

Interpersonal Ties and Individual Citizenship Behaviour among Academics in Universities

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Abstract

Interpersonal citizenship behaviour has attracted scholarly attention but how expressive and instrumental networks influence helping, courtesy and sportsmanship behaviours remain neglected. Accordingly, the study examined the linkage between interpersonal ties and interpersonal citizenship behaviour among academics in universities in Bayelsa State. The study adopted an analytic descriptive strategy and a sample of 453 academic staff was selected from a population of 2,675 university lecturers using a stratified sampling procedure. Data were collected by applying a structured questionnaire through the administration of the measurement instrument on academic staff of universities. Data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling with Smart PLS. The findings indicated that there was a relationship between expressive ties and helping, courtesy and sportsmanship behaviour, and there was a relationship between instrumental ties and helping, courtesy and sportsmanship behaviour among academics in universities. Thus, the study recommended that universities should promote mentorship programmes among faculty members and informal networks to create social bonds. Universities should also encourage professional ties for academics to engage in academic conferences, interdisciplinary research collaborations and knowledge sharing. Besides, there should be a formal system for recognition of extra-role and discretionary behaviour of academics.

Keywords: Expressive Ties, Instrumental Ties, Interpersonal Citizenship Behaviour, Academics, Universities.

Introduction

Individual citizenship behaviour is a critical factor in workplace relationships among university academics. As institutions of higher learning are established to provide research, teaching and community services, academics assist one another beyond the job description stipulated in a contract of employment for the wellbeing of colleagues and employer organisations. Bowler and Bass (2006) state that interpersonal or individual citizenship behaviour means diverse forms of academic helping behaviour demonstrated toward junior and senior colleagues in performing tasks and duties outside officially designated assignments. Accordingly, academic members in a community engage in the exchange of ideas, knowledge and research collaboration to facilitate individual and collective scholarly production and performance of tasks in universities. As people come together in organisations, relationships are formed. Interpersonal ties are networks among academics

from different ethnic, educational and professional backgrounds in tertiary institutions. Interpersonal ties are close affinity and liking emanating from social, transactional, task-related activities and interactions in the workplace and organisations (Huang et al., 2016). Following Blau's (1964) social exchange theory, faculty interactions build trust, loyalty and mutual relationships. Accordingly, academics tend to engage in interdependent helping behaviour as a form of reciprocity. University faculty members demonstrate courtesy and sportsmanship. Lecturers stand in for others to help in examination invigilation, lectures and engage in research collaboration in the academia.

From available literature, there is a scholarly attention on interpersonal ties and organisation citizenship behaviour as predictors and antecedents in organisation studies. . Dahlander and McFarland (2013) asserted that intraorganisational ties are beneficial to individuals and entities, drawing on the longitudinal study of intraorganisational task relationships while Umphress et al. (2003) from their empirical evidence, underpin that social ties like expressive and instrumental networks influence organisational justice perception of co-workers in corporate entities. In addition, Wang et al (2022) from the assessment of expressive and instrumental ties through the mechanism of supervisor-subordinate relationships, upholds that employee job performance was enhanced as a result of expressive and instrumental networks of supervisors and subordinates with a mediating role of organisational trust.

Scholars have also argued that empathy with personality traits stimulates interpersonal citizenship behaviour towards staff members (Taylor et al., 2010). Interpersonal citizenship behaviour consists of helping, courtesy and sportsmanship behaviours directed to organisational members (Ndoja & Maleker, 2020). While the critical nature of both interpersonal ties and organisational citizenship behaviour in workplace settings have been acknowledged among scholars in disparate forms (Huang et al, 2016; Levin & Barnard 2013; Wang et al, 2022; Lee et al, 2025, Hetrick & Jacobson, 2025), there is still a lack of scholarly contributions to how interpersonal ties affect individual citizenship behaviour among academics in the Nigerian university system.

As a result of the scholarly void, the study aims to investigate the nexus between expressive and instrumental ties as forms of interpersonal relationships and helping, courtesy, and sportsmanship as dimensions of interpersonal citizenship behaviour among academics in Nigerian universities. The rest of the paper considers theory and hypotheses development, methodological design, data analysis and results, discussion of findings, limitations and suggestions for further studies.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Drawing on Blau's theoretical lens of social exchange (1964), academics engage in mutual relationships to gain mutual benefits and reciprocity. Accordingly, academics deliberately and professionally initiate instrumental interactions to their advantage and establish

socially expressive interactions to stimulate discretionary behaviour towards one another (Scott et al; 2018).

