

DIMENSIONS OF POLITICS, POLICIES AND THOUGHTS IN EDUCATION

In Honour of
Professor Modupe Adeola Adelabu

Edited By:

Fashiku, C. O., Yusuf, M. A.

Subair, S. O., Ajadi, O. T., Adepoju, T. L.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

DETERMINANTS OF LECTURERS' COMMITMENT IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Introduction

Nigeria appreciates the key role that education can and should play in moving the country towards the achievement of its social and economic goals. The broad national development objectives on which the educational objectives are premised derive from the following national goals: a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a united strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Thus, Nigeria operates a 9-3-4 system of education, with nine years of basic education, three years of secondary education and four years of tertiary education. The goals of Nigerian tertiary education include to: contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower; develop and inculcate proper values for the individual and society; develop the intellectual capacity of individual to understand and appreciate their local and external environment; acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

To achieve these goals the lecturers are the main agent. Lecturers utilise the other available resources (financial, physical and material) towards achieving the objectives of the institutions. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014), no institution can be more productive than the quality of its workforce. Thus lecturers have the mandates of knowledge generation (or research function); knowledge transmission (or teaching function); knowledge application (or community services). Therefore, teachers' role as a facilitator and custodian of knowledge is crucial to nation building as he engages in teaching and training of the human resources of any given society and can be regarded as the one that trains the manpower for the development of any nation. In support of this notion, Tetty (2006) observed that fast globalization process and the increasing competition for both students and lecturers intensified brain drain from developing to developed countries. Therefore, a high level of lecturers' commitment is a crucial factor for tertiary institution to stay competitive in international context and to ensure high quality of services.

Lecturers' commitment is the glue keeping lecturers in the tertiary institutions. The stronger and deeper it is, the longer lecturers stay in the same institution and are more motivated to put more effort into their work (Cohen, 2007). In general, lecturers' commitment is defined as a force determining lecturer's identification and involvement in the university organization (Uygun & Kilic, 2009). It is being measured and interpreted in a number of ways in the existing literature. Thus, this study examined the determinants of lecturers' commitment in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Concept of Lecturers' Commitment

In general, commitment is defined as the psychological attachment of workers to their workplaces (Brooks, 2006). Employee commitment is defined as employees' acceptance, involvement and dedication towards achieving the organizational goals. It is the willingness of employees to accept organizational values and goals; and to work towards achieving these; to be fully involved and participate in all the activities both work and non-work related of the organization and to dedicate

time and effort towards the betterment of the organization. It was further defined by Uygur and Kilic (2009) as a force determining lecturer's identification and involvement in an organization. Kaselytė and Malūkaitė (2013) define commitment by three main characteristics: strong belief and acceptance of the goals and values of one's organization; dedicated efforts towards benefit of the organization; and desire to stay as a member of the organization.

Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnysky (2002) gave three dimensional constructs of commitment which are affective, continuance and normative which is sometimes labeled calculative commitment. Affective commitment refers to the employees' emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization (based on positive feelings or emotions towards the organization). Employees with a strong affective commitment continue their organizational membership because they want to do so. Continuance commitment refers to commitment based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization. Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnysky further explained that continuance commitment refers to the continued membership in an organization because of two reasons: perceived cost of leaving the organization such as reduction in pay, pension benefits or facilities and second due to the lack of alternative job opportunities. Continuance commitment ensures that employees do not resort to exit in response to their dissatisfaction and ensure that organization members remain in their organization despite being dissatisfied or discontented. This may be because such employees are likely to resort to loyalty or neglect as the response to their dissatisfaction.

Normative commitment on the other hand refers to an employee's feeling of obligation to remain with the organization based on the employees having internalized the values and goals of the organization. Normative commitment means internalized pressure or feeling of obligation to continue employment due to work culture and other socially accepted norms (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnysky, 2002).

According to Kaselytė & Malūkaitė (2013), the first reason of being committed to an organization is a psychological feeling of being emotionally attached to, identified with, and involved in the organization (affective commitment). An employee with a high level of affective commitment feels a part of the organization and stays because he wants to. The second cause of organizational commitment is related to the feeling of the need to stay in the organization because the costs related to leaving current workplace (continuance commitment). Employee will stay in the organization if his perceived cost of leaving will be higher than potential benefits. The last reason for being committed to the organization is the feeling of being obliged to stay in the organization due to personal values and norms (normative commitment).

