

# Innovations

## Employee Engagement and Organizational Commitment in the Local Government Service Commission

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### Abstract

*This study empirically investigated employee engagement and organizational commitment in Delta and Bayelsa local government service commissions. Employee engagement was disaggregated into organizational learning, organizational communication, and job empowerment. The study was built on Social Exchange Theory (SET). The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. The target population for the study consisted of thirty-eight thousand, eight hundred and ninety-eight employees of Bayelsa and Delta states Local Government Service Commissions. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamani formula while the sampling technique was stratified random sampling. The sampling size was three hundred and ninety-six (396). The reliability of the instrument was determined by using the Cronbach Alpha Statistic which yielded a coefficient of 0.88 (88%) for organizational learning, 0.68 (68%) for communication, 0.77(77%) for job empowerment, and 0.76 (76%) for organizational commitment. The Path Analysis was used to determine the causal and direct effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The study revealed that Organizational learning, Organizational communication, and Job empowerment have direct positive effect on organizational commitment while only Organizational learning, and communication have significant effect on organizational commitment in Delta and Bayelsa states local government service commissions. Among the recommendations is that Local government councils in Nigeria should promote an effective learning environment to improve staff commitment to their councils.*

**Keywords:** 1.Employee Engagement, 2.Job Empowerment, 3.Organizational Commitment, 4.Organizational Communication, 5.Organizational Learning.

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### Introduction

Local government service commissions in Nigeria have been identified as important drivers in accelerating national growth and development through grass-root improvement in public service delivery (Imhanlahimi & Ikeanyibe, 2009). However, their performance or service delivery over the years especially since the beginning of the fourth republic has been a matter of public concern (Okafor, Chukwuemeka, & Udentia, 2015). Because of this concern, it has resulted in enormous pressure to improve service delivery and become more accountable to the public. To meet the increasing demand for efficient service delivery at the local level, the federal government has pushed for autonomy at the local level and payment of the local government allocation directly to their account to improve the recruitment process of the workforce. However, this progress has been hindered thus making the commission a dumping ground for political thugs, friends, relatives etc. This act has led to the inability of the commission to hire and retain the right calibre of staff leading to poor service delivery and accountability.

Some schools of thought have called for institutional and structural reforms at the local level while inadequately addressing critical issues such as the employee recruitment process even though there is overwhelming empirical evidence demonstrating that it is correlated to organisational outcomes (Smith & Markwick, 2009; Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey & Saks, 2015). Poor recruitment process definitely will affect employees' engagement and commitment. In an ever-dynamic public service environment, a committed and proactive workforce could provide organisations with a competitive advantage (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008). Hypothetically, employee engagement is the energy, passion or fire that employees have towards their work and the employer, therefore, a weak engaged work will show a weak commitment.

Local government service commissions in Nigeria have been criticized for lack of staff commitment or low commitment to an organization which manifests in skip work, coming to work late or leaving work and as well as lack of training and development which also has made most staff bored and tired of doing things in the same way and this has led to weak commitment among most staff. In addition to this, the commission has been bedeviled with irregular salary payment, poor leadership, poor working environment, poor recruitment process, and lack of autonomy. These factors have led to poor staff engagement leading to poor organizational commitment in the commission. It is well known that lack of employee commitment is the main threat to the survival of the organization as a loss of employee commitment is a loss of competitive advantage for an organization. Although, some studies have been done but mostly in private organizations (Nicholas & Sanjana, (2020) and Mokaya, & Kipyegon, (2014)), there is and a paucity of studies when it comes to the public enterprises or organizations in the area, hence the need for this study. In light of the above, this study investigates the influence of organizational learning, communication, and job empowerment as dimensions of employee engagement and how they affect organizational commitment using local government services commissions in the Delta and Bayelsa states.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to determine the influence of employees' engagement on organizational commitment in an organization using local government services commissions in Delta and Bayelsa states. Specifically, the objectives are:

- i. To ascertain the influence of organizational learning on organizational commitment of staff in local government services commissions in Delta and Bayelsa States
- ii. To examine the influence of organizational communication on organizational commitment of staff in local government services commissions in Delta and Bayelsa States
- iii. To investigate the influence of job empowerment on organizational commitment of staff in local government services commissions in Delta and Bayelsa States

### **Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

Kazimoto (2016) believed that employee engagement is a motivational issue that empowers employees to offer their best towards the accomplishment of organizational objectives. An engaged employee" is one who is fully involved in, as well as enthusiastic about their work, and thus will act in a way that furthers their organization's interests. Employee engagement is important to the competitiveness of any organization, particularly in the current business environment (Furst, 2018). Likewise, Khalid, Khalid, Waseem, Farooqi, and Nazish (2015) emphasized that engagement is a state of mind regarding an employee's fulfilment with pride in, as well as the commitment to, his/her job. MacLeod and Clarke (2009) describe engagement as a fixation of employees on their company's goals and qualities for achievement and a feeling of prosperity. Employee engagement is a passionate, logical duty for the company, that is, the more employees receive financial and emotive support from the company, the more they feel indebted to pay back the benevolence by exerting their mental and physical assets to their work roles (Kahn, 2010). However, other literature emphasized that engagement is the vitality, contribution and an engaged emotion as well

as an action-oriented endeavour towards the achievement of organizational aims (Dickson, 2011; Mathis & Jackson, 2011).

