

**WORKPLACE AUTONOMY AND EMPLOYEE AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT: A MODERATING
ROLE OF MANAGERIAL STYLE IN DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN PORT HARCOURT**

Dr. Vivian Ogechi Promise-Amadi

**Department of Employment Relations and Human Resource Management
Faculty of Administration and Management, Ignatius Ajuru University of Management,
Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt, Rivers State**

Email: vivianpromiseamadi@iaue.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The study examined the relationship between workplace autonomy and employee affective commitment: A moderating role of managerial style in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt. The study revealed that there is a relationship between decision making authority and measures of employee affective commitment in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt, there is a significant relationship between resource control and measures of employee affective commitment in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt. Managerial styles moderates the relationship between workforce autonomy and employee affective commitment in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt. The study concluded that there is a relationship between workforce autonomy and employee affective commitment in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt. The study recommended that firms should empower their workers by providing them with greater authority in decision making through decentralizing decision making process and involving employees in key operational decisions.

Keywords: Workplace Autonomy, Employee Affective Commitment, Managerial Style

INTRODUCTION

Workplace autonomy plays an essential role in shaping employee commitment in various organizational settings, including banking sector. Research has shown that workplace autonomy positively influences employees' affective commitment to change, tacit knowledge sharing, discretionary work effort, and organizational commitment (Iqbal et al., 2023; Odiwo et al., 2022; Ahmed et al., 2023; Gupta et al., 2023). Factors such as perceived supervisor support and organizational identification mediate the relationship between workplace autonomy and employee outcomes (Mertz et al., 2023). Additionally, workplace democracy characteristics like justice and accountability have been found to be positively associated with employee productivity in the banking sector. Therefore, fostering workplace autonomy through humanistic policies and practices can enhance employee affective commitment, productivity, and overall well-being in the banking industry and other industries. Workplace autonomy indeed encompasses the respectful treatment of employees, recognition of their contributions, and protection of their rights and well-being. Research indicates that workplace dignity positively influences various aspects of employee well-being and organizational outcomes. Studies emphasize the importance of workplace dignity in fostering employee well-being, organizational commitment, and reducing turnover intentions (Mertz et al., 2023). Furthermore, the concept of workplace dignity serves as a foundational element for privacy in the workplace, highlighting its significance in shaping the employment relationship and ensuring respect for workers' dignity (Iqbal et al., 2023). In a sector where labor-intensive tasks and hazardous working conditions are common, ensuring workplace dignity becomes paramount. Employees who feel valued and respected are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of commitment towards their organization, willingly investing their time and effort to achieve organizational goals.

Many researchers have conducted studies in the area of workplace autonomy and employee commitment from different perspective. Such as the work of Onyinye (2023) titled Workplace Ethics and Employee Commitment of Public Secondary School Teachers in Rivers State. Bell et al., (2023),

studied Autonomy and Diversity in the Workplace. In *Intercultural Issues in the Workplace: Leadership, Communication and Trust*. Ekejiuba et al., (2023), studied the management of Workplace Autonomy and Employee Commitment: A Conceptual Review in the Nigerian Public Sector. Estigoy et al., (2020), studied the factors affecting employee commitment in the workplace: An analysis. Zhenjing et al., (2022), studied the impact of employees' workplace environment on employees' performance: a multi-mediation model. Sainz et al., (2023), studied the perceived unequal and unfair workplaces trigger lower job satisfaction and lower workers' autonomy via organizational dehumanization and workers' self-objectification. Funmini (2018), studied the impact of workplace environmental factors on employee commitment: Evidence from North East Nigeria. Nayak et al., (2018), examined workplace empowerment, quality of work life and employee commitment: a study on Indian healthcare sector.

It is worthy to note that workplace ethics, diversity, environment, and empowerment impact employee commitment across various sectors and regions; this demonstrate that ethical practices, diversity, supportive environments, and empowerment are vital for fostering strong employee commitment and organizational success. None of the studies above were able to provide empirical insight on how dimensions of workplace autonomy such as decision making authority and resource control interact with measures of employee affective commitment such as acceptance of organisational goals and pursuance of organisational goals. It was against this backdrop that the researcher chose to delve into this study.

