

EFFECTS OF TERRITORIALITY ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Abstract

Territoriality within organizations is a double edge sword. While some studies reported its positive impacts on behaviors such as affective commitment, turnover intention and absenteeism, other studies reported its negative effects on task performance and knowledge sharing. However, territoriality is pervasive and inevitable. Therefore, organizations and practitioners persistently seek for effective ways to manage the negative territorial issues inherent in the workplaces. Drawing from theory of territoriality, this study examines the effects of territoriality on organizational commitment through affective, continuance and normative commitments. In addition, the study examined the role of organizations' physical structures on the manifestation of territoriality. 227 public secondary schools' employees in Kano State were randomly selected and participated in the study. PLS-SEM was used for data analysis through smart PLS version 3. The study found that territoriality accounts for weak variation in affective commitment and normative commitment. In addition, territoriality accounts for medium variation in continuance commitment. Therefore, managers and practitioners can design their organizational physical structures in such a way that encourages collective ownership over objects rather than personal ownership to effectively dissuade individual territoriality and its negative consequences.

Keywords: Affective commitment, Continuance commitment, Normative commitment, Organizational commitment, Territoriality

JEL Classification: L2

Introduction

Organization is a collection of individuals that work together towards achieving the goal of the organization. Therefore, organizations depend largely on their human resources (Alrowwad, Almajali, Masa'deh, Obeidat & Aqqad, 2019); hence the need for employees' commitment. Commitment to an organization is perceived as pivotal factor that determines the successes of the organizations and aids them retain workforce which in turn increases organizational productivity and effectiveness (Alrowwad et al., 2019). Organizational commitment (OC) has received wide attention from the researchers mainly because it explained attitudes toward a target, organization, and behavior. Literatures argued that OC reduces employee withdrawal behaviors such as lateness, absenteeism and turnover which have potentially serious consequences on the overall organizational performance (Irefin & Mechanic, 2014). Therefore, efforts were made by researchers to explain why employees bind to an organization and the potential behavioral outcomes from such attachment. Several

studies have reported positive effect of OC on many positive behavioral outcomes e.g. knowledge sharing (Van den Hooff & de Leeuw van Weenen 2004), job performance (Sungu, Weng and Xu, 2019). Conversely, negative relationship was reported between OC and negative behavioral outcomes (Ramalho Luz, Luiz de Paula and de Oliveira, 2018). However, very little is known about the impact of territoriality on OC. Territorial behavior was found to have direct relationship on positive feelings towards organizational objective (Brown & Zhu, 2016). But, questions such as whether employees' territorial behavior is positively related to organizational commitment still requires more empirical evidence (Lu, Lui & Zhao, 2017). Very few studies existed on territorial behavior (Xiaoting, 2019), specifically studies that link territoriality and commitment (Brown & Zhu, 2016). This study addresses this literature limitation.

Territoriality is a double edge sword. Huo et al. (2016) asserted that territorial behaviors impede organizations'

positive activities such as teamwork and organizational goal accomplishment/performance. Therefore, it is essential to understand, recognize and effectively manage counterproductive territorial behaviors inherent in the workplaces (Brown & Robinson, 2007). This study argues that organizational physical structures affects territoriality over physical spaces within organizations. Most of the studies on territoriality within organizations that reported positive or negative consequences of territoriality (e.g. Singh, 2019; Lu et al., 2017; Brown & Zhu, 2016; Huo et al., 2016) were conducted in the physical structures that encourages territoriality over physical spaces or objects e.g. personal office, personal computer etc. Therefore, whether territoriality fosters when physical structures encourages collective ownerships such as common room/office, knowledge/information repository etc. is yet to be empirically addressed. The study addresses this literature limitation.

This study specifically addresses two literature gaps. First, there is paucity of studies on the direct effect of territoriality on OC, particularly on each of the dimensions of the OC. To the best of our knowledge, none of the existing studies operationalized OC as multidimensional variable on the relationship between territoriality and OC. This study addresses this literature gap. Secondly, existing studies were majorly conducted in the organizations whose physical structures encourages individuals territoriality over objects. Therefore, whether territoriality thrives even when physical objects are commonly shared is not yet addressed. This study was conducted in the organization whose physical structures dissuade individual territoriality; common room/offices: hence another contribution of the study to knowledge.