Robinson, Perryman and Hayday in Bedarkar and Pandita (2014) postulated that engagement refers to employees' positive attitudes towards the organisation and its values and, therefore, emphasized that an engaged worker is dependable and trustworthy, aware of the business context and works beyond the call of duty with co-workers to increase performance for the benefit of the company. Khalid et al. (2015) stated that employee engagement is not only about the positive feelings and behaviours of the worker during his/her work, but it can also be denoted by organization citizenship behaviour, commitment as well as high involvement in work practices. Additionally, most literature supports the fact that engagement leads to affirmative work results such as organisational commitment (Field & Buitendach, 2011).

On the other hand organisational commitment (OC) is described as an emotional attitude that binds personnel to an establishment in a way that decreases turnover intention (Ahakwa, Yang, Agba-Tackie, Afotey-Odai, & Dartey, 2021). Lee, Ashford, Walsh, and Mowday (in Ahakwa, Yang, Tackie & Atingabili, 2021) proposed the most generally accepted definition for OC as the level to which a person's participation in his/her organization. The authors added that loyalty is demonstrated by an employee's ability to labour successfully in an establishment and the desire to sustain the relationship devoid of attempting to turn to another. Organizations with greatly committed personnel, since it is widely agreed that OC might lead to countless organizational results; reduced turnover, greater motivation level, enriched citizenship conduct, and continuous organizational support (Ahakwa *et al.*, 2021). The commitment of workers is a sign of greater devotion and improved efficiency. Committed personnel often work assiduously to fulfill the objectives of the establishment and appear to positively consent to their values (Cheah, Chong, Yeo, & Pee, 2016).

#### **Relationship between Employee Engagement and Organizational Commitment**

In the literature, the effect of human resource practices on employee engagement and organizational commitment is identified (Janet-Chew, 2008). Personal or contextual factors affect engagement, organizational commitment and turnover intention. Personal factors include (performance goal orientation) and contextual factors include (organizational learning culture and developmental feedback). Research shows that employee engagement and organizational commitment are interconnected. Employees who are engaged might develop strong involvement with the organization and would probably increase their desire to remain in the company if the organization is also paying attention to employees' career development (Andrea & Moscoso-Riveros, 2011).

Engagement and intention to stay within the organization are affected by relationships built at work and demonstrated behaviours. Employees should be given importance by their employers to make them engage in their work (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane & Truss, 2008). Study shows that when organizations provide better work-life conditions, employees become more engaged and commitment level is increased (Cho, Laschinger & Wong, 2006). Engagement is important to achieve success in one career. Research shows that employees who are engaged in their careers have better control over their career success and failure (Heslin, 2003). Engagement along with other contributors like behaviour, attitudes and intentions of employees can increase the success in work outcomes (Andrew & Sufian, 2012). Besides the engagement factor, work-family conflicts, and organizational and family support can increase or decrease the commitment at work.

#### **Relationship between Organisational Learning and Organizational Commitment**

Learning gives a company the utmost economical advantage. Organizational learning enhances an institution's capability to facilitate and use the skills required to respond to external environmental factors. Usefi, Nazari, and Zargar (2013) revealed that a lack of focus on organizational learning reduces organizations' success and may result in low productivity and efficiency, making it impossible for organizations to progress. The main feature of a learning organization's is the ability to pursue opportunities to study from useful sources and then utilize this information to give the institution added value through an exchange of knowledge in organizations. Ahmad and Marinah (2013), being a learning organization and improving training courses are critical factors required to enhance learning, strengthen knowledge management, develop individual and institutional performance, and retain

an economic advantage. Ahmad and Marinah (2013) established a strong correlation between organizational learning and organizational commitment. The researcher suggested that to keep up with the rapidly changing world, organizations need to remain agile and strengthen their commitment to employees through organizational learning. Similarly, Ong, Kasim, and Uli (2008) have shown a significant positive relationship between organizational learning and organizational commitment.

**H<sub>01</sub>: Organizational learning does not significantly influence organizational commitment of staff in local government services commissions in Delta and Bayelsa States**