Social ties are important to individuals and organisations, and these interpersonal relations play a key role for employees in thriving at work. Social ties are thus referred to as expressive ties which “provide friendship and social support” (Manev & Stevenson, 2001; Zhu et al, 2024). As academics develop interpersonal expressive ties, they tend to foster unity and helping behaviour to their colleagues outside the formal requirements of job description. Expressive interactions arise from social and economic exchanges within and outside an organisation, leading to dyad relationship, uniplex and multiplex ties (Ferriani et al, 2012).

Courtesy behaviour is an element of extra-role behaviour expressed by academics, which brings value to an entity (Eyupoglu, 2016). Courtesy behaviour, as an extra-role behaviour, is about being respectful and providing useful information to colleagues. Academics tend to be courteous to fellow lecturers in whom they have expressive ties. With expressive ties established among faculty members, lecturers willingly maintain a high level of sportsmanship, which has to do with the avoidance of negative behaviour and disrespectful attitudes to colleagues, making personal sacrifices and do not feel offended when their expectations and ideas are not considered (Altunta, et al, 2021; Podsakoff et al, 2000).

Lecturers have several aims while performing official assignments. Accordingly, faculty members initiate deliberate ties to offer helping behaviour to one another to realise the goals of teaching, research and community service. Building instrumental relations is a professional and formal task interaction formed in the academic community (Casciaro, 2014). The formation of instrumental ties is deliberately initiated with a predetermined purpose or goal. With instrumental ties, faculty members extend extra-role behaviour to colleagues to attain professional and task-related goals. Further, close affinities are established to extend helping behaviour, support, exchange of ideas, and share knowledge and academic resources (Casciaro, 2014, Rafique et al.). Gómez-Solórzano (2019) asserted that instrumental relationships create room for knowledge exchange and innovativeness of individual employees while generating a set of expectations from colleagues. Accordingly, interpersonal citizenship behaviour as discretionary and extra-role behaviour is exhibited in the form of helping, courtesy and sportsmanship aside from the official responsibility in the workplace context. In view of the literature, the following hypotheses are presented:

Ho₁: There is a positive Significant Relationship between Expressive Ties and Interpersonal Helping Behaviour

Ho₂: There is a positive Significant Relationship between Expressive Ties and Interpersonal Courtesy Behaviour

Ho₃: There is a positive Significant Relationship between Expressive Ties and Interpersonal Sportsmanship Behaviour

Ho₄: There is a positive Significant Relationship between Instrumental Ties and Interpersonal Helping Behaviour

***Ho₅:** There is a positive significant Relationship between Instrumental Ties and Interpersonal Courtesy Behaviour*

***Ho₆:** There is a positive significant Relationship between Instrumental Ties and Interpersonal Sportsmanship Behaviour*

Methodology

The study was executed in universities in Bayelsa State and the focus was to examine the connection between interpersonal ties and interpersonal citizenship behaviour in the academia. The study adopted analytic descriptive survey design, and with a population of 2,675 academic staff of two state owned universities (Establishment Units of the Universities, [EUU], 2025), a sample of 453 lecturers was selected for the study through stratified sampling procedure from University of Africa Toru-Orua and Bayelsa Medical University Yenagoa. The instrument for data was a structured questionnaire designed on a 5-point scale of strongly agree and strongly disagree. The instrument for data collection was self-designed based on the scholarly literature.

The dependent variable was interpersonal citizenship behaviour with specific components of helping, courtesy and sportsmanship behaviour while the independent variable was interpersonal relationship with specific focus of expressive and instrumental ties. The data was collected through the administration of questionnaire to academics in the two universities.

Data Analysis

The first process of data analysis focuses on the measurement model through the application of structural equation modelling with Smart partial least regression (PLS).

Measurement Model

Factor loadings or indicators are the determinants of the reliability and validity of the measurement model. Indicators with factor loadings below the threshold of 0.70 do not contribute adequately to the latent construct and, thus, should be eliminated (Hair et al., 2019). Figure1: displays the measurement model of interpersonal ties and interpersonal citizenship behaviour of academic staff of universities. Based on this benchmark, several indicators were removed to improve the measurement model. As displayed in the model, Expressive Ties (ET) as a latent construct with ET₄, ET₅ and ET₆ were eliminated, while Instrumental Ties (IT) IT₅ was below the benchmark and was discarded. Further, for helping behaviour HB₁ and HB₂ were removed, Courtesy Behaviour, CB₁, CB₂ and CB₃ were excluded as the factor loadings were less than the minimum benchmark. More so, Sportsmanship Behaviour with indicators of SB₁ and SB₂ were deleted to improve the construct validity of the constructs. The removing of items of construct aligned with recommendations to prior scholars (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, in table 1, the internal consistency of the measurement model was considered by examining the

Cronbach alpha and Composite reliability values are displayed ranging from 0.74 to 0.90 which are above the minimum threshold of 0.70 as recommended (Hair et al, 2019). Accordingly, the measurement model is dependable and reliable.

