



THE IMPACT OF TEAM INTEGRITY ON PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN BAYELSA STATE CIVIL SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines that impact of team integrity and project performance in Bayelsa state civil service. The study focused on project managers, supervisors and engineers in their respective parastatals. The respondents were drawn from the Ministries of Works and Infrastructure, Science and Technology and Manpower Development, Mineral Resources, Local Government, Land and Survey, Energy, Water Resources, Housing and Urban Development, Education, Special Projects, Environment and three agencies. Our hypothesis was tested using Spearman rank order correlation. He findings reveals that there is a signifnt relationship existing between team integrity and project performance within civil service in Bayelsa state. The study further recommends that Civil servants should be trained and retrained often on the gains of integrity within the workplace and beyond. Some of these trainings should be in locations different from their work environment so that they can assimilate what is being facilitated.

KEYWORDS: Team, Integrity, project, performance, civil servant, Bayelsa

INTRODUCTION

Project performance among government agencies in Bayelsa State is very important because government projects require a lot of financial investments and resources, yet there are many project failures, delays or costs overrun in Bayelsa State (Ogege, 2011). The poor level of project performance, as mentioned above, negatively affects the civil service, the government and the citizens in general. Specifically, it leads to increase in project costs to the State Government, while robbing the citizens the benefits of enjoying quality projects. The low level of project performance is evidenced in the high number of abandoned projects in the State such as the case of the 500 bed-space government hospital in Yenagoa which was started since the era of the former Governor, late D.S.P. Alameisegha, and it still remains uncompleted and abandoned till date (Bartholomew & Sule, 2017).

Other manifestations of poor rate of project execution is seen in the failure to meet project completion schedule, poor quality of completed projects, slow response to clients' demand, none optimisation of resources budgeted for the projects, poor projects and service development, disgruntled customer services and outright failure to meet project datelines. These failures have led to loss of confidence in

government agencies by the citizens and other business partners. Moreover, most of the projects executed by government agencies seem to be in a state of non-conformance to standards. Governments in Bayelsa State have spent billions of Naira to finance its projects. Despite this huge amount of money used by the State Governments, her projects' performance have not been very successful and one of the reasons given by project consultants and evaluators, is low level of trust among team members whereby, some factors of effective team trust like openness and caring, have not been given attention during the project implementation process. Therefore this study is aimed at assessing the relationship between team Integrity and project performance in the Bayelsa State Civil Service.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Stakeholder theory

Interest in stakeholder theory has increased steadily since Edward Freeman's (1984) landmark publication (Agle et al. 2008). Breaking with the dominant focus on stockholders, the term 'stakeholder' is now established in business studies and business practice. Stakeholder theory was originated from the study of organizational management and ethics (Phillips et al., 2003). Stakeholder theory suggests that managers



must pay attention to all constituencies as they can affect the value of the organization (Jensen, 2010).

The stakeholders' theory holds that, corporations and their managers have the duty to give account of their actions not only to their stockholders or financials, but to all individuals or groups in which their operations their direct or indirect impact (Jensen & Sandström, 2011). Furthermore, the stakeholders' theory holds that, project team satisfaction can influence project performance through stakeholdership. Project manager together with other project team members are part of stakeholders of the project performance. In project context, stakeholders are people or organizations inclusive project manager, team members, customers, sponsors, performing organizations, general public et al. who are involved in the project that can exert influence over the project or their interests can be affected by the project performance (PMI, 2008).

When the project team members are more satisfied, their stakes increased that will motivate them further to achieve the desire project performance. Naturally every project team member wants to see the team succeed because each of them is a stakeholder of the project deliverables. If the project is not delivered successfully, this will look bad not only to the team but also to each of them. Since each (team member) has a stake, they have no choice but to perform their role or portion of work well. But at the same time if the team feels more satisfied, they will produce more or help out each other to deliver the project performance as needed.

The stakeholders' theory bridges the vacuum noticed in the agency and stewardship theories. The stakeholder theory recognises that, organization is a composition of several stakeholders who jealously fight to protect their individual interest (Olori & Sylva, 2017). However, the agency and stakeholder theories failure is their "inability to highlight the pluralistic composition of a corporation" (Olori & Sylva, 2017, p.33).

