Onboarding Practices and Employee Commitment of Aviation Agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study examined the nexus between onboarding practices and employee commitment of aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The proxies of Onboarding Practices include: Communication; while the proxies of Employee Commitment is: Affective Commitment and Continuance Commitment. The theory that underpin the study is; relational view theory. The t a r g e t population w a s 168 middle to top-level managers of aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria. The Krejcie and Morgan's formular was utilised to determine a sample size of 128 respondents, and the stratified random sampling was adopted with the aid of random numbers. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level, by deploying a statistical model. The study revealed the following: a strong positive and significant relationship between communication and affective commitment, also on communication and continuance commitment; It is therefore recommended that: Managers of Aviation Agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria should foster Communication by ensuring employees are provided with the initial information, resources, tools and contacts to assist staff to be successful in their new role, as this can significantly improve Affective Commitment and Managers of Aviation Agencies in Rivers State. Moreso, Managers of Aviation Agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria should enhance Communication Culture by ensuring people have access to timely and accurate information about what's really happening in the organization.

Keywords: Onboarding Practice, Employee Commitment, Communication, Orientation, Affective Commitment

Introduction

An important factor in the growth of the Nigerian economy is the aviation industry. The aviation industry generated N117 billion in the first half of 2022, accounting for 4% of Nigeria's GDP (N84.7 billion in Q1 and N32.6 billion in Q2). It also generates approximately N8.5 billion in tax revenue annually and supports roughly 200,000 direct and indirect jobs in Nigeria, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022). According to a 2012 Oxford Economics analysis, an additional 130,000 people are employed as a result of aviation's catalytic impacts on tourism. By contrast, the industry contributed N80.3 billion in the first half of 2021 (N53.8 billion in Q1 and N26.5 billion in Q2), it follows that increase in productivity was recorded despite a myriad of crises that have beset the sector since the turn of 2022. There are some peculiar issues surrounding the aviation sector, these challenges include predominance of ageing aircrafts, lack of access to foreign currency to procure airplane parts, foreign airlines not being able to repatriate their funds from air ticket sales, coupled with the rise in the cost of aviation fuel which has also led to a rise in ticket prices with the NBS noting that the average fare paid by air passengers for specified routes increased by 60 per cent in 2022 from an average of 37,000 to N70, 000. According to Omoleke (2019), the bottom line of the problems facing aviation industry in Africa in general

and Nigeria in particular lies in the variance between policy formulation and the government's political will to implement such policy and the concomitant effect of this, is inadequate employee commitment of aviation agencies in Nigeria such as: Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria - FAAN, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority –NCAA etc.

One cannot overstate the value of staff dedication. According to Muoghalu and Tantua (2021) employee engagement raises job satisfaction and improves job performance, increases return to shareholders, boosts sales, and lowers operating costs. Because dedicated employees are devoted to the company, share its values, connect with its objectives, and have few reasons to desire to leave, Uju and Tantua (2021) contended that employee commitment lowers employee turnover. Akintayo (2010) proposed that the level of devotion that employee feels towards their organization is what they mean when they talk about employee commitment. From Ongori's (2007) perspective, employee commitment is described as an effective response to the whole organization and the degree of attachment or loyalty employee feels towards the organization.

In a similar vein, Iqra, Yahya, and Tahira (2013) listed a few signs of an employee's commitment, including: eagerness to work with less supervision, willingness to take on responsibility, expression of job satisfaction, lack of interest in other job offers, and refusal to accept needless excuses. In addition, Uju and Tantua (2021) list the following as antecedents of employee commitment: work-life balance, job satisfaction, promotion, organizational justice and trust, met expectations, induction and training, relationships with managers, relationships with colleagues, group membership, and demographic variables. In the meantime, there are many different ways to gauge employee commitment in the literature. Affective and continuation commitments are two ways that some researchers have measured it. In particular, emotional attachment-related affective commitment is normally linked to a favorable working environment and relationships with the other employees (Chung-Chen & Chih-Jen, 2013). While, inadequate continuance commitment is reflected by the fact that the employees of aviation agencies seem not be morally obligated to remain with their organizations.

