

Lateral Transfers and Organizational Commitment of Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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Abstract: - This study examined the lateral transfers and organizational commitment in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. The study adopted a cross sectional survey design. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaire. The population for the study was 131 full-time and permanent employees of five selected Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. The sample size of 99 was determined using the Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The reliability was achieved using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient with all items being above the 0.70 acceptance benchmark set by Nunnally (1970). After data cleaning, data for 87 respondents were suitable for use for data analysis. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The study finding revealed that there is a significant relationship between lateral transfers and organizational commitment in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. The study concludes that by practicing lateral transfers, the Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt can boost the levels of their affective, normative and continuance commitment. The study thus recommends that Deposit Money Banks should seek out ways to integrate work flow and departments through lateral transfers. By such transfers, workers are exposed to the work processes and operations of related units and are able to bring alongside their expectations, previous experiences in previous roles which will enable them perform better and enjoy such change in positions.

Keywords: Lateral Transfers, Organizational Commitment, Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment, Continuance Commitment

I. INTRODUCTION

Given the growing dynamics of work relations and its implications for organizations today, the major concern for businesses and corporate entities including public agencies is motivating the employees as well as enhancing their commitment and job involvement in order to get the desired results from them. However, this is highly becoming more challenging and difficult due to the uncertain nature of corporate environment (Smith, Carroll & Ashford, 1995). This is as the performance of organizations today and their survival depends to a significant extent on the commitment the workers express towards their jobs as well as towards the goals of the organization (Snow, Miles & Coleman, 1992). Adequate commitment levels ensure consistency and imply substantial support for the organization from its workforce.

Commitment can be described as an individual's dedication to a person, job or organization. Within the framework of the

organization, it is reflected in the workers intention or desire to persevere in a course of action that is beneficial or advantageous to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Soliven (2009) describes it more strongly as a sacred covenant, without which life is unimaginable. Organizational commitment has always been presented and described as the driving force behind the organizations success; this is observed in instances where committed workers turn out to pursue specific tasks until its completion despite the prevalence or experience of obstacles during the process. It is the worker or employee's commitment to the organization that will drive him to rise above the challenges or obstacles.

Organizational commitment refers to the extent to which an employee develops an attachment and feels a sense of allegiance to his or her employer. The emotional attachment that one may form with their company would help to build a stronger commitment. Within this theory, the concepts that are applied to commitment to an organization are the work ethics of individual and the intensity of participation by said individual. These concepts can determine the level of commitment to an organization. However, the application of these concepts can be directed by several variables such as age, culture, emotions, personality traits, desires, and individual differences among other factors and can be present to a certain degree in many situations. These theories are not strict categories of commitment. Often times there are overlap among them.

In this regard, Soliven (2009) opined that one major driver of organizational commitment is the content and structuring of the job or role expectations within the organization. In his opinion, workers tend to be more committed when their jobs offer them meaning and when tasks are relatively fluid, varied rather than monotonous, as provided by job rotation activities. Job rotation has been defined as systematic movement of employees from one job to another at planned intervals (Dessler & Varkkey, 2009; Malinski, 2002). It involves periodic shifting of employees from one task to another where each task requires different skills and responsibilities (Robbins, 1996).

Torrington and Hall (1991) described the job rotation as movement of workers among different tasks and positions which will probably be of similar nature. Different organizations covering both service and manufacturing sectors, public and private firms, do rotate their employees

from one job to another across various departments for multiple reasons depending on specific needs of an organization. Other operational terms that could be used to measure or capture activities related to job rotation include rotational assignments, transfers, job changes, lateral moves, cross training and redeployment.