#### **Relationship between Organisational Communication and Organizational Commitment**

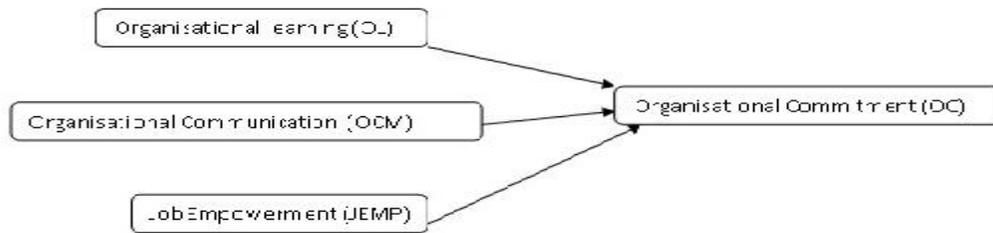
Communication in organizations is the study of how to interact in an organization. Communication itself is a part that is in an organization, to help for the continuity of organizational activities. Communication is the process of conveying ideas, hopes, and messages conveyed through certain symbols, containing meaning, carried out by the messenger addressed to the recipient of the message. Researches reveal that organizational communication affects work commitment in a very similar way. Satisfaction from organizational communication is an intermediate variable in influencing work commitment. Chen, Silverthorne, and Hung (2006) found that in organizations where organizational communication is more continuous and open, work commitment is higher. It was also found that subordinates, who show a similar degree of work commitment, tend to establish communication networks among themselves and that negative superior-subordinate relationship reduces work commitment seriously. Postmes, Tanis, and DeWitt's (2001) study regarding the relationship between organizational communication and organizational commitment argued that informal communication of socio-emotional content with proximate colleagues is less strongly related to levels of organizational commitment than the formal bureaucratic communication of management content with superiors.

**H<sub>02</sub>: Organizational communication does not significantly influence organizational commitment of staff in local government services commissions in Delta and Bayelsa States**

#### **Relationship between Job Empowerment and Organizational Commitment**

Empowerment has been proposed and found to facilitate a worker's commitment to the organization. Muhammad and Abdullah (2016) stated that employee empowerment relates to social exchange theory (SET) regarding reciprocal connections of workers with their companies. SET describes the social connection between workers and companies, companies that assist workers and identify the opinions of workers in decision making, workers will be more committed to the organization in return (Prabawa & Supartha, 2018). Prior studies also maintained that if organizations support employee empowerment it will help to increase their trust and commitment to the organization (Kariuki & Kiambati, 2017). According to Andika and Darmanto (2020), empowered workers are committed to their organizations because organizations are giving them jobs, empowering and treating them fairly. Organizational commitment can be stated as a bond and loyalty of the employee to his organization and job. OC can be understood as an employee bond and linkage with his company. It varies greatly from other firms of commitment, such as endorsement of work ethics, commitment to one's career, job engagement, etc. (Alkhadher, Beehr & Meng, 2020). Liden, Wayne and Sparrowe, (in Alkhadher, Beehr & Meng, 2020) claimed that empowerment is accompanied by commitment and personnel who are more empowered are more loyal. Vacharakiat (2008) indicated the positive relationship between empowerment and organizational commitment in his studies.

**H<sub>03</sub>: Job empowerment does not significantly influence organizational commitment of staff in local government services commissions in Delta and Bayelsa States**



**Figure 1: Hypothesized input Path Analysis**

### Operationalization of Variables

**Organizational learning** is the process of fashioning, holding, and transmitting knowledge among employees in a workplace. An organization improves over time as a result of learning which leads to gaining of experience and furthermore get knowledge.

**Organizational communication** is a process by which employees/employer hypothesised, fare, and understand employee/employer manners and codes (whether verbal or nonverbal), both intentionally and unintentionally, through interaction

**Job empowerment** is the art of providing employees with the resources, authority, opportunity, and motivation to do their work, as well as holding them accountable for their actions in a workplace.

**Organisational Commitment** is an employee’s emotional attachment to his/her works in an organization. It is the psychology an employee attaches to his/her work.

### Theoretical Framework

This study is built on Social Exchange Theory (SET). The social exchange theory is among the most influential theories for understanding workplace behaviour (Croponzano & Mitchell, 2005) and has its roots in anthropology. It was, however, Blaus (1964) who is credited as its founder (Robbins, 1991). The theory has been progressed by other researchers such as Das and Teng (2002); Globerman and Nielsen (2007). Blaus (1964) posited that individuals voluntarily behave in certain ways or do certain things because they expect positive reciprocal behaviour from others.

Social exchange is based on trusting others to reciprocate. Human beings in social situations choose behaviour that maximises their likelihood of meeting self-interests. Critics of social exchange theory have pointed out its weakness as the assumption that people are rational and will always act in rational ways. In reality, however, people sometimes act in irrational ways. Caution should therefore be exercised when applying the theory to the workplace environment. However, the social exchange theory is a useful model in advancing studies on employee engagement due to its focus on the reciprocal relationship between employer and employees and hence was used as the anchor theory for this study.

### Empirical Literature

Ahakwa, Yang, Tackie, Odai, and Dartey (2021) investigated the effects of job autonomy, organizational learning, and work environment on the organizational commitment of public sector employees in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The study linked job autonomy, organizational learning, and work environment with organizational commitment of public sector employees in Ghana. Data were obtained from three hundred and thirty (330) employees from five (5) Metropolitan, Municipal and Districts Assemblies (MMDAs) in the Ashanti Region of Ghana through the use of simple random probability sampling. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squared based on Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). It was found that organizational learning has the most incredible impact on organizational commitment and was statistically significant.

