



## **Affective, Normative and Continuance Commitment of Librarians in Southwest Universities, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*This is a descriptive based paper that gives an overview of organizational commitment and its dimensions in terms of affective, continuance, and normative commitment of librarians. Organizational commitment is the extent to which an employee develops an attachment and sense of allegiance to her organization and it has three components, namely, affective, continuance and normative. Librarians' commitment has significant implications for achieving the university mandate, productivity and goal. University libraries may not successfully achieve their mandate of supporting teaching, learning and research without the committed efforts of librarians. The literature has however shown a decline in librarians' commitment as evidenced by poor service delivery and a negative work attitude. Hence, the study reviewed literature on affective, normative and continuance commitment of librarians' in Southwest universities, Nigeria. The study concluded that organizational commitment of librarians' is germane to the productivity of the university library. It was recommended that the university management should improve the reward system and organizational support in terms of employee recognition and mentoring to further increase employee commitment in universities in Southwest, Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Affective, Continuance, Normative, Organizational Commitment, Librarians.

### **Introduction**

The world today has become a global competitive space with an ever-evolving demand for excellent service delivery. However, it is almost impossible to meet such demand for quality, without the passion, drive and commitment of employees who are ready to put in the effort needed to meaningfully engage the global competitive space. The effort of committed personnel such as the librarians is needed for the workplace to function optimally and to achieve the goals of the organization. Organizational commitment is the tie, connection, or attachment that individuals have towards their organization which could be reflected in their attitude towards the objectives, goals, and principles of their organizations. Committed personnel in an organization expresses some level of dedication and zealotness to the job, which may contribute to organizational performance, success, and productivity (Gorgulu & Akilli, 2017; Nkhukhu-Orlando, Brown, Wilson, Forcheh, Linn & Fako, 2019).



The increasing demand for committed workers cuts across the divide of developed and developing countries. For instance, the developed countries like Canada, employees were found to be committed to their organization, possibly because employees were empowered and their passion or goals were consistently fuelled by the government or the management (Marcoux, Guihur & Leclerc, 2018; Murray & Holmes, 2021). However, in Netherlands, Sweden, and United Kingdom, a low commitment was recorded among the employees (Suzuki & Hur, 2020). There are some unique challenges such as poor remuneration when it comes to developing countries like Nigeria, where it is possible to find workers with low commitment due to factors that could pose a challenge to the organizational commitment of librarians. Some examples of these are studies carried out in southwest, Nigeria, which recorded a low level of commitment among the librarians in terms of poor service delivery and negative work attitude (Ademodi & Akintomide, 2015; Oyovwevotu, 2017).

One of the reasons why organizational commitment has attracted much attention in organizational psychology research is because of its relationship to various other work variables such as job performance, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour, and employee turnover (Kaplan, 2018). In other words, the level of organizational commitment of staff might have a great impact on organizational performance and productivity. Tella and Ibinaiye (2019) noted that without a practical and realistic level of commitment from workers, organizational performance, productivity, and set goals may not be attained. It is therefore important that organizational commitment is ensured and sustained among the librarians and university management. This is imperative in the library where highly efficient and effective service delivery is the *sine qua non* in the dynamic world of academia. Workers' commitment to the library could aid the work process and achievement of organizational goals. A university library with highly committed librarians will likely experience higher effectiveness and efficiency which could drive optimal usage by clients.

### **Concept of Organizational Commitment**

According to Allen and Meyer (1993), organizational commitment can be described as the extent of an individual's interaction and involvement with the organization. The level to which an employee develops an attachment and feels a sense of allegiance to his or her employer. Organizational commitment is a psychological link between employees and their organization which makes them want to be associated and remain steadfast with the organization. Nkhukhu-Orlando, Brown, Wilson, Forcheh, Linn and Fako (2019) defined organizational commitment as the link or association that the staff have towards their establishment which could be seen in their reaction, task outcome, and responses to things related to the organization. Furthermore, organizational commitment can be observed in employees' attitudes towards the goals, vision, and rules of their organizations.