Tubman (2005), describes deployment as that organization practice or activity of moving their human resources to new work stations either within new departments, new stations and providing them with enhanced responsibilities and duties (re-designation). He gives the types of deployments as interdepartmental deployments; inter location deployments, and re-designation deployments. He explains that whatever the type deployment has major effects on employee performance in an organization. Its great impacts on employee innovation, creativity, developments, attitude, quality, productivity, communication, relationships patterns, satisfaction, loyalty and commitments, he adds. He notes that when handled well and in accordance with the employees' circumstances, deployment increase employee performance through increased innovation, creativity, quality, productivity, profitability, loyalty flexibility, efficiency, effectiveness, and low levels of discontents, dysfunctional conflicts. Lateral transfers have been revealed to also improve the employee's problem-solving abilities. This is as shared understanding of the job, enhances team efficiency and enables the employees to avail themselves of promotion opportunities after

successful completion of job rotation programs (Faegri, Dyba & Dingsoyr, 2010). Thus, both the employees and employers can benefit from job rotation practices.

Despite the prevailing content on the relationship between Lateral transfers and organizational commitment, there exists a scarcity of content that discusses the relationship between lateral transfers organizational commitment. In this sense, it can be argued that little has been investigated with regards to the role lateral transfers play in the actualization of organizational commitment. Therefore, this study departs from previous studies as it will empirically investigate the operational relationship between job rotation and organizational commitment of Deposit Money Banks n Port Harcourt.

This study was also guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between lateral transfers and affective commitment in Deposit Money Banks n Port Harcourt?
- ii. What is the relationship between lateral transfers and normative commitment in Deposit Money Banks n Port Harcourt?
- iii. What is the relationship between lateral transfers and continuance commitment in Deposit Money Banks n Port Harcourt?

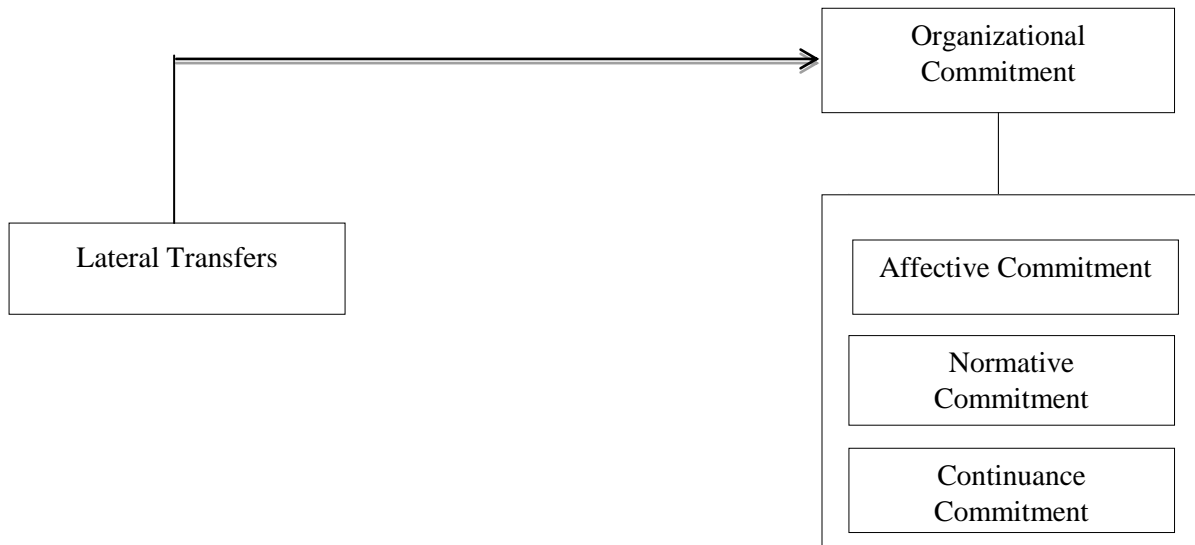


Fig.1. 1 Conceptual framework for the relationship between lateral transfers and organizational commitment

Source: Author's Desk Research, 2019

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

The concept of situated learning implies that individuals learn in specific cultural and historical contexts and in a web of social relations in which they are embedded. Learning is therefore seen as an integral and inseparable aspect of social

practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and individuals are thought to learn in practice by doing, relating and by interacting with significant others. The literature on situated learning emphasizes on particular learning through participation within specific frameworks and networks of practice (Brown & Duguid, 2001; Wenger, 1998). Wenger (1998) and Brown and Duguid (2001) played a crucial role in promoting the concepts

of “learning in practice” and “within frameworks of practice” in business, management and organisational studies, showing that learning is an inseparable and integral part of all organisational practices (Gherardi, 1999). Previous studies have consistently linked the concept of frameworks or communities of practice to organisational learning, workplace learning and invariable to improved performance and drive for success (Brown & Duguid, 2001; Gherardi & Nicolini, 2000) in order to shed light on the importance of social dynamics for professionals’ learning and for sharing and creating knowledge in organisations.