This study adopts two of the tri-dimensional model of employee commitment which was conceptualised by Meyere and Herscovitch (2005). The scholar measured employee commitment by: affective and continuance and normative commitments, which affective and continuance commitment is used as a dimension in the study. Specifically, affective commitment which relates to emotional attachment, is normally linked to a favorable working environment and relationships with the other employees (Chung-Chen & Chih-Jen, 2013).

The goal of this study is to determine how onboarding methods, which are the procedures used to transition new hires from outside the organization to inside it, can guarantee employee loyalty (Bauer & Erdogan, 2011). The academics also pointed out that onboarding is the process of assisting newcomers in becoming successful and valuable members of a team. Moreover, academics have embraced multiple aspects of onboarding procedures. For example, Bauer (2010) classified onboarding procedures according to connection, culture, compliance, and clarity. Likewise, Brenner (2020) proposed value-based, social, and functional integration as components of onboarding procedures. Nonetheless, according to Connell (2019; Karhunen, 2017; Klein, Polin & Sutton, 2015), this study accepts communication and orientation as aspects of onboarding methods. First, it has been demonstrated that employees devote a sizeable portion of their daily tasks to gathering and disseminating information regarding critical issues, such as task instruction, role expectations, performance feedback, and policy. Communication is essential to an

establishment's ability to function (Akpinar *et al*, 2013). Since communication is essentially an asynchronous exchange of information, internal communication is the exchange of information between managers and employees (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). Secondly, orientation serves as a means of acquainting a recent hire with his or her new work environment, colleagues, and the policies, procedures, legal framework, and rules of the organization. Through this orientation process, new hires are better able to perform by being more familiar with their roles, responsibilities, and other aspects of the company (Samanya, 2017).

In view of the foregoing, this study seeks to explore the literature of employee commitment domain by interrogating the nexus between onboarding practices and employee commitment of aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria, using organizational culture as a moderating variable.

Statement of the Problem

The poor staff dedication of Nigerian aviation organizations is the study's main issue. According to Meire and Herscovitch (2005), employees of aviation agencies in Nigeria exhibit poor levels of affective and continuous commitment, which is indicative of inadequate employee commitment. As a result of their low levels of affective and continuous commitment, these workers lack a sense of emotional attachment to their companies, which deters them from giving their all at work and from being sufficiently encouraged to be innovative and explore different approaches to meeting goals. Furthermore, the aviation industry faces a number of difficulties that contribute to low employee engagement in the field, including the prevalence of aging aircraft, limited access to foreign exchange for the purchase of airplane parts, foreign airlines not being able to repatriate their funds from air ticket sales, coupled with the rise in the cost of aviation fuel which has also led to a rise in ticket prices. Likewise, Omoleke (2012) argued that the bottom line of the problems facing aviation industry in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular lies in the variance between policy formulation and the government's political will to implement such policy. Thus, some gaps exist at the contextual and establishment of this study. Therefore, this study seeks to close the lacuna in literature by critically examining onboarding practices and how it relates to employee commitment of aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to determine the relationship between the onboarding methods of aviation organizations in Rivers State, as evaluated by communication, and employee commitment, as measured by affective commitment and continuation commitment. Thus, in the context of aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria, the particular goals are as follows:

    i.   Evaluate the relationship between communication and affective commitment.
    ii.   Ascertain the relationship between communication and continuance commitment.

Research question

In order to achieve the above stated intents, the study is embarked upon to answer the following research questions within the context of aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria.

i.   What is the relationship between communication and affective commitment?

ii.   How does communication relates to continuance commitment?

Research hypotheses

In the context of aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria, the following null hypotheses are hereby developed to offer preliminary replies based on the aforementioned study topics.

H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between communication and affective commitment.

H_{o2}: Communication does not significantly relates to continuance commitment.