Literature Review

Concept of Territoriality

Brown, Lawrence, and Robinson (2005) define territoriality as an individual's behavioral expression of his/her feelings of ownership toward a physical or social object which includes constructing, communicating, maintaining, and restoring territories around those objects in the organization to which employee feels patented attachment towards. Therefore, territorial behavior arises when an employee feels compelled to protect objects or ideas from others, that he/she regards as his/her own possession (Brown, Crossley and Robinson, 2014). Territorial behavior in organizations can either be identity-oriented marking, control-oriented marking, anticipatory defending, or reactionary defending (Brown et al., 2005). Control-oriented marking refers to the behavior where individuals communicate

with other individuals and inform them that the territory has been claimed, hence preventing them from entering, using and destroying the territory (Xiaoting, 2019) e.g. creating a physical border to demarcate the boundaries of the territory (Brown, 2009). Control-oriented marking serves to communicate to others that someone has claimed a territory so that other people are discouraged from accessing or using the territory.

Identity-oriented marking are behaviors where individuals intentionally decorate and modify the surrounding environment to reflect their identity (Xiaoting, 2019). Anticipatory territorial behavior aims to primarily thwart infringement on the territoriality and ensure possession e.g. padlocking or pass wording (Brown, 2009). Reactionary territoriality defense occur when a territory is invaded and the individual acted in venting emotions to once again claim the territory (Brown et al., 2005).

2.2 Concept of Organizational Commitment

OC is the extent to which an individual accepts, internalizes, and views his/her role in the organization (Jans, 1989). Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) defines OC as the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. However, OC is an encompassing concept. Many models were developed by different researchers in an effort to come up with constructs that can measure OC e.g. gold standard model (Porter, Steer, Mowday & Boulian, 1974); value commitment and commitment to remain model (Angle & Perry, 1981). However, none of the previous models were able to obtain a complete picture of an individual's commitment to an organization (Boehman, 2006).

Allen and Meyer (1990) argued that OC is a paired connection between attitudinal and behavioral commitment; thus proposed an OC framework model based on the premise that affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment (CC), and normative commitment (NC) are interrelated and can be witnessed and exhibit by individuals at the same time. They argued that these different models of commitment should not be seen as types of commitment, but components (Mercurio, 2015) and as such the three commitment components are self-determining experienced at various points by all employees of an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Therefore, Allen and Meyer (1990) three-dimensional model seems to be a viable alternative of OC (Boehman, 2006) and probably most renowned and long lasting multi-dimensional conceptualization of OC (Mercurio, 2015). Therefore, this study adopted the model of OC proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990).

Jaros, Jermier, Koehler, and Sincich(1993) defined AC as the degree to which an employee is mentally attached to an organization via feelings of loyalty, love, warmth, belongingness, fondness and pleasure. CC involves rational calculation that exiting the organization could have exorbitant price on employee (Khashefiet al., 2013). It is the type of commitment based on the costs and benefits associated to stay or exit the organization. NC is an individual's preference to retain organizational membership due to the believe that it is morally right to be loyal and stay (Wang & Noe, 2010). Employees with NC stay in the organization due to feelings that they should do so for moral reasons (Meyer & Allen, 1991)

Territoriality and Organizational Commitment

Territoriality is inevitable in organizations' life. Therefore, tremendous efforts were made by researchers to understand both positive and negative consequences of territorial behaviors in the organization. Singh (2019) studied the role of territoriality on task performance, and workplace deviance and reported negative effect of territoriality on task performance and positive effect on workplace deviance behaviors. Further, the study found that knowledge hiding negatively mediates the influence of territoriality on task performance and workplace deviance. The curvilinear relation between territoriality and task performance was a study conducted by Chen,Liu, and Hui (2019). The study concluded that the relationship between territoriality and task performance is curvilinear and there exist negative correlation between territoriality and help giving. Li et al. (2020) found that team territorial climate played a cross-level moderating role between knowledge hiding and idea implementation such that if team territorial climate was at a high level, then the negative connection between knowledge hiding and idea implementation would be weaker.