AlKahtani, Iqbalb, Sohailc, Sherazd, Jahane, Anwarf and Haider (2021) empirically tested the impact of employee empowerment on organizational commitment through the mediating role of job satisfaction. The non-probability

random sampling technique and time lag were used to collect data from 307 employees working at four and five Stars Hotels in two cities Rawalpindi, Islamabad of Pakistan. Smart Partial least squares-structural equation modelling (Smart PLS-SEM v.3.2.8) was used to test the hypotheses. The result indicated that employee empowerment has a significant and positive impact on organizational commitment. Also, job satisfaction is considered a potential mediator between employee empowerment and organizational commitment

Mia, Thatok, and Dwi (2020) investigated the influence of organizational communication climate, and communication satisfaction on job satisfaction and affective commitment. The study aimed to analyze the significance of the influence of the organizational communication climate and communication satisfaction variables on affective commitment, either directly or indirectly through job satisfaction at family planning extension and family planning field extension officers in West Nusa Tenggara Province. The research used a causal quantitative approach with a sample of 203 respondents and data analysis used SEM-PLS (Structural Equation Model - Partial Least Square) analysis with the SmartPLS. Research results showed that: organizational communication climate has no significant effect on affective commitment, communication satisfaction has no significant effect on affective commitment, organizational communication climate has a significant effect on job satisfaction, communication satisfaction has a significant effect on job satisfaction, job satisfaction has a significant effect on affective commitment, employee job satisfaction can strengthen the influence of organizational communication climate in increasing affective commitment and employee job satisfaction can strengthen the influence of communication satisfaction in increasing affective commitment of family planning extension and family planning field extension officers.

Miheso and Mukanzi (2020) investigated the effects of employee communication dimensions on organizational commitment at Kenya's national library service. The primary objective of the study was to investigate the effect of employee communication dimensions on commitment at Kenya's national library service. The specific objectives involve examining the effect of employee communication mode, communication frequency, communication content and flow of information on organizational commitment at KNLS Kenya. Using Taro Yamane's formula, the sample size was obtained and inferences were deduced from the calculated sampled employees' size including senior managers, middle-level managers, and support staff. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The analysis of data was done through descriptive statistical analysis. Demographic data were analyzed by using frequency distributions and percentages with the results presented in charts and tables. Inferential statistics were obtained by carrying out correlation and regressions analyses, to test for the degree of association (correlations) between the variable pairs and their influence on employee commitment. The findings indicated that the employee communication content dimension had a significant positive correlation with employee commitment, employee communication flow was positively correlated to commitment, communication mode was highly and positively correlated to employee commitment and communication frequency was minimally positively related to employee commitment. Further, revelations from the regression analysis revealed that only the communication mode dimension is a significant predictor of employee commitment when the four predictor variables were measured jointly.

Ali, Akhtar and Jangraiz (2020) studied the impact of employees' empowerment practices on organizational commitment: A case on telecommunication sector in Khyberpaktunkhwa, Pakistan. The study examined the impact of employees' empowerment practices on the organizational commitment of full-time employees belonging to different telecommunication sectors in Khyber Paktunkhwa. The purpose of the study was to see the relationship between employees' empowerment and their commitment to the organizations. The non-Probability Sampling technique was employed based on convenience. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed among 280 employees working in different companies in the telecommunication sector, from which 250 employees participated to fill the complete questionnaire. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  co-efficient was used to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire and was found above 0.70. Correlation and regression techniques were employed to establish the relationship between the variables. The finding of Pearson's Correlation revealed a significant positive relationship between the variables. Moreover, the results of regression analysis indicate a positive and significant impact of empowerment practices on all types of organizational commitments.

Affandie, Sulistiyono, Mayasari, Suyono and Damarsari (2020) investigated the mediating role of organizational commitment in the relationship between organizational communication on knowledge sharing. The study was conducted at a textile company in Surabaya, East Java Indonesia to analyze the effect of organizational communication on knowledge sharing, analyzing the effect of organizational communication on organizational commitment, analyzing the effect of organizational commitment on knowledge sharing, and analyzing the effect of organizational communication on knowledge sharing through organizational commitment. The population of the study was employees of a textile company in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia with a total of 57 employees. The results showed that organizational communication affects knowledge sharing, organizational communication has an effect on organizational commitment, organizational commitment has an effect on knowledge sharing, and organizational communication has an effect on knowledge sharing through organizational commitment.

Tharanya, Gajenderan and Nawaz (2020) studied the impact of employee engagement practices on organizational commitment and job performance among probationary officers in private sector banks in Chennai. The study used primary & secondary data. The examination utilized primary and secondary data. The primary data was sourced from private bank employees. The secondary data was gathered from the research articles, magazines, and textbooks. The responses were collected from the probationary officers working at the selected private banks in Chennai city. The study adopted the purposive sampling method. The study selected four prominent private banks, i.e., ICICI, HDFC, Kotak Mahindra, and Axis. For each bank, 100 questionnaires were circulated, and overall, 400 questionnaires were distributed. Out of which, 379 valid filled responses were gathered from the respondents. The valid sample size of the study was 379. The study outcome exhibited that employee engagement drivers, i.e., leadership style, training and development aspect, compensation and facilities, organizational justice and policies, and procedures, significantly influence employee engagement practices in private banks. The study also established that employee engagement practices significantly influence organizational commitment. The work feeling of job satisfaction and organizational commitment is significant in determining employees' intention to stay or exit. Employees with a high level of commitment are loyal to the working firm, share their values, and recognize the goals of the working organization.