Purpose of the study

The academic community, management professionals, aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria, and other government agencies will all profit from the study's findings. Notably, the study will improve academics' understanding of the dynamic relationship between employee commitment and onboarding techniques. Second, the results of this study will be used to inform stakeholders, including the government and managers of aviation agencies, about the best ways to guarantee employee commitment in these government organizations. Moreover, this research will expand the comprehension of management practitioners regarding onboarding procedures and improve their capacity to make knowledgeable choices regarding the maintenance of productive employee commitment.

Review of Related Literature
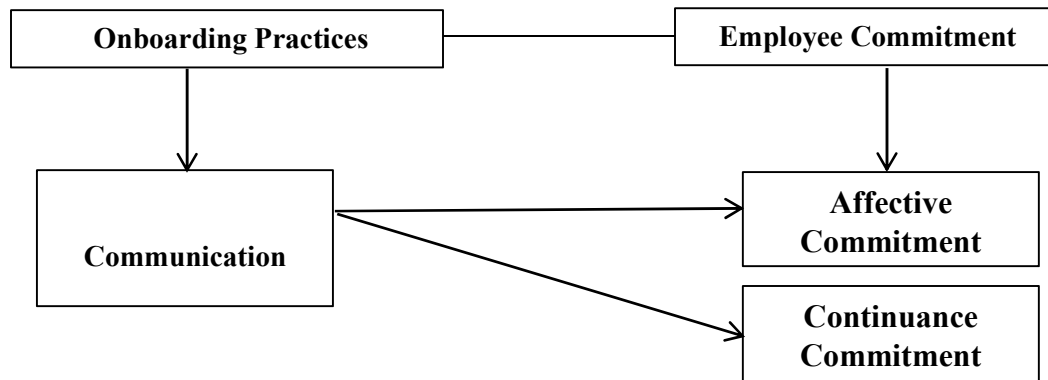**Concept of Onboarding Practices**

According to Klein *et al*. (2015), onboarding refers to the official and informal procedures, policies, and programs that an organization or its representatives implement or carry out in order to assist with the adjustment of newcomers (p. 268). As a result, it is primarily influenced by the organization and is shaped by an individual's initial involvement with it. This occurs when a person crosses an organizational boundary by changing their position or function upon entering the company as an external or internal (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006). These days, onboarding incorporates educational elements with support activities, surpassing the conventional compliance-focused orientation program (Jeske & Olson, 2021). Organizations that view the onboarding process as an expense rather than a long-term investment sometimes overlook the role of onboarding new employees. The motivation, experience, and skills of newcomers, as well as their social network, are directly impacted by the practices employed during the onboarding process. Furthermore, insufficient onboarding can lead to a state of ambiguity, confusion, and dissatisfaction for staff members, which can hinder their ability to execute to the best of their abilities and completely develop their skill set (Caldwell & Peters, 2018). Regulations from firms that specify the official training and initial work experiences of their new hires can improve onboarding (Saks *et al*., 2007).

However, it is crucial on the first day for the new employee to be well-prepared because that is the first impression they have of their new workplace and co-workers. Through orientation, new employees are able to gain clarity on their roles, responsibilities, supervisions, work processes, hierarchy involved and other job related matters that help to build their minds and gives them focus on the job, which also leads to efficiency and effectiveness on the job

Furthermore, a number of elements, including corporate social responsibility and organizational justice (Ponnu & Chuah, 2010) have been noted in the literature as predictors of employee commitment (Ali *et al*, 2010). Zuwena (2014) and Let (2008) have identified grievance handling

and employee relationships as additional factors of employee commitment. A theoretical review, on the other hand, is a compilation of connected concepts drawn from theory. Based on the theory, it makes an effort to explain why things are the way they are. According to Swanson (2013), a theory is a collection of assertions or tenets developed to explain a set of facts or phenomenon, particularly one that has undergone extensive testing or gained widespread acceptance and is useful for forecasting the occurrence of natural events.