Huoet al. (2017) examined the relationship between territoriality, motivational climate, and idea implementation and concluded that there is positive

relationship between territoriality and social alienation. The study further concluded that social alienation mediated the relationship between territoriality and idea implementation, and that mastery climate and performance climate moderated the positive relationship between territoriality and social alienation. Furthermore, territoriality was found to positively influence knowledge hiding (Huo, Cai, Luo, Men &Jia, 2016; Peng, 2013). Slupinski (2018) studied the mediating role of knowledge hiding and the moderating role of perceived servant leadership style on the relationship between territoriality and individual creativity and concluded that territoriality positively relates to knowledge hiding. Furthermore, the study found that high levels of perceived servant leadership style attenuates the relationship between territoriality and individual creativity but did not have an influence on the relationship between territoriality and knowledge hiding; territoriality and knowledge hiding did not significantly impact creativity. Lu et al. (2017) concluded that territoriality is negatively related to turnover intention and mediates the relationship between psychological ownership and turnover intention.

Brown and Zhu (2016) studied the impact of psychological ownership and territoriality in organizations and concluded that territorial behavior leads to positive feelings towards the organization which extends to feelings of commitment. However, one obvious conclusion from this empirical literature review is that there is still dearth of literature on territoriality in organizations. Furthermore, only one study (Brown & Zhu, 2016) examined the direct effect of territoriality on affective commitment. Nehmeh (2009) argued that the three types of commitment will have varying effects as displayed by individuals which in turn have varying effects on the organization's performance. Therefore, there is need to understand the relationship between territoriality and each of the OC dimensions. This study contributed to existing literature in this regard.

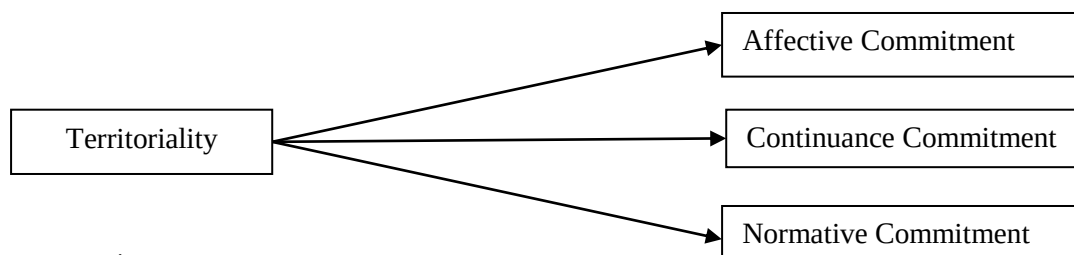
Hypothesis

Specifically, the study hypothesized as follows:

- H1. Territoriality has significant positive effect on affective commitment.
- H2. Territoriality has significant positive effect on continuance commitment.
- H3. Territoriality has significant positive effect on normative commitment.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework Model

*Source: Literature review*

The theoretical model of this study is underpinned by theory of territoriality (Brown et al., 2005). The theory is based on the premise that territoriality within organizations is inevitable and individuals tend to regard certain object(s) whether tangible or intangible as their territory e.g. knowledge, information, physical spaces etc. Territoriality is an antecedent of psychological ownership: however, while psychological ownership is a psychological state, territoriality is a social behavioral concept based on social actions that flow from psychological ownership in social context which reflects the social meaning of actions regarding claiming and protecting (Brown et al., 2005). Therefore, theory of territoriality posits that territorial behaviors within organizations emanates from the feeling of psychological ownership over an object which involves constructing, maintaining, communicating, and restoring territories which in turn leads to organizational commitment (Brown & Zhu, 2016). However, this study argues that the extent of one's territoriality over physical space depends on the physical structure of the organization which in turn affects their organizational commitment.