Determinants of Lecturers' Commitment in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Hundreds of studies have been conducted to determine the main factors of lecturers' commitment. However, the obtained results are hard to compare due to the fact that researchers use different dimensions and include different factors in their studies. Some of the determinants include:

Age: A study by Brown and Sargeant (2007) on Caribbean university's academics concluded that older lecturers were more motivated and had higher level of job satisfaction as well as lecturers' commitment compared to their younger colleagues. And so far, most of the research on academics' commitment and their age implies that there is a positive relation between their age and lecturers' commitment (Labatmediénė, Endriulaitienė & Gustaitienė, 2007). An older person is likely to have been use to certain areas and certain norms that suit his own and thus are likely to be committed. More so, since the retirement age is 70, the closer you are to the retirement age, the likelihood of your wanting to change your location. Thus, age is significantly related to lecturers' commitment.

Gender: According to Ndubueze (2013) men have higher levels of commitment when compared to women. This is in agreement with Labatmediené et al (2007) when talking about organizational commitment levels between men and women. It was further explained that women prioritise family roles as the way of self-fulfilment and thus, the job is left in the second place. In contrary, men identify themselves with their job and consider job as a way of self-fulfillment. Therefore, it is hypothesized that organizational commitment of men will be higher than that of women. In Nigeria, no matter your qualification or profession, people tend to look down on women that are not married or that do not have time for their children. Thus, female lecturers devote more time and are committed to taking care of their homes and this lessens their commitment compared to male lecturers.

Tenure: A positive organizational commitment-job tenure relation and negative relation with positional tenure were reported by previous research. Brown and Sargeant (2007) empirically proved the positive relation between job tenure and organizational commitment. It was revealed that employees in Caribbean Region University having the tenure over 11 years were more satisfied with their jobs and more committed to their organization compared to the employees having less than 10 years of tenure. Possible explanation of this positive relation could be a strong emotional connection an employee develops over the time he spends in an organization. The more years a lecturer stays in an institution, the more psychologically attached they become. There is also possibility of continuance commitment arising from the cost of changing the children school, wife work or business and even social relationships already created over the years in that institution. Thus, lecturers' commitment tends to be influenced by their years of service in a particular institution.

Level of Education: Labatmediené et al (2007) explain the inverse relation between the level of education and organizational commitment by the fact that the organization is unable to satisfy the expectations and the needs of employees with high levels of education and, thus, unable to create and develop an emotional connection. Therefore, it is harder to retain highly skilled employees and "brain drain" takes place (Gaiduk, Gaiduk & Fields, 2009).

Having a Second Job: As observed by Kipkebut (2010), engagement in additional income generating activities by academic has adverse influence on their loyalty and quality of work. It is a common case in Nigeria, where the level of remuneration is relatively low. This is because under such circumstances, the academics start to seek for ways to generate more income rather than dedicate themselves to a particular job and fulfill the duties in best possible way.

Job Autonomy: Job autonomy is defined as an ability of an employee to make administrative and job related decisions freely. Kazlauskaite, Buciunaite and Turasukas (2006) concluded that employees tend to show higher level of lecturers' commitment if they are given more decision-making rights. Job autonomy is especially important in academic context since providing lecturers with a freedom of choosing their own teaching methodology and grading criteria is an important factor determining their commitment because commitment cannot exist within institutions, where the focus is on extensive control and authority only.

Co-worker Support: Malik, Nawab, Naeem and Danish (2010) found that the more university employees value the nature of the relationship with their co-workers, the higher level of commitment for the organization they express. Kaselyte and Malukaite (2013) in their work found that strong feelings towards commitment are recalled by opportunities for social interaction in the organization. Therefore, the level of satisfaction with colleagues is measured by the level of value academics

attach to the social interaction at work with co-workers. The measure is expected to be positively related to commitment.