Concept of Team Integrity

Currently, there is no generally agreed definition of integrity (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). Integrity has been understood and interpreted and defined according to the school of thought of the scholar (Dineen, Lewicki & Tomlinson, 2006; Palanski & Yammarino, 2009). Literature on integrity indicated that, it is been used in different fields of study such as business ethics, social studies, applied psychology, and management (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007; Palanski, Kahai & Yammarino, 2010). Business ethics studies see integrity as meaning "wholeness, authenticity, consistency in adversity, consistency between words and actions, and moral/ethical behavior" (Palanski, Kahai & Yammarino, 2010). Palanski, Kahai and

Yammarino (2010) proposed that integrity should be considered as "a virtue within the framework of moral philosophy as a way to resolve this misunderstanding and difference of opinion". Therefore, they defined integrity as "the consistency of an acting entity's words and actions".

However, in this work, integrity is seen as a measure of team trust, thus considered within a team structure. This is in accordance with Palanski and Yammarino's (2009) multi-level theory of integrity which considers the integrity of teams. Therefore, this study aligns with Simons (2002) definition of integrity as the "perceived pattern of alignment between an actor's words and deeds.". Integrity implies that the trustee acts in accordance with values and principles the trustor finds acceptable (Breuer, Hüffmeier & Hertel, 2016). Thus, in this study, team integrity is defined as the extent to which a team member believes that other members are honourable and will keep their words.

Integrity among team members has been linked to increased trust between members, both theoretically (Simons, 2002) and empirically (Simons et al., 2007). Specifically, Palanski and Yammarino (2009) distinguished between the integrity of individual team members and the integrity of the team. The scholars described the integrity of the group as the integrity of an acting entity; in other words, although group-level integrity may emerge from the individual integrity of the team members, group-level integrity refers to the integrity of the team as a separate, autonomous entity which is irreducible to the individual level of analysis.

Concept of Project Performance

Project performance in this study is based on Stakeholder Requirement Theory which is defined as the degree of project delivery that meets stakeholders' requirements on a negotiated time, within negotiated budget, meeting specific quality requirements and accepted by customers (Gallegos, et al., 2004; Shenhar, 2004; Parsons, 2006). Project performance is used instead of project success because project performance only encompasses the stages of planning, production and then handover as indicated by Munns and Bjeirmi (1996) in their stage two to four of project lifecycle. On the other hand, project success refers to all the six stages from conception, planning, production, handover, utilization to close down. Also according to Pinto & Slevin (1988), project performance is only subset of project success in which project success also incorporates time, budget, scope, satisfaction, welfare of client, technical and organizational validity as well as contribution to organizational effectiveness.

Today, as organizations recognized the importance and benefits of project teams, they have



formed more and more project teams to achieve different organizational objectives. However, in order to ensure project teams achieving positive project performance, management and project managers need to focus on critical factors which include team satisfaction (Fung & Siow, 2013).

Recently, more and more organizations and government agencies are using project teams to deliver products or services as well as resolving problems especially on complex tasks. This is because project performance through team is more rewarding than individual performance as the team outcomes exceed the sum of individual outputs. The rationale to study project performance is projects require a lot of financial investments and resources yet there are many project failures, delays or costs over run (Collyer, 2000; Peled, 2000; Standish Group International, 2009). The negative project performance as mentioned above has chain effect which even costs more to an organization. These include: problems streamlining operations, problems optimizing services or products development, delaying speed to market, disruption to customer services, weaken the organization's market shares, losing to competition and much more.

Among people, processes and tools (inclusive technologies), people is the most critical success factor in influencing project performance (Kerzner, 1998; Lechler, 1998; Cooke-Davies, 2002; Thamhain, 2004; Guiney, 2009). From literature, human factors studied pertaining to project performance include: stakeholder's participation, project manager's leadership, project management practices, project organizational structure, communications and external environmental factors (Pinto & Slevin, 1986; Belassi & Tukel, 1996; Ravichandran & Rai, 1999; Dolan, 2005; Zhang & Xu, 2008).

Project performance in the public sector is defined as "the extent to which government projects development process has been undertaken as well as performance of the delivery system from the view point of the users" (Jiang & Klein, 2004). Taking the notion

of project performance by Nidumolu (1996), Jiang, Klein (2004) suggested that the project performance should be studied from the perspective of product performance as well as process performance.

The advocates of this theory have views that every project is of unique nature, so they need a different and contingent way to deal with it. But the critics of contingency theory claim that project leaders with certain leadership styles can only perform effectively in some projects. In the current study, the concept of agency theory has been used to enhance project performance through project governance and other understudy variables like project quality and project risk. Agency theory, basically suggests that principle/project owner has difficulties to motivate his agent to act in principle/owner's best interest.