Methodology

The samples of this study were employees from public secondary schools in Kano State, Nigeria. The study chooses this sample because it wants to shed light on whether territoriality flourishes in the organizational physical structure where manifestations of territorial behaviors over physical spaces or objects are dissuaded. For example, majority of the employees in public schools share offices (staff common room). Therefore, territorial behaviors such as control-oriented (deter unwarranted access) and identity-oriented (decorating to reflect personal possession) were virtually impossible. 300 employees were randomly selected. 227 (76%) valid responses were used for data analysis. 63% of the respondents were male, 29% were female: majority of the respondents (60%) were between the age of 26-35, and 26% were 36yrs and above. Similarly, 61% of the

respondents have first degree and above while 72% of the respondents have working experience of between 0 to 15yrs. All the measurement scales of this study were adapted from previous studies and measured based on five point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Territoriality was measured using a 17items scaled developed and validated by Brown (2009). The scale captured all the three territorial behaviours of identity-oriented, control-oriented, and anticipatory-oriented. Lu et al.(2017) reported Cronbach alpha of .81. A sample item is "I created a boarder around my workspace".

Organizational commitment; A Questionnaire developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) was used to measure AC, CC, and NC. Simo, Enache, Sallan, and Fernandez (2014) argued that Meyer and Allen's three component model of commitment is the dominant tool used by scholars to address organizational commitment. The instrument has 18items (AC 6, NC 6, and CC 6). The instrument received widespread usage (Jaros, 2007) and was adapted/adopted by many researchers: Oh (2019); Bonds (2017); Hafiz (2017) among others. A sample item is "I do not feel emotionally attached to this school".

Data Analysis

This study utilized Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) for data analysis. PLS-SEM is a causal-prediction approach that emphasizes estimating statistical models, whose structures are designed to provide causal explanations (Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair, 2017). Therefore, PLS-SEM overcomes the ostensible dichotomy between explanation emphasized in academic research and prediction, which is the basis for developing managerial implications (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt & Ringle, 2019). First, we assessed common method bias CMB through full collinearity test based on the threshold of variance inflation factor (VIF) of ≤ 3.3 suggested by (Kock, 2015). To conduct collinearity test

for possible CMB on PLS-SEM model, the variables are all connected to one variable at a time and the same process is applied on each variable in the model (Gaskin,

2017). The model of this study does not show any possible CMB (see Table I).

Table 1

Common Method Bias Test Result

Latent Variable	Job satisfaction	Job performance	Psychological ownership
Job satisfaction		1.951	1.817
Job performance	1.576		1.203
Psychological ownership	1.923	1.725	

Source: PLS-SEM

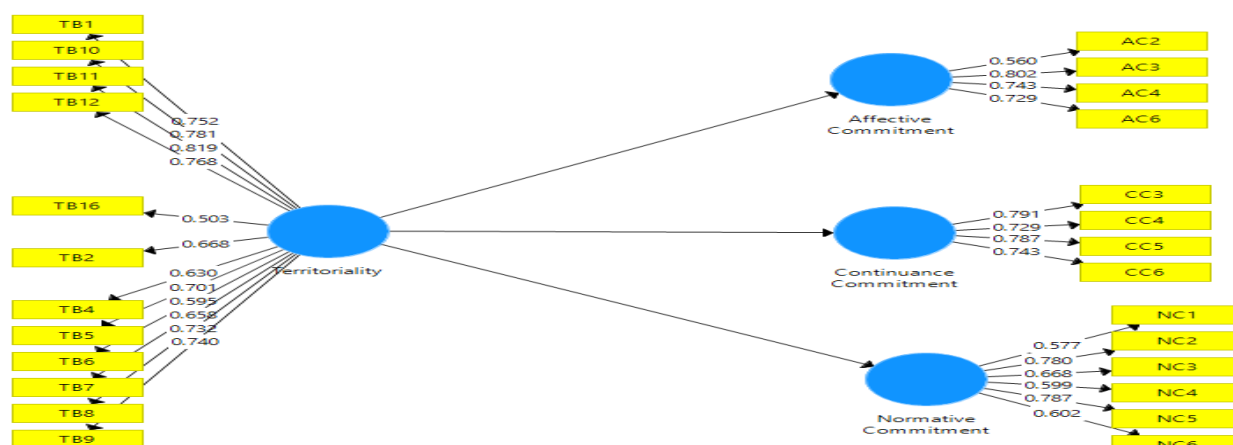
Results

Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed via factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), rho “A”, and HTMT as recommended by Hair et al. (2019).