In view of discriminant validity, Fornell-Larcker criterion was considered while the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) compared with the latent construct value of the different constructs. The condition for discriminant validity was satisfied as put forward by previous scholars that when the latent variable is differentiated from other constructs in same measurement model, that the square root of the AVE values compared with the correlation coefficients of the other latent constructs (Fornell & Larcker 1981).

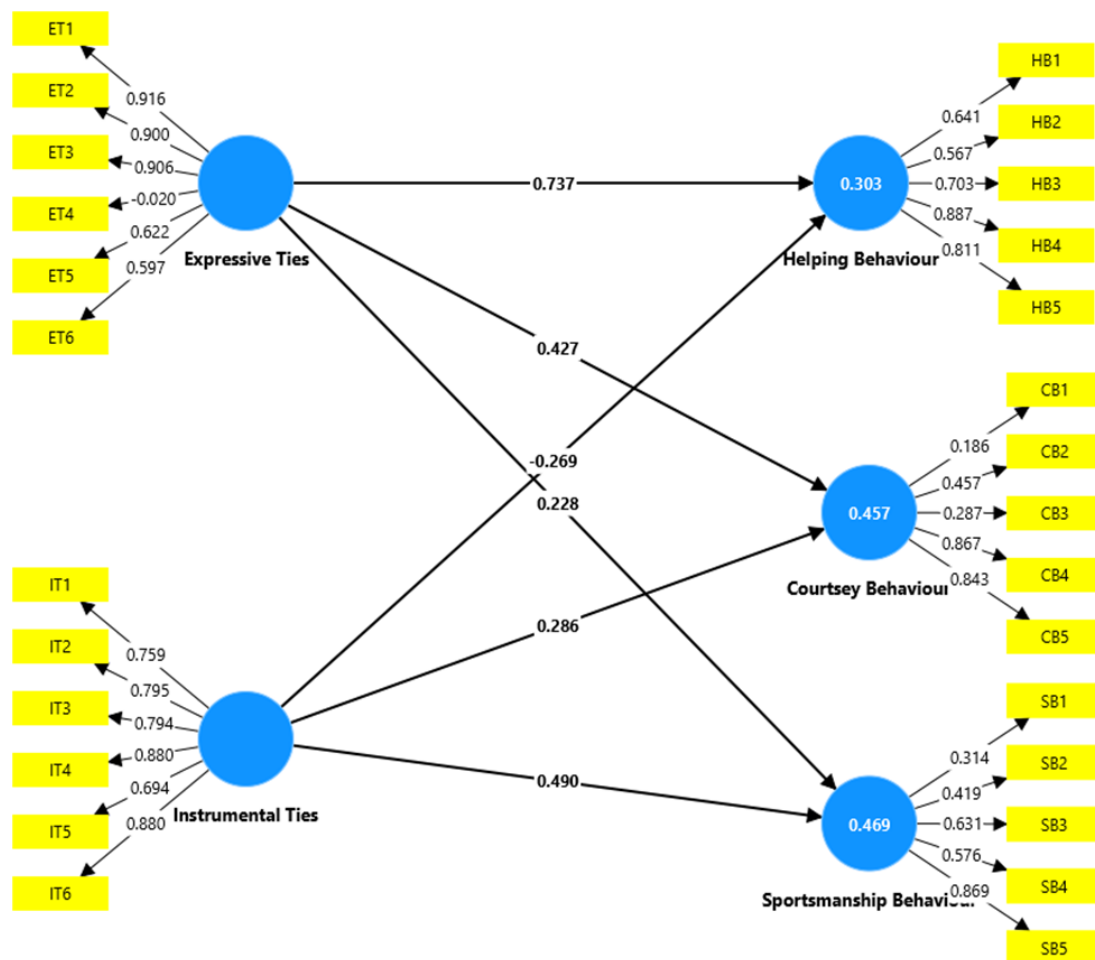


Figure 1: Measurement Model of Interpersonal ties and Individual Citizenship Behaviour