Concept of Workplace Autonomy

Autonomy in the workplace is about granting employees the authority to shape their work environment and tasks. This empowerment reflects a deep respect for their skills, knowledge, and professional judgment. Employees' perception of dignity in the workplace is closely tied to the autonomy they are granted in making decisions related to their work. Research has shown that job autonomy can lead to improved workplace attitudes, productivity, and employee well-being. Additionally, workplace sociability can enhance autonomy and make heteronomous work more bearable, potentially advancing the cause of workers' autonomy through solidarity and collective action (Jenkins & Neal, 2023). Furthermore, daily perceived autonomy support has been found to positively impact meaningful work, which in turn influences work engagement, highlighting the importance of autonomy in fostering a sense of purpose and engagement among employees (Meng et al., 2023). Ultimately, autonomy conveys trust and respect from the organization, signaling to employees that their opinions and contributions are valued, reinforcing their self-worth and professional identity (Sajari et al., 2023).

Moreover, autonomy is closely linked to intrinsic motivation. When employees have control over their work, they are more likely to find it meaningful and fulfilling. This internal motivation is often more sustainable and effective than extrinsic motivators such as monetary rewards. Job autonomy plays a crucial role in enhancing employee engagement, satisfaction, and overall well-being. Studies have shown that job autonomy is positively related to job satisfaction, work engagement, and mental health outcomes (Wu et al., 2023). Employees who have the freedom to make decisions and plan their work strategies tend to experience higher levels of cognitive and emotional engagement (Ade-Adeniji et al., 2021). Furthermore, job autonomy can reduce work-leisure conflict and contribute to lower mental distress during working days (Sajari et al., 2023). This autonomy allows individuals to align their work with personal values and goals, fostering a deeper connection to their job and enhancing their overall satisfaction and well-being. Therefore, organizations should consider implementing policies that promote job autonomy to support employee mental health and well-being.

Autonomy plays a crucial role in fostering innovation and creativity among employees, ultimately contributing to organizational success in dynamic and competitive business environments. Research has shown that providing employees with job autonomy can lead to improved workplace attitudes, productivity, and well-being. Additionally, autonomy has been found to positively impact employees'

creativity, with autonomy and innovation climate both being key factors in enhancing employees' creative behaviors at work (Mai et al., 2022). Furthermore, autonomy can also lead to a higher sense of autonomy during tasks, allowing individuals to explore new ideas and cross boundaries, thus boosting feelings of autonomy while triggering evaluation apprehension, which can be a double-edged sword in terms of psychological well-being (Kim et al., 2023). Therefore, granting employees autonomy to explore new ideas and approaches is essential for promoting innovation and adaptability within organizations. By valuing and promoting autonomy, organizations signal that they appreciate and rely on their employees' ingenuity and initiative. This, in turn, reinforces employees' sense of dignity and purpose within the organization.

Managerial Style

Effective managerial style is indeed a multifaceted concept that necessitates the integration of various approaches and techniques tailored to the organization's requirements, task characteristics, and team dynamics. Research emphasizes the importance of combining different management styles to achieve optimal results (Danek, 2022). The ability to adapt leadership styles based on situational demands and the individual qualities of team members is crucial for success in modern management. Successful managers often exhibit a combination of leadership styles, adapting their approach to maximize team performance, engagement, and organizational success. They prioritize building strong relationships, fostering open communication, and empowering their employees to contribute to the organization's goals and objectives. By understanding and leveraging different managerial styles, managers can create a positive work environment where employees feel motivated, valued, and empowered to achieve their full potential.

I. Task-Oriented Leadership

Task-oriented leadership, also known as directive leadership, focuses primarily on achieving specific objectives and tasks within an organization. Leaders who adopt a task-oriented approach prioritize productivity, efficiency, and goal attainment. This style of leadership is characterized by clear instructions, structured processes, and a strong emphasis on achieving measurable outcomes.

One of the key aspects of task-oriented leadership is clarity in expectations. Leaders outline specific goals, objectives, and performance standards that need to be achieved within a given timeframe. They provide clear directions on how tasks should be executed, emphasizing adherence to procedures and deadlines. This clarity helps team members understand their roles and responsibilities, reducing ambiguity and enabling them to work towards common objectives effectively.