In addition, Tella, Ayeni and Popoola (2007) expound organizational commitment as a psychological or emotional state that gives or attach the employees to their workplace. It is an attachment that persons of an organization have towards the institution to remain a member. This implies that for every committed personnel there must have been a level of trust the person has for the organization, and also the acceptance of all the organization's goals, vision, and mission statement on the part of the employee (Kipkebut, 2010). Some authors like Tarigan and Ariami (2015); Njoku, Ebeh and Mbaeri, (2017) defined organizational commitment as an expression of an employee's continuous allegiance towards his or her organization's success. Similarly, organizational commitment according to (Atak, 2011) is an attitude that involves the loyalty of employees to the organization and it involves the internalization of goals and objectives and the willingness of employees to play a role in achieving these goals and



objectives. In other words, the employee has to accept all that the organization stands for and be willing to be part of the success story. Employee commitment plays a major role in the success of any organization besides, it denotes the level of attachment that employees feel towards the organization, their willingness to perform the tasks on behalf of the organization and their tendency to remain members of the organization (Dey, 2012). Committed staff put in some level of allegiance and perseverance towards their job, which may contribute to overall organizational productivity.

### **Dimensions of Organizational Commitment**

#### ***Affective Commitment***

Organizational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct comprising affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment is a strong feeling of affinity, recognition with, physical attachment to, and absolute interest and participation in the organization. Employees that have an affective commitment to their organization remain there because they want to. It is an employee's affirmative keenness towards the organization, which is demonstrated to ensure that organization succeeds in accomplishing its goals and objectives (Babalola & Opeke, 2013; Ogechukwu, Eketu & Needorn, 2018). Affective commitment can be described as the extent to which staff or workers want to remain at their organizations due to the affection they have for their organizations. Affective commitment is a strong feeling of affinity, recognition with, physical attachment to, and absolute interest and participation in the organization. When an emotional attachment is developed, there is a feeling of sense of belonging to the organization and a desire to remain in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Affective commitment seems to be preferred by organizations because it is fundamental to achieving organizational commitment. It can be influenced by personal characteristics, structural issues, workplace-related characteristics, and experience (Adegbaye, Babalola & Alegbeleye, 2020); although, work-related experiences seem to be the most effective variable to create affective commitment among employees. Affective commitment could mean that employees' work-related experiences meet up with their emotional needs hence, they are willing to perform optimally (Ebikeseke & Dickson, 2018).

#### ***Continuance Commitment***

The second dimension of organizational commitment is continuance commitment and it is hinged on the employee's consideration of the cost and effect of leaving the organization. Such costs could be an economic relating investment that may not be transferable such as pensions. It could also be social in the sense that the employee might have formed a strong relationship such as marriage within the organization which makes it difficult for him/her to leave. Employees who have continuance commitment for their organizations remain there because they have to. Employees who show continuance commitment to their establishment usually find it very difficult to exit the organization due to the investment that they have put into it. For instance, the cost of leaving an organization becomes higher for a librarian when he is unable to match financial and non-financial benefits with another employer (Babalola & Opeke, 2013; Cherian, 2018).

The antecedents of continuance commitment are investments and alternative employments. For instance, investment by employees could be related to work and sometimes not related to work. The work-related investment of employees includes monetary rewards (salary, pension), while investment that is not related to work could be the psychological stress of relocating one's family to another place, or even the process of getting adjusted to new people, new environment, or a new way of life. Also, the lack of alternatives for employees could contribute to their continuance commitment. This could be in form of not being competent for the alternative job in terms of skills or other requirements, thereby making employees tend to



develop continuance commitment for the organization (Meyer, Stanley, Jackson, McInnis, Maltin, & Sheppard, 2012). This connotes that an employee will assess other alternatives to his job before deciding on exiting the organization if the need occurs.