Table 1: Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Courtesy Behaviour	0.754	0.773	0.851	0.741
Expressive Ties	0.907	0.916	0.941	0.842
Helping Behaviour	0.740	0.803	0.846	0.648
Instrumental Ties	0.887	0.891	0.917	0.690
Sportsmanship Behaviour	0.741	0.758	0.802	0.673

Source: Smart PLS output, 2025

Table 2: Fornell-Larcker Criterion for Discriminant Validity of The Constructs

	Courtesy Behaviour	Expressive Ties	Helping Behaviour	Instrumental Ties	Sportsmanship Behaviour
Courtesy Behaviour	0.861				
Expressive Ties	0.709	0.918			
Helping Behaviour	0.402	0.534	0.805		
Instrumental Ties	0.667	0.765	0.287	0.831	
Sportsmanship Behaviour	0.681	0.600	0.511	0.693	0.820

Source: Smart PLS output, 2025

Structural Model

In the case of the structural model, results in Figure 2 and Table 2, demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between expressive ties and courtesy behaviour ($\beta = 0.374$, $t = 9.458$, $p < 0.05$), there is a positive relationship between expressive ties and helping behaviour ($\beta = 0.804$, $t = 16.820$, $p < 0.05$) there is a positive significant relationship between expressive ties and sportsmanship behaviour ; there is a positive significant relationship between instrumental ties and courtesy behaviour ($\beta = 0.368$, $t = 7.199$, $p < 0.05$); instrumental ties and helping behaviour ($\beta = 0.327$, $t = 7.516$, $p < 0.05$); instrumental ties and sportsmanship behaviour ($\beta = 0.535$, $t = 9.635$, $p < 0.05$).

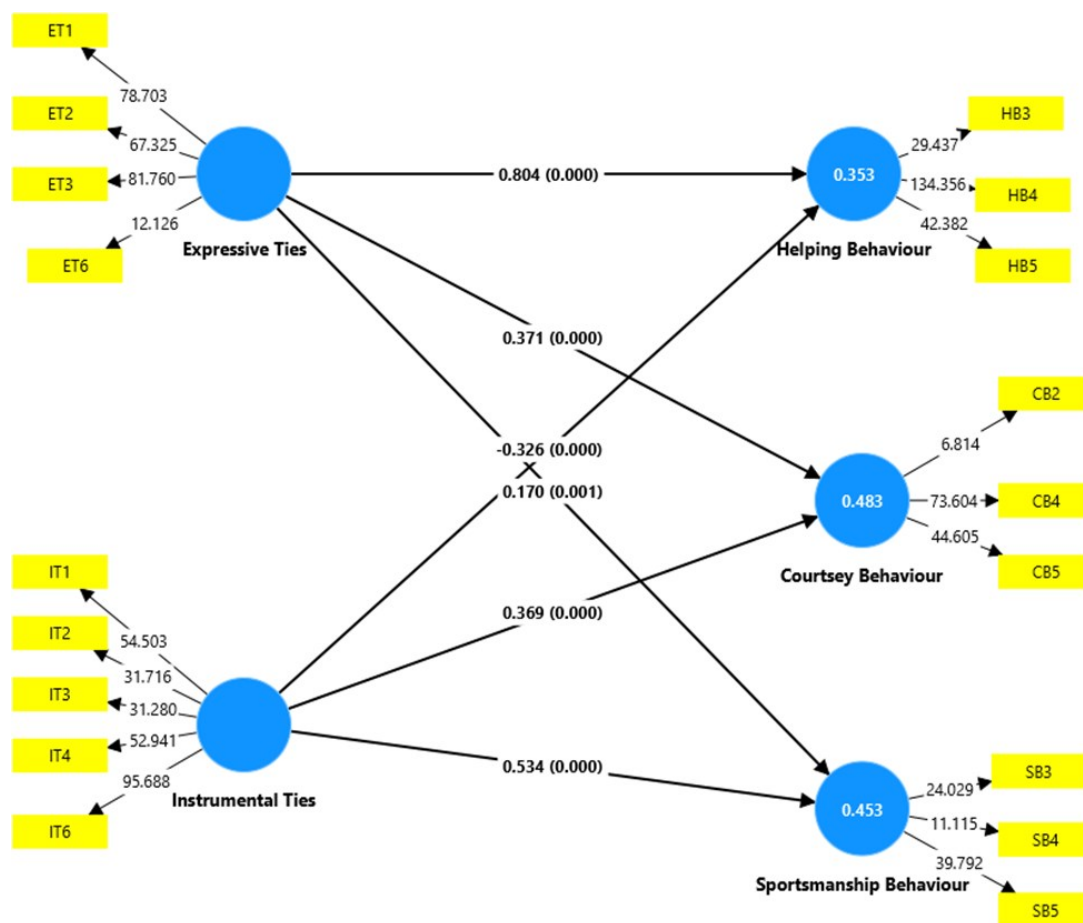


Figure 2: Structural Model Interpersonal ties and Interpersonal Citizenship Behaviour