Supervisory Support: Satisfaction level with the supervision in the organization also influences the level of employee commitment. According Malik, Waheed & Malik (2010), supervisors are crucial for forming a working environment and providing adequate working conditions. In other words, they can be treated as main representatives of the organization level of support. A lecturer with a supportive boss tends to be emotionally stable and the level of commitment is likely to increase and vice versa.

Role Ambiguity, Role conflict and Role Overload: In the existing literature the three factors are regarded as role stressors, i.e. factors, creating stress in the workplace. Being distinct in their nature, they are still highly related to each other (Malik et al, 2010). Larson (2004) defined role conflict as a mismatch in job demands from different supervisors, when the order of one supervisor makes the order of another supervisor difficult or impossible to implement. Role ambiguity is a factor indicating the shortage of clarity in explanations of one's assignments and lack of clear expectations for one's performance. Finally, role overload is defined as a mismatch between the extent of work assigned to an employee and the time provided to fulfil those tasks. Malik et al (2010) empirically proved that role stressors are significantly and negatively related to lecturers' commitment both directly and through job satisfaction. The reason behind it is that role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload are proved to create stressful situations to the employees, which as a result decreases their job satisfaction and willingness to be attached to the organization, in which the stress is created. In most Nigerian tertiary institutions, lecturers battle with so many responsibilities within limited time, especially during marking of scripts or collation of results. This may go a long way in adversely influencing their commitment.

Promotional Opportunities: Lambert, Hogan and Jiang (2008) defined promotional opportunities as possible chances seen by an employee to grow within the organization. The authors further explained that employees expect to work in the organizations which provide plenty of promotional opportunities for more challenging and responsible positions. If there is a good environment of promotion policies within the organisation, employees tend to work hard to earn the promotion, increase the productivity of their work, as well as develop a strong emotional bond with their workplace (Gaiduk et al, 2009). Hence, there is a positive relation between organizational commitment and policies and practices concerning a promotion within the organization. The positive relation between promotional opportunities and lecturers' commitment has also been identified in higher education sector in particular. Malik et al (2010) have conducted the research among university teachers in public sector of Pakistan and have found out that academics that are highly satisfied with the promotional opportunities they are provided with are also more satisfied with their job in general as well as more committed to their workplace.

In Nigeria, one of the commonest slogans in tertiary institutions is "publish or perish", which indicates that for lecturers to prosper or be promoted, they need to have adequate number of quality publications. It will be demoralizing after spending time, energy and money to publish paper, an individual lecturer is denied promotion due to lack of vacancy or any other excuse. If this happens often to lecturers, their commitment is bound to be low. Thus, a promotion opportunity is a determinant of lecturers' commitment. There are cases where lecturers move from certain university to another because he was being denied promotion.

Training and Development Opportunities: The provision of training and development opportunities by the organization leads employees to think that the organization supports their career development and is committed to its employees in a long-term perspective. As a result, the employees themselves start to feel more psychologically bounded to their organization and thus, become more psychologically committed (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006). Gaiduk et al (2009) found a positive relationship between training opportunities and employees' affective organizational commitment among employees in Lithuania. By providing development opportunities, an organization strengthens emotional relations with the employees. Lecturers are required to be sponsored to conferences, workshops and for higher degree. Even the Federal Government made provision for such through various agencies like Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund). It is a pity that some universities may be more prudent in giving this opportunity to their lecturers than the other. There are situations where lecturers become less committed because their counterparts get better training opportunities in another institution.

Monetary Compensation: Comm and Mathaisel (2003) examined the relation between Australian academic workload and monetary compensation and concluded that more than half of the respondents were not satisfied with the level of compensation and felt the need to find a second job. This perceived underpayment, according to Kipkebut (2010), may lead to decreased effort one puts into work and, thus, negatively affect primary responsibilities of teaching and research. High commitment of employees could be achieved through high compensation since it serves as an indicator of how much an organization values its employees. According to Turk (2005), who conducted a research in university of Tartu, fair remuneration system serves as a motivator to put more effort into work. Therefore, a level of compensation which is closely tied to work performance is expected to predict a level of organizational commitment.

