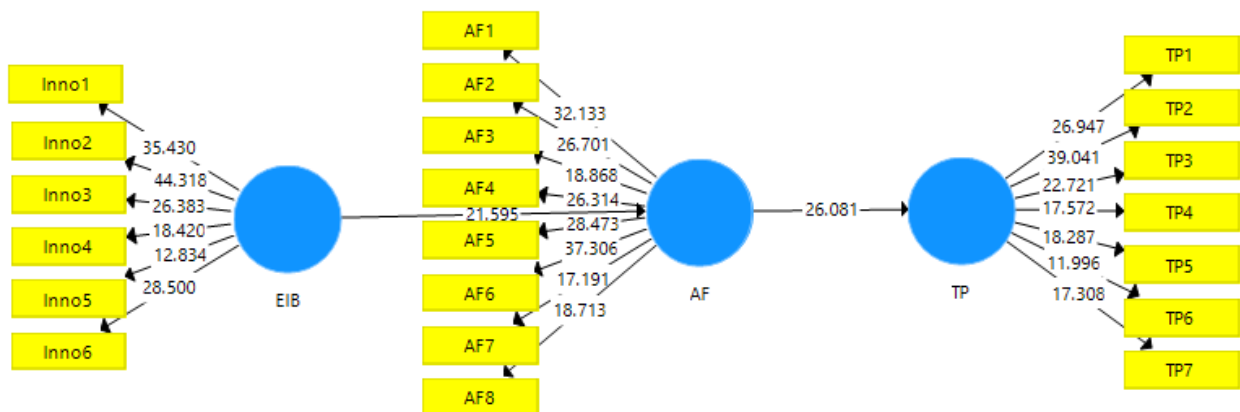


Figure 3
PLS Bootstrapping

Table 4
Test of Direct Relationship

Constructs	Beta Value (β)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision
EIB -> TP	0.586	0.043	13.550	0.000	Supported
EIB-> AF	0.804	0.031	26.081	0.000	Supported
AF -> TP	0.730	0.034	21.595	0.000	Supported

Table 5
Test of Indirect Relationship (Mediation Effects)

Construct	Beta Value (β)	Std. Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision
EIB -> AF -> TP	0.586	0.043	13.550	0.000	Supported



Discussion

The study aims to empirically examine the mediating role of affective commitment on the relationship between employee innovative behavior and task performance in Nigeria public sector. A questionnaire was used to collect data and PLS SEM for data analysis. The empirical result reveal that a positive and significant connection exists among the latent constructs as depicted by hypotheses H1 to H3 tested at two-tailed at $p < 0.010$ and $P < 0.001$ levels of significance. Hence, the outcome of hypotheses H1 to H3 were statistically significant as such accepted. The results were in harmony with the findings of previous studies on the relationship between the constructs (Jafri, 2010; Griffin, Neal, and Parker, 2007; Noori, Alias, and Rosdi, 2017; Iqbal, Tufail, and Lodhi, 2015 ; Dixit and Bhati, 2012; Qaisar, Rehman, and Suffyan, 2012; Rafieia, Taghi and Foroozandei, 2014; Leonga, Raslib, 2013; Zannad and Rouet, 2003). Equally, the mediation results indicate a mediatory role of affective commitment on the relationship between EIB and TP. Impliedly, affective commitment can increase the positive relationship between EIB and TP in the Nigeria public sector. Therefore, public organizations should encourage employee innovative behavior as well create an enabling atmosphere that will enhance workers' loyalty (AF) to the organization.

Conclusion

The study investigated the mediating role of affective commitment on the relationship between employee innovative behavior and task performance. Data were tested and empirical evidences show strong support for a significant connection between employee innovative behavior and task performance; employee innovative behavior and affective commitment; affective commitment and task performance. In addition, affective commitment was found to mediate the

relationship between employee innovative behavior and task performance. The result also suggests that workers innovative behavior can indirectly explain through affective commitment. The findings of this study have several important implications. First, the findings extend the literature by demonstrating the significant and positive influence of Employee innovative behavior on task performance; employee innovative behavior and affective commitment; affective commitment and task performance thus revealing that these constructs are also important predictors of task performance in the organization. Second, the findings also provide additional insights on the role of affective commitment in explaining the link between employee innovative and task performance. Although this study provides empirical evidence that all the two variables are important as far as task performance is concerned. The study has some limitations. First, the study used only two variables that explained about 64 percent of the variance of task performance. This indicated that these constructs are not the only predictors of task performance. Thus, future studies can examine other potential variables like work life balance and justice to see how they can influence task performance. Second, self-reporting is a means of collecting data while self-reports might be linked with social desirability bias. Thus, the need for further research that will incorporate multiple sources of data collection, such as supervisors' reporting and peer/subordinate reporting among others, will address the likelihood of social bias (Porr & Fields, 2006). Third, the sample size (respondents) was only from the public sector in the northwestern region of Nigeria. Future studies should include other regions which may allow for possible generalization. Fourthly, the study is conducted on the public sector organizations, there is need to test these variables in the private sector organizations.

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