Figure 1

Factor Loadings



Source: PLS-SEM

The loadings are adequate (Table 2) since that all the items exceeded the minimally recommended value of 0.5 (Hulland, 1999). CR determines the internal consistency of the construct measuring items and the values for territoriality, AC, CC, and NC are within the recommended region of above 0.7 by Hair et al. (2019).

CR is more a precise measure of reliability compared with Cronbach's Alpha because the later does not weight items (Hair et al., 2019). The AVE was used to assess convergent validity of the constructs and the values were all above the threshold of 0.5 suggested by Hair et al. (2019).

Table 2
Convergent Validity and Reliability

Construct	Items	Loadings	AVE	CR	rho
Affective Commitment	AC2	0.56	0.51	0.804	0.731
	AC3	0.802			
	AC4	0.743			
	AC6	0.729			
Continuance Commitment	CC3	0.791	0.582	0.848	0.765
	CC4	0.729			
	CC5	0.787			
	CC6	0.743			
Normative Commitment	NC1	0.577	0.601	0.831	0.772
	NC2	0.78			
	NC3	0.668			
	NC4	0.599			
	NC5	0.787			
	NC6	0.602			
Territoriality	TB1	0.752	0.531	0.919	0.812
	TB10	0.781			
	TB11	0.819			
	TB12	0.768			
	TB16	0.503			
	TB2	0.668			
	TB4	0.63			
	TB5	0.701			
	TB6	0.595			
	TB7	0.658			
	TB8	0.732			
	TB9	0.74			

Source: PLS-SEM

Table 3 presents the Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) values which determine discriminant validity based on threshold of <0.85 (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015). All the HTMT values for the constructs were less than the recommended threshold hence, displayed discriminant validity.

Table 3
Heterotrait-monotrait

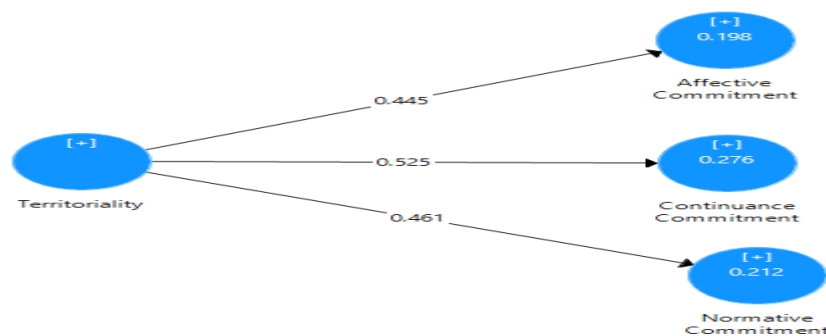
Construct	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment	Territoriality
Affective Commitment				
Continuance Commitment	0.493			
Normative Commitment	0.639	0.648		
Territoriality	0.556	0.629	0.494	

Source: PLS-SEM

Standardized root-mean residuals (SRMR) and normed-fit index (NFI) were used to determine the model fit. This study obtained an estimated model value of 0.073 for SRMR and 0.97 for NFI which were within the threshold of ≤ 0.08 and ≥ 0.95 respectively (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Figure 2

Path Coefficients (Direct Effect)



Source: PLS-SEM

Since the structural equation model of this study is reflective model, coefficient of determination (R^2), cross-validated redundancy (predictive relevance, Q^2), statistical significance, and relevance of path coefficient were used to assess the model (Hair et al., 2019). Q^2 is a blindfolding procedure which determines the predictive relevance of the PLS-Path model based on threshold of > 0 , > 0.25 , and > 0.50 for small, medium, and large (Hair

et al., 2019). R^2 determines the explanatory power of the model based on variance in endogenous constructs explained by the exogenous constructs (Schnueli & Korrius, 2011). R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 present large, moderate and weak explanatory power (Henseler et al., 2009). Therefore, based on the results in Table 4, all the three hypotheses are accepted.