Conceptual Framework

Source: *Dimension and concept of onboarding practices were adopted from various scholars (Connell, 2019; Karhunen, 2017; Klein, Polin & Sutton, 2015) while the measures of employee commitment was adopted from Meyere & Herscovitch (2001).*

Relational View Theory
Many different subject areas are heavily referenced in the theory of onboarding procedures and employee commitment, and other ideas have been widely applied to these concepts. The study is supported by the Relational View Theory. The RBV serves as the primary foundation for Dyer and Singh's (1998) Relational View Theory. The scholar claims that RVT has helped identify both the internal and external strategic resources, something RBT fails to do, because the exchange in networks of inter-organizational relations would result in a greater value that explains a superior business performance. This study recognizes that attaining differentiated performance requires a firm's heterogeneity. Likewise, RVT proposes that the resources that are found at the interface of the relationship between firms and that are created and shared can also have these effects.

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role that is sometimes overlooked. The techniques employed throughout the onboarding process have a direct effect on the newcomers' social network, motivation, experience, and talents. "The ideal first day for a new hire would include paperwork having already been completed, their workspace being set up and stocked with supplies, coworkers welcoming their new team member, and a "buddy" being assigned to help the new employee navigate the new environment," according to Snell (2006) (p. 33). It is crucial on the first day for the new employee to be well-prepared because that is the first impression they have of their new workplace and co-workers.

Dimensions of Onboarding Practices
Communication
Without communication among its members, no organization can function. The process of transmitting information from one person, group, or organization (the sender) to another person, group, or organization (the receiver) is known as communication (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). A message can be spoken or nonverbally communicated to the recipient through communication. But effective communication also requires that the recipient understands what is being said. It is indisputable that any thought, no matter how brilliant, is meaningless without successful transmission and accurate comprehension (Robbins *et al*., 2010). When both parties fully comprehend what is being said, communication is perfect. But in actuality, there are a lot of factors in a company that prevent flawless communication. Some of the reasons will be presented in the current chapter later. Previous studies have demonstrated that there is a relationship between the quality of communication and total performance in organizations (Tubbs & Moss, 2008). Lack of effective communication is one of the most inhibiting factors of successful organizational performance (Robbins *et al*., 2010). For instance, communication helps members in the organization to discuss relevant organizational issues and generate and share information for creating ideas and making decisions, so that both the organizational and individual goals are achieved. According to Conrad (1985), the functions of communication can be summarized as: the command function, the relational function, and the ambiguity-management function. The communication in an organization flows vertically and horizontally. Further, in the vertical direction, communication may be directed downward and upward. Communication is key in the functioning of an establishment and it has been proven that employees dedicate a significant part of their daily chores to gather and distribute information concerning vital issues that include task instruction, role expectation, performance feedback and policy (Akpinar *et al*., 2013). Essentially, communication involves an asynchronous exchange of information and hence internal communication is that which occurs among employees and managers (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014). Communication is a formidable reagent for creating and supporting trust, the emotional state that is communal among highly committed employees and superiors.

Concept of Employee Commitment
The term "employee commitment" has been defined in a number of ways. The definition of employee commitment by Meyer, Stanley, and Parfyonova (2012), which takes a multidimensional approach and views it from affective, continuation, and normative viewpoints, is arguably the most thorough of those definitions. Employee commitment, then, can be understood from a number of definitions, including the one given above, as a bond between the employee and the organization that makes the person desire to stay with the organization and support it in achieving its goals. Several authors have done a good job of capturing the significance of employee dedication. According to Yilmaz and Çokluk-Bökeoğlu (2008), workers who have strong feelings of

commitment to the organization have a beneficial impact on its performance because they are less likely to engage in negative behavior and provide higher-quality services. Furthermore, a dedicated worker is a more likable and effective person with greater degrees of responsibility, loyalty, and happiness. They continue to note that organizational commitment fosters individual achievement of numerous voluntary acts required for the smooth operation of the organization and high standards system, in addition to increasing success in a particular function. According to Visagie and Steyn (2011), employee acceptance of organizational change is linked to their dedication. Park, Christie and Sype (2014) advance that committed employees may be more likely to engage in organisational citizenship behaviours, that is, extra-role behaviours, such as creativity or innovation which are often what keep organisations competitive.