Distributive Justice: Distributive justice is one's perception of fairness of allocation of rewards, pay, promotions and other organizational resources among employees. Given the fact that employees provide an organization with their skills, education and knowledge, they are willing to receive a fair amount of reward in return. Once an employee estimates that rewards he receives are unfair compared to other employees, his loyalty, commitment and work productivity deteriorates. This also applies to lecturers of tertiary education in Nigeria just like any other human being. Equity theory argued that once there is a mismatch between effort and expectation/reward, dissatisfaction sets in for employees. This is also the case in Nigeria.

Feedback: Karim and Noor (2007) empirically proved a positive relation between regular feedback on one's performance and one's affective organizational commitment among the employees in academic institutions. Kipkebut (2010) also proved empirically that regular feedback, allowing an employee to improve his performance, is positively and significantly correlated with one's job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In the same vein, Turk (2005) concluded that regular communication with employees and their performance appraisal positively influences one's attachment to the organization. In Nigeria tertiary institutions like other institutions, lack of feedback may get lecturers confused, demoralized because he/she is not sure if he/she is doing it right or wrong and this can in turn lower the commitment to the organization.

Participation in Decision Making: Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnysky (2002) proved that an employee, who is provided with narrow information only related to his task and has no possibility to have an access to the information related to the organization as a whole, does not feel any commitment to the organization and does not identify himself with it. Only the access to broader issues important to the whole organization such as the organization's business strategy or the

financial information makes an employee feel trusted; these add to employee's emotional attachment to the organization. Additionally allowing employees to participate in the decision making process and providing them with relevant information allows them to feel empowered and builds stronger emotional bond between the two parties.

Conclusion

The rapid changes in education system are generally carving the roles and scopes of works for lecturers in the academic environment. Lecturers need to be creative and innovative in order to develop the commitment towards any given tasks. At organisational level, committed employees normally put on a greater effort at their workplace. Committed lecturers are ready at all times, to adapt to the changes in the method of conveying knowledge especially with the globalization and advent of Information Communication Technology (ICT). Committed lecturer sacrifices spending extra time to make an extra class and to guide students who are involved and attached with long time personal problems. Taking into account what occurs in many Nigerian tertiary institutions, it is worthy to note that lecturers experience work-overload and underpay, develop competitive relationships with colleagues and superiors and get involved in strike actions. Additionally, they are likely to be affected by family issues, and thus have lower commitments and these may have negative influence on university goals achievement. Hence, all stakeholders need to put all hands on deck to ensure that all the determinants of lecturers' commitment are influencing it positively. This is necessary because lecturers need to be emotionally committed to their work, for without this emotional connection, lecturers face constant danger of burn-out in an increasingly intensified work environment.

Suggestions

Considering the factors influencing the commitment of lecturers and the need to maintain high lecturers' commitment, the following suggestions are therefore made:

- Training and development should be adequately provided to make lecturers' believe that the university supports their personal career development thus enhance their commitment.
- The absence of role ambiguity is crucial to lecturers' commitment; therefore, it is important to define the tasks and responsibilities of a lecturer when working in a particular job position.
- Keeping employees involved in the decision making of all organization related issues is also a factor leading to higher level of lecturers' commitment. Therefore, it is crucial for the universities, which still operate under hierarchical superior-subordinate management system to switch to horizontal management structures, where employees who are otherwise hierarchically unequal, are involved in decision making process to a higher extent. The involvement in decision making process could be stimulated by organizing more staff meetings and discussions focused on particular issues.
- Social support (coworker and supervisory support) within the organization also plays an important role while determining lecturers' commitment towards university goal achievement. It is therefore crucial to implement certain policies that would ensure safe, friendly, trustworthy and supportive work environment in the universities. To improve coworker support, the universities should make efforts to create a less competitive environment among the academic staff. The absence of competition among employees makes them more helpful to each other. In order to ensure higher levels of coworker interactions and support, interpersonal relations should be encouraged. This could be achieved by organizing more organizational activities for the employees (such as holiday gatherings, group trainings and trips), encouraging teamwork through joint researches and recognition of achievements.

- In terms of supervisory support, as lecturing and other academic duties are rather autonomous and do not require direct supervision, it is highly important for the university management not to set the requirements to the working staff unilaterally, but to provide all the information and communicate first and agree on rules that seem fair to both parties. This could be achieved by continuous appraisal and achievement recognition.

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