METHODOLOGY

The Bayelsa State civil service has 149 parastatals which comprise 34 ministries, 5 commissions and 110 departments and agencies. However, since this study is about team trust and project performance, the target population is made up of project team members. Specifically, the study will focus on project managers, supervisors and engineers in these parastatals. The respondents were drawn from the Ministries of Works and Infrastructure, Science and Technology and Manpower Development, Mineral Resources, Local Government, Land and Survey, Energy, Water Resources, Housing and Urban Development, Education, Special Projects, Environment and three agencies. These ministries were chosen based on the judgment that they have not less than five teams members which are involved in monitoring and implementing (sometimes through direct labour) government projects. Table 1 below indicates the number of team members in each of the ministries:



Table 1: Ministries under consideration

S/N	Ministries	No. of Team Members
1	Works and Infrastructure	13
2	Education	9
3	Special projects	10
4	Land and Survey	8
5	Energy	6
6	Water Resources	6
7	Mineral Resources	12
8	Science and Technology and Manpower Development	9
9	Housing and Urban Development	6
10	Local Government	8
11	Environment	12
12	Bayelsa State Housing and Property Development Authority	13
13	Bayelsa State Capital City Development Authority	14
14	Bayelsa State Senior Secondary School Board	5
	Total	131

Data Analysis Techniques

Several statistical techniques were used to analyse data in this study. First, the demographic details of the respondents were analysed using pie charts and percentages. Secondly, univariate analysis was carried out by examining the individual characteristics of the variables via mean, standard deviation and kurtosis.

Lastly, to test the study hypotheses, Spearman's Rank Order Correlation coefficient was deployed. The choice of the Spearman's rho is informed by its suitability to the type of data (ordinal data) which were collected (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Also, they are suitable since the aim of the study is to examine the relationships between the dimensions and measures of these constructs (Salkind, 2007; Pallant, 2013).

In sum, the choices of Spearman's Rank order Correlation Coefficient and Kendall's tau correlation coefficient were based on fact that:

- i. The study is concerned on the relationship between two variables.
- ii. The data is ordinal in nature.

Decision Rules

In testing hypotheses, the following decision rules will apply:

Step one

The null hypothesis is to be accepted if the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05, otherwise it will be rejected.

Step two

In interpreting the correlation values, the criteria by Gravetter and Walnau (2013) will apply:

0 = No relationship

0.1 – 0.29 = Weak relationship

0.3 – 0.69 = Moderate relationship

0.7 – 0.99 = Strong relationship

1 = Perfect relationship

The hypotheses will be tested at 5% level of significance.



DATA ANALYSES AND FINDINGS

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Study Constructs

			Team Integrity	Project Performance
Spearman's rho	Team Integrity	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.643**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Project Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.643**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	112	112

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

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 above illustrates the association between team integrity and project performance. The results reveal that team integrity has moderate but positive and significant relationships with project performance. Specifically, team trust and product quality (rho = .643, n = 112 and P < 0.05), Based on the results, the null hypotheses were rejected and their alternatives accepted which means:

- i. There is significant relationship between team integrity and project performance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, we have realized that team integrity can significantly relate with project performance in Bayelsa state civil service. The study reveals that the extent of relationship is a moderate but significant relationship. That is to say that if the fourteen (14) ministries and parastatals within Bayelsa state can unanimously work with the concept of integrity in mind, there would be a sporadic outcome of project performance within that area. This could bring about the much needed development that is being craved for within the socio-cultural and political society. The government in power while considering integrity as a watch word can benefit from its gains as team members involved would work with minimal ill conceived tendencies.

Recommendations

- i. Civil servants should be trained and retrained often on the gains of integrity within the workplace and beyond. Some of these trainings should be in locations different from their work environment so that they can assimilate what is being facilitated.
- ii. Civil servants who have shown high level of integrity in the discharge of their responsibilities should be celebrated. There

should be room for best employee of the week, month, year, etc. this would motivate other employees and team members towards working for the much needed project performance.

- iii. Civil servants should be advised not to act with the perception of those in political authority as those people would come and go but the civil service would remain. Therefore they shouldn't just make themselves instruments in the hands of government who can be moved without questioning posterity.
- iv. Government in power should also help the civil service in the performance of their control functions. Government should set up task force committees to checkmate the activities of civil servants and call them to order where necessary.

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