Furthermore, employee commitment is multi-dimensional in nature, encompassing workers' loyalty, their willingness to exert more effort on behalf of the organization, adherence to organizational values, and desire to remain in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Iqra and Yahya (2013) outlined some of the indicators of a committed employee which include but not limited to lack of interest in job offers elsewhere, willingness to accept responsibility, expression of job satisfaction, willingness and ability to make useful contributions, eagerness to work with less supervision and not given to unnecessary excuses.

Measures of Employee Commitment
Affective Commitment
According to McShane and Von Glinow (2015), affective commitment is the term used to describe an employee's emotional connection, involvement, and identity with the company they work for. Researchers have suggested that affective commitment is a psychological connection in which a worker or employee decides to be devoted to and accountable for the company (Klein, Molloy, & Brinsfield, 2012; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 2013; Solinger, Van Olffen, & Roe, 2008). Edeh and Mlanga (2019) claim that affective commitment reduces the complexity of employees' feelings of attachment to the company they work for. This might happen because of the way their managers and supervisors treat them, because compensation packages are paid on time, or because the company has a good reputation in the community or takes positive social responsibility in the community. Affective commitment also describes a worker's sentimental connection to, identification with, and participation in the company (Ugu & Tantua, 2021). Furthermore, when an employee feels accepted by the social environment of the organization and the organization's interests and beliefs align with their own, this is known as affective commitment. Accordingly, affective commitment is the most significant type of commitment according to Allen and Meyer (1991), since it has the greatest potential advantages for organizations. It has also been seen in the view of Bal, *et al*, (2014) that affective commitment reflects an emotional attachment and involvement in the organization.

Continuance Commitment
An understanding of the expenses involved in leaving the organization is referred to as continuity commitment. Losing desirable benefits, giving up seniority-based advantages, uprooting family members, upsetting personal relationships, and squandering time and effort on nontransferable skill acquisition are some of the possible costs associated with leaving an organization. In addition to the expenses of quitting the company, a dearth of other work options will lead to a decline in

continuing commitment. Workers who owe their employment to the company primarily to their continuous commitment do so out of necessity (Ugu & Tantua, 2021). To put it simply, continuation commitment is defined as a commitment based on the costs an employee will incur upon leaving the company (since leaving will be expensive). The potential antecedents of continuance include age, tenure, career satisfaction and intent to leave. Age and tenure can be seen as adopted predictors of continuance commitment, as a result of their roles as substitute measures of investment in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). In the same vein, continuance commitment is said to relate to such terms of employment as job contract, which may make leaving the current job very costly and troublesome (Mullins, 2001), and it is further developed as the result of accumulated investments, or side-bets that would be lost if the individual discontinued a course of action, and as a result of lack of alternative to the present course (Powell & Meyer, 2004).

Empirical Review
Alongside the study questions and proposed links is this empirical review. For example, Baade (2022) studied whether organizational practices are appropriate for a remote workforce and how the organizational onboarding process may be built for them. The aim is to ascertain onboarding protocols that mitigate uncertainty and cater to the requirements of NG professionals who operate remotely. Human resource managers can use the developed conceptual framework to provide improved assistance to recent immigrants. Semi-structured interviews were used in an exploratory qualitative study that was informed by theories of human resource management and relevant literature. Interviews were conducted with an NG professional who underwent a remote onboarding procedure and an HR manager or supervisor who oversaw the process from each of the six firms that made up the sample. Through a thematic analysis, it was found that different actors of an organization need to collaborate to provide an onboarding that supports the integration of remote newcomers especially with communication.