Zaraket, Garios, and Malek (2018) studied the impact of employee empowerment on organizational commitment. This research adopted the principles of positivism where the researcher was independent of the study. Since the study was already grounded in an existing theoretical framework with the purpose of testing hypotheses, the deductive approach was followed. After studying the existing literature related to the subject, the researcher conducted a quantitative study. The data was distributed and collected from 123 employees working in the Lebanese Banking sector using a self-administered questionnaire. This questionnaire aimed to explore the influence of job autonomy, motivation, training and compensation on organizational commitment. The results reflected a positive relationship between the components of employee empowerment and organizational commitment.

Santoso, Brahmasari, and Brahmaratih (2018) investigated the influence of organizational learning and job characteristic on organizational commitment and employee performance in a clinical laboratory, type B regional general hospital in East Java. The study was causal explanatory research. Simple random sampling was used and 220 respondents were selected. The analysis was done using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Organizational learning had a significant influence on organizational commitment; organizational learning has a significant influence on employee performance, job characteristic has a significant influence on organizational commitment, and job characteristics had a significant influence on employee performance. And organizational commitment has no significant influence on employee performance of Clinical laboratory, type B regional general hospital in East Java. The result revealed that organizational learning and job characteristics have a significant influence on organizational commitment; organizational commitment and job characteristics have a significant influence on employee performance in the Type B clinic laboratory in East Java. Influence among the most dominant variable is the organizational learning variable has a significant influence on organizational commitment in the clinical laboratory of type B Regional General Hospital in East Java.

Boussalem (2014) studied the impact of employees' empowerment on organizational loyalty – a case study on Algerian Communications Company. The study sought to determine the impact of employees' empowerment on organizational loyalty, employees empowerment has been identified through its four dimensions were in

(meaningfulness, self-determination, competence of employees, and impact on job). To achieve the above objectives, the questionnaire was developed and distributed to a sample consisting (of 71) subjects and then descriptive statistical techniques such as (mean, and standard deviation) and analytical statistical techniques such as (multi-regression) were used to analyze the data. The study found that there was a statistically significant impact of employees' empowerment on organizational loyalty: there was a statistically significant impact of (Meaningfulness, Competence) on organizational loyalty and that there was no statistically significant role of (self-determination, Impact) on organizational loyalty.

Yenen, Oztürk and Kaya (2014) investigated the effects of organizational communication on organizational commitment and its application. The study aimed at investigating the effects of organizational communication on organizational commitment, emphasizing the importance of communication. Data related to the research was collected through internet and face-to-face surveys. The research was conducted in Istanbul province with employees from various sectors, mainly service sector employees. Data collected by 215 survey participants in January 2014 was transferred to the SPSS program and tested through Cronbach's alpha reliability test, correlation analysis and regression analysis. Results showed that there was a partial effect of organizational communication style on organizational commitment; other types of organizational communication have no impact on organizational commitment. The findings indicated that the organizational commitment of the employees, in the service sector mainly, are affected by the communication styles of their managers.

Shoko and Zinyemba (2014) studied the impact of employee engagement on organizational commitment in national institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe. The study explored the impact of employee engagement on organisational commitment among workers at national higher education institutes (HEI) in Zimbabwe. The research methodology was an explanatory-descriptive survey design. The respondents were drawn from a stratified random sample of 142 employees from three universities. Employee engagement was measured using the Gallup Worker Audit (GWA) while organisational commitment was measured using the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire. Data were analysed statistically and correlations were made between employee engagement and organisational commitment. Results of the study revealed that only 33.8% of the employees were actively engaged while the remaining 66.2 % showed low levels of engagement. The findings also indicated that there was a positive correlation between employee engagement and organisational commitment.

Muhammad, Areesa, Asad and Mazhar (2014) studied enhancing organizational commitment through employee empowerment - empirical evidence from telecom sector employees. The main purpose of the study was to find out the relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment. Also to find out the relationship between employee empowerment and the three dimensions of organizational commitment; affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. It was a correlational study. Four hypothesized relationships were tested among employees of the telecommunication sector in Lahore. Data was collected through questionnaires. All 300 questionnaires were self-administered. To analyze the data descriptive statistics were used which include frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations; and inferential statistics were used which include the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Results of the study showed a positive relationship between employee empowerment and organizational commitment. Results also showed a positive relationship between employee empowerment and dimensions of organizational commitment; affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. The target population for the study consists of thirty-eight thousand, eight hundred and ninety-eight (38898) local government staff of both Delta and Bayelsa states local government commissions with Delta state having thirty-one thousand eight hundred and fifty (31850) (Delta State Local Government Service Commission 2021) while Bayelsa state has seven thousand and forty-eight (7048) (Bayelsa State Local Government Service Commission 2021). The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamani formula while the sampling technique was stratified random sampling.