Wenger (1998) argued that practice can change when one or more members, who have had experiences that currently fall outside the regime of competence of a community or framework to which they belong attempt to change the framework’s regime so that it includes their experiences. Wenger (1998) argued that both experienced and new members of an organization can bring or share experiences that trigger collective learning and transform current work practices of the organization. In this sense, new learning experiences could also be made while one is a member of a particular organization. People learn and grow through interactions with members of their networks of practice (Brown & Duguid, 2001) and through interactions with members of other networks as well (Scarborough & Swan, 2008) and thus the interaction within networks of practices and across communities are potential sources of new experiences which could trigger changes in understanding of competence, commitment levels and subsequently transformation of work or work outcomes.

The implications of the situated learning theory to this study is that it provides a clear framework for predicting learning processes within work setting and its resulting transformation processes for both the individual and the organization. Its generalizations offer a concise but in-depth description and prediction lateral transfers and their possible impact on organizational commitment (affective, normative and continuance commitment).

Lateral Transfers

Arogyaswamy and Simmons (1993) assert that new departments offer new challenges to the employee in terms of learning new ways of work, social behaviours and psychological orientations and cultural orientations. He describes lateral transfers as the kind of movement taking place in an organization where an employee is taken from one department to another, for instance from human resources to administration or marketing to production. He notes that the challenges offered to the employee by the new environment work format, social arrangements and other work demands makes the employee eager, curious and develop interest in the knowing them.

In the views of Robbins (2003) lateral transfers such as occur inter-departmentally offers the employees the chances to become productive, innovative, and exhibit high chances of

commitment, loyalty and satisfaction in order to achieve. He further notes that employees tend to develop positive attitude in an attempt to learn new cultures and work formats. He admits that lateral transfers offer the employee the chances to learn more of the organization, its programs, activities and operations thus increasing the flexibility, developmental ability, learning prospect thus becoming more productive, effective, and efficient and customers friendly. He however notes that lateral transfers is sometimes more disruptive to the employee and may reduce the performance. He explains that employee become frustrated, stressed and fatigued at learning new things, perspectives.

Additionally adopting a new role or task assignment may take some time, need psychological social and physical adjustments and on more occasion leads to more strains on employees and if not properly handled may impact negatively on performance (Arogyaswamy & Simmons, 1993). Moving an employee from one department to another can also impact negatively on the performance of employees if not properly handled. Hullington (2009) posit that moving an employee from one department to another has more effects on the performance. They assert that new departments offer new challenges to the employee in terms of learning new ways of work, social behaviors and psychological orientations and cultural orientations. He describes interdepartmental deployments as the kind of redeployment taking place in an organization where an employee is taken from one department to another, for instance from human resources to administration or marketing to production. He notes that the challenges offered to the employee by the new environment work format, social arrangements and other work demands makes the employee eager, curious and develop interest in the knowing them. He explains that in trying to understand the new requirements the employee must be more motivated innovative, creative and have all sense of personal initiative to learn and be proactive efficient and effective in order assimilate the developments. He concludes that the new mindset of high innovation, creativity, initiative, motivation and positive motivation increases employee performance.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is defined as that state in which the employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in the organization (Robbins, 2003). Liou (2008) calls it employee loyalty. Quevideo (2006) say it is manifested in the employees’ acceptance of organizational values and goals and his loyalty to the organization reflected by his continual desire to remain in the organization. Xu and Bassham (2010) claimed that it is what binds an employee to the organization.