Task-oriented leadership, as highlighted in various studies (Muchanje & Wanyoko, 2021), plays a crucial role in environments where precision and efficiency are paramount, such as project management and education. Research indicates that task-oriented leaders focus on clarifying work tasks, setting high-performance standards, and promoting competition among employees, ultimately leading to improved project success and students' academic achievement (Ahmed et al., 2024). Additionally, the emphasis on task-oriented communication principles in the context of intelligent tasks in 6G systems underscores the significance of this leadership style in driving successful outcomes through effective information transmission strategies. Another characteristic of task-oriented leadership is a focus on task delegation and supervision. Leaders delegate responsibilities based on team members' skills and capabilities, ensuring that each task is assigned to the most qualified individual. They monitor progress closely, providing guidance and feedback to ensure that tasks are being executed according to plan. This hands-on approach helps maintain accountability and allows leaders to intervene promptly if issues arise, thereby minimizing delays and disruptions.

Task-oriented leaders often emphasize efficiency in resource allocation. They prioritize the allocation of resources—such as time, budget, and manpower—based on the criticality of tasks and the organization's strategic objectives. By optimizing resource use, these leaders ensure that the

organization operates cost-effectively while achieving its goals in a timely manner. They may implement systems or tools to track resource utilization and make data-driven decisions to improve efficiency continuously.

While task-oriented leadership focuses primarily on achieving objectives, effective leaders also recognize the importance of fostering a positive work environment. They understand that motivated and engaged employees are more likely to perform at their best and contribute to organizational success. Task-oriented leaders play a crucial role in promoting knowledge creation behavior among their subordinates by focusing on task-relevant information and setting high-performance standards (Ma et al, 2024). They stimulate employees to engage in more knowledge creation behaviors by transmitting the organization's vision, clarifying work tasks, and fostering a competitive yet collaborative environment. By adopting a task-oriented leadership style, leaders can effectively motivate their teams through recognition of achievements, providing skill development opportunities, and encouraging open communication to enhance trust and camaraderie among team members. Additionally, in the realm of communication networks, task-oriented communication is highlighted as a disruptive technology for 6G systems, emphasizing the importance of task-specific information structures and tailored transmission strategies for intelligent tasks (Shi et al., 2023).

II. People-Oriented Leadership

People-oriented leadership, also referred to as relationship-oriented or supportive leadership, emphasizes the well-being, satisfaction, and development of team members. Leaders who adopt a people-oriented approach prioritize building positive relationships, fostering collaboration, and creating a supportive work environment where individuals feel valued and respected.

Empathy plays a crucial role in people-oriented leadership, fostering genuine connections and trust within teams. Leaders who prioritize relationships by demonstrating empathy and interpersonal skills show a sincere interest in the well-being and personal growth of their team members. By actively listening to concerns, understanding perspectives, and addressing challenges, empathetic leaders create a supportive environment that encourages open communication and effective collaboration (Fuller, 2023). This approach not only motivates employees to be more productive and enhances job satisfaction, but also contributes to leadership effectiveness through multi-dimensional thinking and high-performance team working. People-oriented leaders often excel in roles where teamwork, creativity, and innovation are valued. They empower their team members by involving them in decision-making processes and encouraging them to contribute their ideas and insights. This participative approach fosters a sense of ownership and engagement among employees, as they feel their contributions are valued and respected.

Managerial Styles as Moderating Variable of Workplace Autonomy and Employee Affective Commitment

In the context of deposit money banks in Port Harcourt, managerial style can serve as a moderating variable that influences the relationship between workplace autonomy and employee affective commitment. Workplace autonomy involves recognizing and respecting the inherent value of all employees, treating them with fairness, and providing a supportive and respectful work environment. Employee affective commitment, which includes acceptance of organizational goals and pursuance of organizational goals, is crucial for organizational success, particularly in the demanding banking industry.

Managerial style, which encompasses the behaviors and approaches managers use to interact with their employees, can significantly impact how workplace autonomy is perceived and experienced. For instance, a participative managerial style that involves employees in decision-making processes, values their input, and treats them with respect can enhance the sense of autonomy in the workplace. Conversely, an authoritarian style that focuses on strict control and unilateral decision-making can undermine workplace autonomy.

When managers adopt a style that promotes dignity, employees are more likely to feel valued and respected, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and emotional attachment to the organization. This enhanced affective commitment results in greater loyalty and a reduced likelihood of turnover. Additionally, a dignified workplace where employees are treated fairly and respectfully can mitigate the negative effects of job stress and increase overall morale and productivity.

In Port Harcourt, where the banking industry is characterized by high turnover rates and a competitive labor market, adopting a managerial style that fosters workplace autonomy can be particularly beneficial. It not only improves employee affective commitment but also enhances organizational reputation and attractiveness to potential employees.