Table 4

Test of Hypotheses

	Hypotheses	Path coefficient	T-values	P-values	Q2	Standard deviation	Decision
H1	Territoriality -> Affective Commitment	0.198	4.908	0	0.191	0.091	Supported
H2	Territoriality -> Continuance Commitment	0.276	5.914	0	0.178	0.089	Supported
H3	Territoriality -> Normative Commitment	0.212	4.746	0	0.174	0.097	Supported

Source: PLS-SEM

Discussion

This study examined the effect of territoriality on organizational commitment. The study operationalized organizational commitment as multifaceted construct through affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Hence, the three hypotheses were developed and tested. All the three hypotheses were statistically significant based on T-values and P-values ($P < 0.001$). However, the R^2 values of 0.198 and 0.212 for hypotheses one and three meant that territoriality accounts for weak variation in affective and normative commitment. These weak values of R^2 were perceived to be due to the fact that territoriality in certain physical structures is dissuaded. For example, ownership over objects such as offices in public secondary schools in Kano State where usually shared by many employees. Therefore, manifestation of territorial behaviors in form of control-oriented, identity-oriented and to some extent

anticipatory-oriented (e.g. padlocking) is not feasible. Territoriality over physical objects is rather collective. On the other hand, The R^2 value of 0.276 for hypothesis two meant that territoriality accounts for medium variation in continuance commitment. The Q^2 value is also 0.352 to implied medium predictive relevance of territoriality on continuance commitment. This finding concurs with the findings of previous studies like that Brown and Zhu (2016).

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of territoriality on organizational commitment. Specifically, the study operationalized organizational commitment as multifaceted construct. Three hypotheses were developed and tested. The study found that territoriality accounts for weak variation in affective commitment and normative

commitment. The study also found that territoriality accounts for medium variation in continuance commitment. Therefore, the study concluded that territoriality does not always leads to organizational commitment such that the relationship depends on the organizational physical structure. The study explicates to practitioners how territorial issues within the organization can be effectively managed via organizational physical structure design.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This study has theoretical implications. First, the study operationalized organizational commitment as multifaceted based on affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. The motivation for this multifaceted operationalization is to determine the extent to which territoriality influences each dimension of the organizational commitment. To our best knowledge no previous study addresses this limitation. Second, the study was conducted in the context where manifestation of individual territorial behavior is handcuffed. This adds to the generalizability of territoriality theory which poses that territoriality leads to organizational commitment. The study concluded that territoriality does not always lead to organizational commitment such that the relationship is contingent on the organization's physical structure. Third, the study

contributed to methodology. Ringle, Sarstedt, Mitchell, and Gudergan (2018) found that, out of the 77 studies that utilizes PLS-SEM that were published in major human resource management journals in the last 30 years, very few assessed model fit via SRMR and NFI and only 8% of them reported a predictive relevance (Q^2); hence they recommended for future studies to address these methodological limitations. This study contributed to methodology in this aspect.

The study also has managerial implications. Territorial behavior within organizations is pervasive and inevitable. Therefore, organizations and practitioners constantly seek for effective ways to manage territorial issues that negatively affects organizations. For example, a recent survey showed that 60% of employees have difficulties getting their colleagues share information with them that is vital to perform their job because of their beliefs that the information is personally belonging thus, should not be shared (Jian, 2019). This study has revealed that organizations' physical structure affects manifestation of territorial behavior. Therefore, counterproductive territorial behaviors can be attenuated when the organization's ownership over objects e.g. common offices, information/knowledge repository etc.

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