Organizational commitment is the measure of strength of the employee’s identification with the goals and values of the organization (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982) and supervisor. Individuals committed to the organization exert extra effort, desire organizational membership (Morrow, 1993) protect

company assets, and share company goals and values (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Organizational commitment is measured in a variety of ways. Utapao (2003) measured commitment in terms of two dimensions: acceptance of division goals and values, and desire to stay with the organization. Quevedo (2006) measured it along three domains, namely, sense of identification with the organization's goals, feeling of involvement in organizational duties and feeling of loyalty for the organization. Lai (2001), Cabautan (2002) and Daylo (2008) measured it in terms of affective, continuance and normative commitment. Supervisory commitment is defined as the strength of identification with supervisor and internalization of supervisor's values. Identification occurs when the subordinate admires certain attributes of the supervisor, such as attitudes, behaviour, and accomplishments. Internalization occurs when the subordinate adopts the attitudes and behaviours of the supervisor because the supervisor's attitudes and behaviours are congruent with the subordinate's value systems (Gregersen & Black, 1993). Commitment to organization is related positively to a variety of desirable work outcomes including employee job satisfaction, motivation and performance, and related negatively to absenteeism and turnover (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

Organizational commitment can be measured as either attitudinal or calculative. Attitudinal, referred to as affective (Meyer, Allen, & Smith 1993), or internalization and identification is the employee's emotional attachment and identification with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mowday *et al.*, 1982; Cohen, 2003). Employees continue with the organization because they want to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mowday *et al.*, 1982) and feel proud to be part of the organization, respecting its values and accomplishments. The calculative or "side-bet", also referred to as continuance (Meyer & Allen, 1997) and compliance (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), signifies the extent to which employees feel committed to their organization by virtue of the cost that they feel is associated with leaving it and their need to remain with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Affective Commitment (AC)

According to Meyer and 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 Madi, Hamilton, Squirrell, Mioulet, Evans, Lee & King, 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 (NC)

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 (Bal, Sullivan & Harper, 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 co-workers' 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. Normative commitment is said to reflect a sense of obligation instilled in the employee to sustain membership in the organization (Bal, Sullivan & Harper, 2014).

Continuance Commitment (CC)

Bal, Sullivan and Harper (2014) opined that continuance commitment is based on the perceived costs associated with discontinuing employment work 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. They went further to assert that whatever employees perceive to as sunk costs, resulting from leaving the organization, are antecedents of continuance commitment.

Lateral Transfers and Organizational Commitment

Hullington (2009) contends that He reasons that a lateral transfer practice has more positive benefits to the employee and organization than the negative consequences associated with it. He asserts that through interdepartmental deployments employees tend to have knowledge of the entire organization, the departments and the units within in addition to the other employees, the work procedures and the technology used in the entire organization. He contends that employee become

more productive, innovative, creative, and flexible and develops high sense of initiative, loyalty and commitments, factors he agrees are the indicators of good performance. He further criticizes the interdepartmental deployment systems saying that it does not portend well of long term employee focus and has the potential to increase the strikes or other dysfunctional employee behaviours.

Dressler(2005) contends interdepartmental deployment has both positive and negative effects on employee performance. However he quickly adds that interdepartmental deployment portends to have more positive effects to an organization in general and employees in particular. It creates a sense of innovative, creative initiative and learning behavior in an employee. It also calls for more commitments, loyalty, positive viewing and collaborations as well as cooperation on the part of the employee. He explain that by exhibiting these behavioral and performance characteristics the employee will be include to be more productive , profitable, customer focus and possess the general ability to learn train and develop more. The new development arising from new requirements will also force the employee to undertake personal redesign, changes in social arrangements, psychological orientations and physical circumstances, in the process becoming highly mobile and flexile in the work and in relating with the peers and other stakeholders.

Job rotation in terms of lateral transfers have been used to implement activities and functions that increase employee momentum and active participation in functions within the organization, which are incredibly vital for valuable performance (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Lateral transfers establish a successful routine of increasing talents, enthusiasm, encouragement and the motivation of an employee within the organization (Friedrich, Kabst, Weber & Rodehuth, 1998). Job Rotation comprises various procedures all the way through which an organization's employees learn work skill from different activities to eliminate burnout from the job tasks (Olorunsola, 2000). Job Rotation is an opening chance for workers to expand their admiration of organizational objectives, to produce more

liberal facts of the dissimilar field, to build up a strong network of the organizational associates and to increase productivity (Lindbeck & Snower, 2000).