According to Yamani, (1964)  $n = N / [1 + (Ne^2)]$

Therefore,  $n = 38898 / (1 + 38898 (0.05)^2) = 395.9$  approximately 396

**Method of Data Collection**

The source of data was primary source through a questionnaire designed by the researcher. Under employee engagement, the study adapted the Work and Well-Being Survey (UWES-9) reported by Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova in 2006. The instrument consists of five sections. Section A covers the bio-data of the respondents while sections B to E covered the research objectives. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher with the assistance of two (2) research assistance who assisted in the distribution and retrieving of the questionnaires. The researcher assistance worked with the various department heads in the Delta and Bayelsa states local government commissions. This helped in the effective and efficient distribution and retrieving of the questionnaire from the staff of the commissions in the two states.

**Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

The study used both face and content validity and was validated by two experts (human resource management and measurement and evaluation). For the reliability of the instrument, thirty (30) respondents (staff) were chosen outside the sample space and were determined by each component of employee engagement considered in the study (organizational learning, communication, and job empowerment) and organizational commitment using the Cronbach Alpha Statistic which yielded a coefficient of 0.88(88%) for organizational learning, 0.68(68%) for communication, 0.77(77%) for job empowerment, and 0.76 (76%) for organizational commitment.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The researcher employed descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentage for the bio-data profile of the employees. Also, mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, and jargue bera of the variables were analysed. The analysis of the relationship was done using Path Analysis. This was used in-order to determine the causal relationship among and between variables and the direct impact of the independent variables (organizational learning, organizational communication and job empowerment) on the dependent variable (organizational commitment) under a 0.05 significant level. The correlation coefficient was used to measure the causal relationship among and between variables while the repression analysis was used to measure the direct effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

**Model Specification**

Based on the hypothesized input path analysis, the researcher specified the below model to guide the study.

$OC = f(EME)$ .....equ 1

$EME = f(OL, OCM \& JEMP)$ .....equ 2

Substituting equ 2 in equ 1

$OC = f(OL, OCM \& JEMP)$ ..... equ 3

Specifying in econometric format, thus

$OC = \beta_0 + \beta_1OL + \beta_2OCM + \beta_3JEMP + U_t$  .....equ4

Where  $\beta_1$  to  $\beta_3 > 0$  as indicated in figure 1

**Result Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

A total of three hundred and ninety-seven (396) questionnaires were administered and three hundred and eighty-two (382) were retrieved back after careful monitoring and supervision.

## Result Presentation and Analysis

**Table 1: bio-data result**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender:</b>		
Female	233	61.0
Male	149	39.0
<b>Age:</b>		
21-30	47	12.3
31-40	162	42.4
41-50	89	23.3
51- 60	84	22.0
<b>Educational Qualification:</b>		
SSCE	72	18.8
OND/NCE	115	30.1
HND/First Degree	150	39.2
Master	42	10.9
PhD	3	0.01
<b>Position</b>		
Junior	144	37.7
Senior	225	58.9
Management	13	3.4

Source: *Researcher's computation 2022*

The result of Table 1 revealed that out of the three hundred and eighty-two (382) respondents who returned their questionnaire in the survey, two hundred and thirty-three (233) representing 61.0% are female while one hundred and forty-nine (149) representing 39.0% are male. This indicated that there are more female respondents (local government staff) in the survey than male respondents. The reason for the wide margin of difference between the female and male respondents is that most of the men in the Niger Delta prefer to work in the oil companies to working in government establishments because of huge salary disparity. Also, those who are not working in the oil companies prefer to set up their own businesses to working for government because of government defaulting in paying salaries on as when due. The result also revealed that the age bracket of 21-30 has forty-seven (47) representing 12.3%, those within the age bracket of 31-40 has one hundred and sixty-two (162) representing 42.4%, 41-50 years of age has eighty-nine (89) representing 23.3%, and 51-60 years of age has eighty-four (84) representing 22.0% This indicates that most of the bankers surveyed are within the age bracket of 31-40 years of age. For educational qualification, the result revealed that those with SSCE have seventy-two (72) representing 18.8%, those with OND/NCE have one hundred and fifteen (115) representing 30.1%, and those with HND/First degree have one hundred and fifty (150) representing 39.2%, those with masters have forty-two (42) representing 10.9% and those with PhD has three (3) representing 0.01%. This means that they are more HND/First degree holders in the survey. For positions occupied in the council, the result revealed that those who are junior staff are one hundred and forty-four (144) representing 37.7%, those who are senior staff are two hundred and twenty-five (225) representing 58.9%, and the management staff are thirteen (13) representing 3.4%. This means that they are more senior staff in the survey.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