Empirical Review

Zawadzki (2018) conducted a study to address a notable gap in the Polish management discourse by examining the concept of dignity in the workplace through a humanistic management perspective. This work provides an insightful analysis of contemporary discussions on workplace dignity within Western management literature, seeking to offer valuable insights and frameworks applicable to Polish organizational contexts.

The methodology employed by Zawadzki involves a critical analysis of prevalent concepts of workplace autonomy found in management discourse. This approach includes reviewing existing empirical research findings and analyzing relevant management literature on autonomy. The goal is to systematize the available concepts and shed light on the various dimensions of employee autonomy within organizational settings.

The findings from Zawadzki's literature analysis effectively organize and categorize different concepts of workplace dignity, identifying specific factors that positively and negatively influence employees' dignity. Key factors highlighted include organizational culture, leadership styles, and workplace policies that either promote or undermine employee dignity. Additionally, Zawadzki outlines mechanisms that contribute to the humanization of work processes, such as inclusive decision-making practices, recognition of employee contributions, and the establishment of supportive workplace environments.

Despite the valuable theoretical insights provided, Zawadzki acknowledges the necessity for empirical verification within actual organizational contexts. The study points out that the field of workplace autonomy research remains underdeveloped, necessitating further theoretical and empirical investigations to address potential gaps and deepen the understanding of autonomy-related issues in the workplace.

The practical implications of Zawadzki's reflections emphasize the importance of organizational mechanisms in fostering or hindering workplace autonomy. By problematizing the category of autonomy, the study aims to pave the way for empirical research that can inform organizational practices. Managers can utilize these insights to design solutions that protect employee well-being, ultimately contributing to organizational development and success. The reflection on dignity also serves as a guide for researchers to explore new avenues in workplace autonomy studies.

Zawadzki's article stands out for introducing and elaborating on the concept of workplace autonomy within the Polish management discourse, an area previously under explored. By drawing on Western discussions and integrating them with Polish management contexts, the article provides a novel perspective and suggests directions for future research. This work not only enriches the theoretical landscape but also has the potential to influence practical management approaches in Poland.

Zawadzki (2018) makes a substantial contribution to the understanding of autonomy in the workplace from a humanistic management perspective. The study's systematic analysis of literature and identification of key factors influencing workplace dignity offer valuable insights for both researchers and practitioners. However, further empirical research is necessary to validate these theoretical reflections and fully realize the potential benefits of dignified workplace practices in organizational settings.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there is a relationship between workplace autonomy and employee affective commitment in deposit money banks in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the study finds that dimensions of workplace autonomy such as decision making authority and resource control play crucial roles in fostering different aspects of employee affective commitment including acceptance of organizational goals and pursuance of organisational goals. The findings further suggest that these factors are instrumental in creating a workplace environment where employees feel valued, respected, and motivated, thereby increasing their overall commitment to the organization.

The implications of these findings are significant for both theory and practice. In practice, banks can enhance employee affective commitment by fostering a culture that prioritizes autonomy, decision making authority, and resource control. The findings also reinforce existing theoretical framework, such as the organizational justice theory, which emphasize the importance of fairness and trust in promoting employee engagement and commitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve workplace autonomy and foster employee affective commitment in banks:

1. Banks should foster an environment of trust through transparent communication, integrity in leadership, access to information and fair treatment of all employees. Regular feedback mechanisms and open-door policies can help establish this resource control.
2. Train managers to lead with respect and dignity, ensuring that they understand the importance of fostering a workplace culture that values employee contributions and promotes fairness.
3. Regularly provide employees with opportunities for professional development and growth, which will not only enhance their skills but also contribute to their sense of dignity and commitment.
4. Ensure that the organizational culture aligns with the values of autonomy, acceptance of organizational goals and pursuance of organizational goals thereby creating a supportive environment that nurtures employee affective commitment.
5. Conduct regular surveys to assess employees' perceptions of workplace autonomy and make adjustments based on feedback to continually improve the work environment.