Methodology
The research methodology used in this study is deductive, and it employs a cross-sectional survey research design with an explanatory and descriptive focus. The cross-sectional survey approach was chosen for the study because it would only be conducted once, it will not include any researcher intervention or control, and it enables researchers to examine multiple features at once. All aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria are included in the study's population. These agencies include the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB), the Nigerian Aviation Handling Company (NAHCO, 35), and the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet, 26). However, the middle-to upper-level managers of aviation agencies in Nigeria's Rivers State are the only people who can access this demographic. There are 128 middle-to top-level managers of aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria, according to information retrieved from research collaborators at the Federal Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace's personnel unit. These managers hold positions like tower manager, air traffic controller, HR manager, administrative manager, air traffic operational manager, and airspace manager. The respondents were asked to rate the degree to which one variable affected or was influenced by the other in terms of employee commitment and onboarding procedures using an itemized 5-point Likert scale. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the Krejcie and Morgan's formular was used in analysing the data collected from respondents for the purpose of this study. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

The statistical tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance. This was made possible with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0.

Results and Discussions

The study's identified onboarding practice dimension, communication, was connected with measures of employee commitment, or both affective and continuation commitment. The aim of the study was to determine whether there is a substantial and positive correlation between employee commitment and certain aspects of onboarding processes, as well as the nature of this correlation. The data gathered for this investigation was analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistics. To perform the computations, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized.

TABLE 4.1 Correlation Matrix for Communication and Affective commitment for Hypothesis 1 ($H_0 1$) and Communication and Continuance Commitment for Hypothesis 2 ($H_0 2$)

		Communication	Affective	Continuance
Communication	Pearson Correlation	1	.733***	.724***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.002
	N	128	128	128
Affective	Pearson Correlation	.733***	1	.888***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.000
	N	128	128	128
Continuance	Pearson Correlation	.724***	.888***	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.
	N	128	128	128

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

H_{01}: There is no positive and significant relationship between communication and affective commitment.

H_{02}: There is no strong and significant relationship between communication and continuance commitment.

The association between hypothesis one and two is displayed in table 4.1. With a P-value of.000 (P<0.001), the correlation for hypothesis one demonstrates a significant correlation at r =.733**. This suggests that, at a 95% confidence level, there is a substantial and positive link between the two variables. As a result, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho: 1) and accept the alternative, indicating that affective commitment and communication have a significant and positive association. With a P-value of.000 (P<0.001), the correlation for hypothesis two demonstrates a significant correlation at r =.724**. At a 95% level of confidence, this suggests a positive and substantial association between the two variables. We therefore reject the Null hypothesis (Ho: 2), and uphold the alternative hypothesis, thus, there is a strong and significant relationship between communication and continuance commitment.

Summary
The analysis's findings showed that there is a positive and significant correlation between communication and affective commitment as well as between communication and continuance commitment. The correlation coefficients, which were tested at a 95% confidence level, are

r=0.733 and r=0.724. For the firm to continue growing and being committed, managers of aviation agencies in Rivers State must thus keep enhancing workplace communication.

Conclusions

In order to promote affective and continuous commitment, communication is essential. Given the intricate relationship between these programs and employee commitment, investing in transparent, open, and two-way communication procedures can have a favorable impact on employees' emotional attachment to the company and their intention to stay due to perceived costs of leaving. A decline in continuous commitment may result from them, even while they have a good impact on affective commitment. This could be because of more prospects for job advancement or higher expectations. It is important for organizations to carefully create frameworks that meet the demands of the organization and the goals of its employees. Further investigation is required to comprehend the distinct categories of organizational endeavors and their subtle impacts on various facets of employee dedication. However, considering limitations like sample size and specific cultural dimensions measured, further research is needed to draw definitive conclusions.

Recommendation

In order to help me succeed in my new capacity, managers of aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria should prioritize communication by making sure staff members have access to the first information, resources, tools, and connections. This will greatly increase Affective Commitment. As a result, in order to strengthen continuity commitment, management of aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria, should employ communication more frequently. To achieve this and foster continuity commitment, it is vital to make sure that workers receive a list of the names and contact details of key figures in the organization. They should also be made aware of their entire remuneration package. However, the management of aviation agencies in Rivers State, Nigeria should also ensure that individual role in the organization's mission was explained during the orientation and training programme to ensure continuance commitment.

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