	JEMP	OC	OCM	OL
Mean	3.214136	3.124346	2.914984	3.147345
Median	3.000000	3.375000	2.857143	3.000000
Maximum	4.000000	3.500000	3.714286	4.000000
Minimum	2.000000	2.125000	2.000000	2.000000
Std. Dev.	0.699088	0.460104	0.357735	0.654434

Skewness	-0.307208	-1.088608	0.034856	-0.300422
Kurtosis	1.872549	2.596322	2.639414	2.044226
Jarque-Bera	6.024106	7.014304	2.146878	2.128607
Probability	0.051002	0.061000	0.341831	0.310039

Source: Researcher's Computation 2022

The result of table 2 revealed the summary of descriptive statistics (aggregate) for employee engagement dimensions covered in this study (organizational learning (OL), organizational communication (OCM), and joy empowerment (JEMP)) and organizational commitment (OC). The result indicated that all the mean values for the variables are greater than 2.5 being the bench mark for 4 likert scale. This means that majority of the respondents agreed that the questionnaire items are good indices for assessing employee engagement and organizational commitment. This is endorsed by the median values which is also greater than 2.5. The probability of the jargue bera which is greater tha 0.05, indicated that the variables showed normally distributed, hence the use of spearman correlation.

**Table 3: Correlation Output**

		OC	OL	OCM	JEMP
OC	Pearson Correlation		.683**	.427**	.626**
OL	Pearson Correlation			.305**	.948**
OCM	Pearson Correlation				.237**
JEMP	Pearson Correlation				

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

The result of table 3 revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship or correlation among and between variables (OC, OL, OCM and JEMP). The result indicated that the correlation between OL and OC is 0.683 and significant. Also, the correlation between OCM and JEMP on OC are 0.427 and 0.626 respectively and are significant. Also, the correlation between OCM and JEMP on OL are 0.305 and 0.948 respectively and are significant. Lastly, the correlation between JEMP and OCM is 0.237 and is significant.

**Table 4: Regression Output (DV= OC)**

Model		Standardized Coefficients		t	P value
		Beta			
1	(Constant)			6.244	.000
	OL	.697		6.046	.000
	OCM	.236		6.235	.000
	JEMP	.090		.800	.424

R Square = .521 (52.1%) , Adjusted R Square = .517 (51.7%)

F (stats) = 136.999 , F (Prob) = .000: Durbin-Watson = 1.674

The result of table 4 revealed that all the independent variables ( OL,OCM & JEMP) combined together have significant effect on the dependent variable (OC). This is indicated by the f probability of 0.0000 which is less than 0.05. Also, the statistic of the R square revealed that the independent variables to 52.1 percent explains the variation in the dependent variable (OC). This is endorsed by the adjusted R square of 51.7 percent. The statistic of DW which is 1.674 approximately 2 indicated that the model has no autocorrelation. The standardized beta coefficients revealed that OL, OCM and JEMP have positive direct impact on OC but only OL and OCM have significant effect on OC.