REFERENCES

- Ade-Adeniji, O., Adeniji, A., & Imhonopi, D. (2021). And its effect on work engagement: A study of the banking industry in Nigeria. *DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/bbs.16\(3\)](http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/bbs.16(3))*.
- Ahmed, R., Philbin, S. P., & Paracha, O. S. (2024). Investigating the impact of task-oriented, relationship-oriented, and innovation-oriented leadership competencies on project success in Pakistan: a moderated model of multi-dimensional senior management support. *Engineering Management Journal*, 36(1), 42-65.
- Ahmed, A., Liang, D., Anjum, M. A., & Durrani, D. K. (2023). Does dignity matter? The effects of workplace dignity on organization-based self-esteem and discretionary work effort. *Current Psychology*, 42(6), 4732-4743.
- Bell, J. G., Strani, K., & Ahmad, J. (2023). Dignity and diversity in the workplace. In intercultural issues in the workplace: Leadership, Communication and Trust. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

- Danek, J. (2022). On the effectiveness of the combined managerial style of a modern general education school. *Bulletin of the Karaganda university Pedagogy series*, 106(2), 91-100.
- Ekejiuba, U. C., Muritala, T. A., Maitala, F. H., & Nwoye, M. I. (2023). Management of workplace diversity and employee commitment: A conceptual review in the Nigerian Public Sector.
- Estigoy, E., Sulasula, J., & Guodu, X. A. (2020). Factors affecting employee commitment in the workplace: An analysis. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 11(27), 160-171.
- Fuller, L. P. (2023). Empathetic leadership: Motivating organizational citizenship behavior and strengthen leader-member exchange relationships. *International Business Research*, 16(3), 1-38.
- Funminiyi, A. K. (2018). Impact of workplace environmental factors on employee commitment: Evidence from North East Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management*, 6(7), 575-585.
- Gupta, B., Sihag, P., & Pangtey, R. S. (2023). If I feel valued, I am committed to change: Role of workplace dignity and perceived supervisor support. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*.
- Iqbal, A., Nazir, T., & Ahmad, M. S. (2023). Unraveling the relationship between workplace dignity and employees' tacit knowledge sharing: the role of proactive motivation. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 27(10), 2754-2778.
- Jenkins, D., & Neal, A. (2023). Work relationships and autonomy. *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 1-22.
- Kim, S., Goncalo, J. A., & Rodas, M. A. (2023). The cost of freedom: Creative ideation boosts both feelings of autonomy and the fear of judgment. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 105, 104432.
- Maj, J. (2023). Influence of inclusive work environment and perceived diversity on job satisfaction: Evidence from Poland. *Central European Business Review*, 12 (4), 105-122.
- Meng, L., Lin, X., Du, J., Zhang, X., & Lu, X. (2023). Autonomy support and prosocial impact facilitate meaningful work: A daily diary study. *Motivation and Emotion*, 47 (4), 538-553.
- Mertz, B. A., Locander, J. A., Brown, B. W., & Locander, W.B. (2023). Dignity in the workplace: A frontline service employee perspective. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 1-16.
- Muchanje, P. N., & Wanyoko, M. S. (2021). Task-oriented leadership style on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Nyeri County, Kenya. *Journal of Educational Research in Developing Areas*, 2(1), 24-33.
- Odiwo, W. O., Agol, N. M., Egielewa, P. E., Ebhote, O., Akhor, S. O., Ogbeide, F., & Ozuomode, D. C. (2022). Workplace democracy and employee productivity in construction firms. *Corporate Governance and Organizational Behavior Review*, 6(4), 43-56.

- Sajari, A., Haron, H., Ganesan, Y., & Khalid, A. A. (2023). Factors influencing the level of ethics and integrity in Malaysian public sector. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, 14(1), 141-158.
- Sainz, M., Moreno-Bella, E., & Torres-Vega, L. C. (2023). Perceived unequal and unfair workplaces trigger lower job satisfaction and lower workers' dignity via organizational dehumanization and workers' self-objectification. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 53(5), 921-938.
- Sajari, A., Haron, H., Ganesan, Y., & Khalid, A. A. (2023). Factors influencing the level of ethics and integrity in Malaysian public sector. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, 14(1), 141-158.
- Shi, Y., Zhou, Y., Wen, D., Wu, Y., Jiang, C., & Letaief, K. B. (2023). Task-oriented communications for 6G: Vision, principles, and technologies. *IEEE Wireless Communications*, 30(3), 78-85.
- Wu, C. H., Davis, M., Collis, H., Hughes, H., & Fang, L. (2023). A diary study on location autonomy and employee mental distress: The mediating role of task-environment fit. *Personnel Review*.
- Zawadzki, M. (2018). Dignity in the workplace. The perspective of humanistic management. *Central European Management Journal*, 26(1), 171-188.