From the foregoing arguments, the following hypotheses were stated

- Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship between lateral transfers and affective commitment in Deposit Money Banks n Port Harcourt
- Ho₂:** There is no significant relationship between lateral transfers and continuance commitment n Deposit Money Banks n Port Harcourt
- Ho₃:** There is no significant the relationship between lateral transfers and normative commitment in Deposit Money Banks n Port Harcourt

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross sectional survey design. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaire. The population for the study was 131 full-time and permanent employees of five selected Deposit Money Banks n Port Harcourt. The sample size of 99 was determined using the Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The reliability was achieved using the Cronbach Alpha Cofficeint with all items being above the 0.70 acceptance benchmark set by Nunnally (1970). After data cleaning, data for 87 respondents were suitable for used for data analysis. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's rank correlation at a 95% confidence interval. We have based on the statistic of Spearman's rank correlation to carry out the analysis. The level of significance 0.05 was adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in (p> 0.05) or rejecting the null hypothesis in (p <0.05).

Table 1 Relationship between lateral transfers and organizational commitment

			Lateral	Affective	Norm	Continuance
Spearman's rho	Lateral	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.409**	.374**	.510**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	87	87	87	87
	Affective	Correlation Coefficient	.409**	1.000	.420**	.330**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.002
		N	87	87	87	87
	Norm	Correlation Coefficient	.374**	.420**	1.000	.614**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	87	87	87	87
	Continuance	Correlation Coefficient	.510**	.330**	.614**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002	.000	.
		N	87	87	87	87

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

Source: SPSS 23.0 data Output, 2019

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between lateral transfers and affective commitment in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt.

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a significant relationship between lateral transfers and affective commitment. The *rho* value 0.409 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.01$. The correlation coefficient indicates a moderate correlation between the variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between lateral transfers and affective commitment in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between lateral transfers and normative commitment in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt.

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a significant relationship between lateral transfers and normative commitment. The *rho* value 0.374 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.01$. The correlation coefficient indicates a low correlation between the variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between lateral transfers and normative commitment in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between lateral transfers and continuance commitment in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt.

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a significant relationship between lateral transfers and continuance commitment. The *rho* value 0.510 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.01$. The correlation coefficient indicates a moderate correlation between the variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between lateral transfers and continuance commitment in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study examined the relationship between lateral transfers and organizational commitment in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. The implication is that the creation of opportunities for new experience and work in other departments or offices within the organization, or the involvement in key functions that may lie outside the scope of one's specific duties or expectations, contributes positively towards the workers affective, normative and continuance commitment. It resonates with Arogyaswamy and Simmons (1993) observation that workers require change and intermittent work or tasks reshuffling so as not to get bored or disenchanted with the workplace and organization. The

availability of changes to work conditions and opportunities for lateral transfers and new experiences within the organization is critical to sustaining the workers attention and interest in the job or role. This also drives their commitment to the organization.

The study finding corroborates the views of Hullington (2009) that moving an employee from one department to another has more effects on the performance. They assert that new departments offer new challenges to the employee in terms of learning new ways of work, social behaviors and psychological orientations and cultural orientations. He describes interdepartmental deployments as the kind of redeployment taking place in an organization where an employee is taken from one department to another, for instance from human resources to administration or marketing to production. He notes that the challenges offered to the employee by the new environment work format, social arrangements and other work demands makes the employee eager, curious and develop interest in the knowing them.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study examined the relationship between lateral transfers and organizational commitment in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt. Therefore, the study concludes that by practicing lateral transfers, the organization can boost the levels of its affective, normative and continuance commitment of employees in Deposit Money Banks in Port Harcourt.

The study recommends that Deposit Money Banks should seek out ways to integrate work flow and departments through lateral transfers. By such transfers, workers are exposed to the work processes and operations of related units and are able to bring alongside their expectations, previous experiences in previous roles which will enable them perform better and enjoy such change in positions more thoroughly.

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