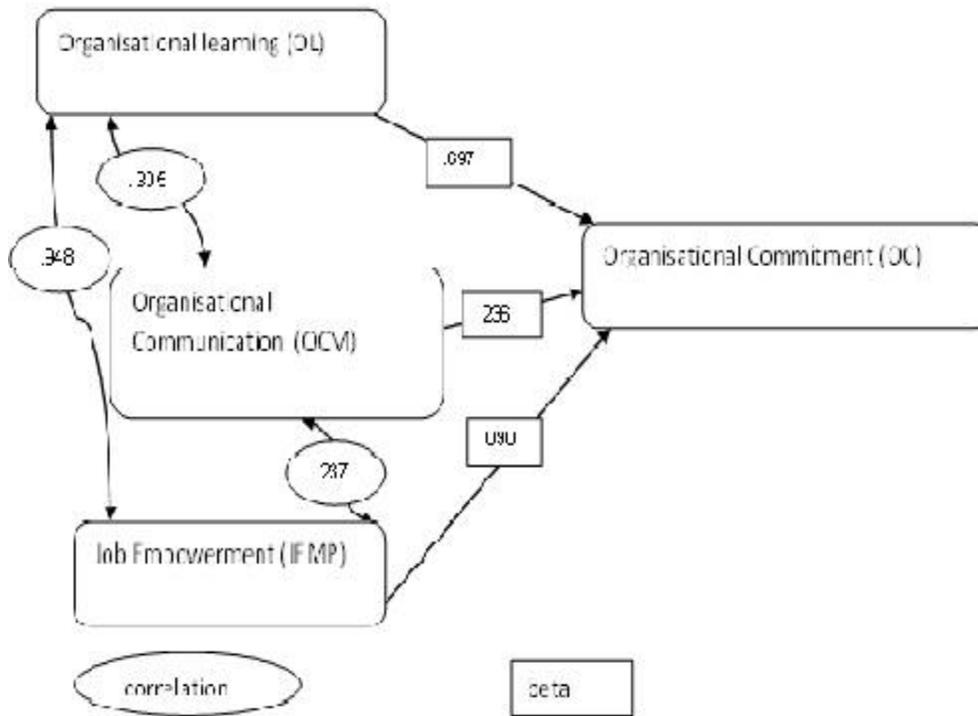


Figure 2: The output Path Analysis

### Discussion of Findings

This study has been able to empirically proven that in general employee engagement have direct positive effect on organisational commitment in the local government service commissions. However, under the dimensions of employees engagement, only OL and OCM have significant positive effects to OC. This submission is in line with some extant studies like Shoko and Zinyemba (2014) who studied the impact of employee engagement on organizational commitment in national institutions of higher learning in Zimbabwe and found that there was a positive effect between employee engagement and organisational commitment. Also, this study is in-line with the study of Tharanya, Gajenderan and Nawaz (2020) studied the impact of employee engagement practices on organizational commitment and job performance among probationary officers in private sector banks in Chennai and established that employee engagement practices significantly influence organizational commitment.

Specifically, in terms of the dimension of employee engagement covered in this study (organizational learning (OL), organizational communication (OCM), and job empowerment (JEMP)), this study is in-line with the following studies. The result for organizational learning revealed that organizational learning has a strong positive effect on organizational commitment in the local government service commission. This is endorsed by the studies of Santoso, Brahmāsari, & Brahmāratih (2018) who investigated the influence of organizational learning and job characteristic on organizational commitment and employee performance in a clinical laboratory, type B regional general hospital in East Java and revealed that organizational learning and job characteristics have a significant influence on organizational commitment. Furthermore, Ahakwa, Yang, Tackie, Odai, and Dartey (2021) investigated the effects of job autonomy, organizational learning, and work environment on the organizational commitment of public sector

employees in the Ashanti region of Ghana and revealed that organizational learning has the most incredible impact on organizational commitment. The result for organizational communication revealed a strong positive effect on organizational commitment in local government service commissions within the period surveyed. This is endorsed by the studies of Yenen, Öztürk and Kaya (2014) who investigated the effects of organizational communication on organizational commitment and an application and indicated that organizational commitment of the employees, in the service sector mainly, are affected by the communication styles of their managers. The same applied to the study of Miheso and Mukanzi (2020) who investigated the effects of employee communication dimensions on organizational commitment at Kenya's national library service and found that employee communication content dimension had a significant positive effect on employee commitment, employee communication flow was positively correlated to commitment, communication mode was highly and positively correlated to employee commitment and communication frequency was minimally positively related to employee commitment. In the opposite light, Mia, Thatok, and Dwi (2020) investigated the influence of organizational communication climate, and communication satisfaction on job satisfaction and affective commitment and revealed that organizational communication climate has no significant effect on affective commitment. For Job empowerment, the result revealed that job empowerment has a strong positive effect on organizational commitment in local government service commissions. This is in line with the studies of Muhammad, Areesa, Asad and Mazhar (2014) who studied enhancing organizational commitment through employee empowerment - empirical evidence from telecom sector employees and showed a positive effect of employee empowerment on organizational commitment; Zaraket, Garios, and Malek (2018) studied the impact of employee empowerment on organizational commitment and revealed positive effect of components of employee empowerment on organizational commitment.; AlKahtani, Iqbalb, Sohailc, Sherazd, Jahane, Anwarf and Haider (2021) empirically tested the impact of employee empowerment on organizational commitment through the mediating role of job satisfaction and revealed that employee empowerment has a significant and positive impact on organizational commitment and Ali, Akhtar and Jangraiz (2020) studied the impact of employees' empowerment practices on organizational commitment: A case on telecommunication sector in Khyberpaktunkhwa, Pakistan and revealed a significant positive effect too

### **Managerial Implication.**

From the study, it is clear that employee engagement is pivotal to organizational profitability in the sense that engaged employees are more productive. They are more profitable, more customer- focused, safer, and more likely to withstand temptations, thus reducing employees' turnover or attrition. In most big organizations, employees' engagement is more than an human resource management strategy — it is a strategic foundation for organizational long survival in business. Through effective organizational learning and job empowerment employees gain experience later knowledge which improves productivity and profitability in the long run. This goes to say the employee engagement is vital in reducing employees attrition, increase commitment, thereby increasing productivity and profitability of any organization.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study sought to assess employees' engagement and organizational commitment in local government councils in Delta and Bayelsa states. Employees' engagement was dimensionalised into organizational learning, communication, and job empowerment. The results indicated that organizational learning and communication have a strong positive and significant effect on the staff of the local government council's commitment to work while employee empowerment has positive but insignificant effect on staff commitment. This means that where there is effective learning, communication and empowerment among and between the staff of an organization, it produces a positive effect on employee commitment.

Based on the findings of this study, the following were made

1. Local government councils in Nigeria should promote an effective learning environment to promote and improve staff commitment to the councils.
2. Also, a good communication network among and between local government staff should be encouraged to promote and improve staff commitment to the councils.

3. Lastly, council staff should be empowered so that they can put in their best for the growth and development of the council.

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