Table 3: Structural Model of Interpersonal Ties and Interpersonal Citizenship Behaviour among Academics in Universities

	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T-statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Remarks
Expressive Ties -> Courtesy Behaviour	0.374	0.039	9.458	0.000	S
Expressive Ties -> Helping Behaviour	0.804	0.048	16.820	0.000	S
Expressive Ties -> Sportsmanship Behaviour	0.173	0.057	2.970	0.001	S
Instrumental Ties -> Courtesy Behaviour	0.368	0.051	7.199	0.000	S
Instrumental Ties -> Helping Behaviour	-0.327	0.043	7.516	0.000	S
Instrumental Ties -> Sportsmanship Behaviour	0.535	0.055	9.635	0.000	S

Source: Smart PLS output, 2025; S = Significant

Discussion of Results

The paper evaluated the linkage between interpersonal ties and interpersonal citizenship behaviour of universities in Bayelsa state. The finding from the study indicated a positive relationship between expressive ties and courtesy behaviours of academics in universities. The finding implies that as academics form expressive ties, there is a likelihood of a lecturer extending courtesy behaviour to colleagues. In a partly similar empirical evidence, the study affirms that there was a positive relationship between interpersonal trust and organisational citizenship behaviour. The study finding partly concurs with the finding of the current study. Trust is built based on relationships established over the years (Singh & Srivastava, 2009)

In terms of the nexus between expressive ties and helping behaviour, there was a positive relationship between expressive ties and helping behaviour ($\beta = 0.804$, $t = 16.82$, $p < 0.05$) and the finding was consistent with prior empirical evidence that supervisor-subordinate expressive ties influence the employees job performance through organizational trust (Wang et.al, 2022). For expressive ties and sportsmanship behaviour, there was a positive and significant relationship between expressive ties and sportsmanship behaviour, the finding is underpinned partly by earlier research findings that expressive ties influence performance of employees and further, the finding aligns with the stance of Chiaburn and Harrison (2008) that expressive ties or task relations promote sportsmanship behaviour and attitude.

In assessing instrumental ties and helping behaviour, the result demonstrated a positive relationship between instrumental ties and helping behaviour. The finding underpinned the earlier works of Wang et al (2022) that tasks related ties, instrumental ties of subordinate and supervisor fostered employees' job performance. This presupposes that instrumental ties stimulated helping behaviour. To buttress the current finding of the study, Settoon and Mossholder(2002) states that professional and instrumental ties promoted citizenship behaviour in organization.

The finding further indicated that instrumental ties and sportsmanship behavior had a significant and positive relationship among academic staff of universities. The finding is consistent with the scholarly evidence of Lin (2006) who stated that helping behavior of academics is based on both instrumental and expressive ties.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that for universities to realize the objectives for which they were established in the twenty first century, universities need to create the ecosystem for expressive and instrumental networks to be formed among academics to foster every form of organisational citizenship behaviour in universities.

The findings indicated that there was a positive relationship between expressive ties and helping, courtesy and sportsmanship behaviour. It was recommended that universities should promote mentorship programmes among faculty members and informal networks

to create social bonds. This no doubt would result in strong interpersonal expressive ties and promotion of interpersonal citizenship behaviour outside the formal job description of research, teaching, community service and related administrative duties.

Instrumental ties had a positive and significant relationship with helping, courtesy and sportsmanship behaviour among university academics. Accordingly, universities should encourage professional ties for academics to engage in academic conferences, interdisciplinary research collaborations and knowledge sharing. Besides, there should be a formal system for recognition of extra-role and discretionary behaviour of academics. This no doubt brings scholarly productivity and efficient service delivery.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

The study made significant contributions to management literature but not without constraints. The design of the study as an analytic descriptive survey in nature and did not collect in waves and therefore lacks causation. Accordingly, future studies can apply longitudinal design to have a robust finding. Aside this, further studies can examine moderating factors like ethnic culture in the linkage between interpersonal network and individual citizenship behaviour.

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