### ***Normative Commitment***

The third dimension of organizational commitment, normative commitment is expressed by employees who feel that staying in their organizations is the right thing to do. Employees that express normative commitment feels they ought to remain in the organization possibly because of training and other benefits they had enjoyed in the organization. Normative commitment is borne out of a sense of obligation to one's organization. It is the result of a personal sense of moral obligation, for example, employees who have normative commitment may feel guilty quitting their job because of the negative effect their exit may have on the organization and other staff (Babalola & Opeke, 2013).

Normative commitment is also expressed by employees who feel that staying in their organizations is the right thing to do. Employees that express normative commitment feels they ought to remain in the organization possibly because of training and other benefits they had enjoyed in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). A normative committed employee feels grateful to the employer and finds it very difficult to leave the organization out of a sense of duty and indebtedness. Normative commitment involves staying with an organization because one is obliged to the employer or teammates when it is no longer advantageous to do so. Therefore, it is based and built on a sense of emotional obligation among employees and could be from employees' work values and social interaction or socialization within the organization (Chiazor, Eketu & Needorn, 2018). In other words, normative commitment is a feeling of obligation on the part of employees to remain in an organization due to the emotional and psychological consequences of leaving.

### **Organizational Commitment of Librarians**

Based on some reviewed literature, university libraries in southwest, Nigeria may be experiencing a disheartening condition of low organizational commitment among the librarians due to some of these psychological factors. The study of Ademodi and Akintomide (2015) reported that librarians' commitment to university libraries in Ondo State Nigeria has been observed to be low in the study carried out on levels of job satisfaction and commitment among private and public institutions. This was supported by the study carried out by Oyovwevotu (2017) on institutional support, job satisfaction and employee commitment in public university libraries in South-East geo-political zone, Nigeria. Several studies have also identified factors that constitute to low level of commitment among employees in various organizations. Some studies have pointed out that employees are faced with problems relating to job security, career path, supervisor-subordinate communication, unfair treatment by supervisors, poor working conditions, role clarity, motivation and reward system, lack of effective leadership style, and organizational culture (Ogunjinmi, Onadeko, Ladebo & Ogunjinmi, 2014; Amune, 2015; Ibegwam, 2019).

The study carried out by Kate-Riin, and Signe (2014) in Tartu Estonia indicated that librarians in the universities were loyal to the organizations that had open communication, participative management, opportunities for achievement, and relationships built on honesty and trust. The librarians that enjoy or benefit from the factors listed in their organization were found to be satisfied and committed in their workplace. Also, the study carried out by Ibegwam (2019) among librarians in public universities in South-South, Nigeria and Adegbaye, Babalola, and Alegbeleye (2020)'s study carried out among librarians in South-South, universities Nigeria on



organizational commitment revealed that affective commitment among librarians in public universities in South-South Nigeria is high. Hence, these two studies from South-South, Nigeria revealed that librarians in this geo-political zone are relatively committed to their organization. However, a moderate level of continuance and normative commitment was revealed in some studies carried out among librarians in universities in southwest, Nigeria on their level of organizational commitment (Amune, 2015; Adewoyin, Opeke, Ikonne, & Madukoma, 2020).

Furthermore, Mayowa-Adebara (2018)'s study investigated the influence of leadership style, organizational justice, and human capital development on employee commitment in university libraries in universities in southwest, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design and the population of the study was 684 library personnel. The study established that the level of employee commitment in university libraries in universities in southwest, Nigeria is fairly high. The fairly high level of employee commitment could mean a lower rate of absenteeism, tardiness, intention to quit and increased level of job satisfaction. The study suggested that university library management should deploy means to further increase employee commitment by providing good conditions of service such as regular promotion, salary increment and provision of career opportunities for librarians. In addition, Amune (2015), Ikonne and Ikonne (2016), and Mayowa-Adebara and Aina (2016) all reported that librarians in Nigeria were committed to their library because they felt emotionally attached and have allegiance to their libraries. These three studies were however carried out in universities in southwest, Nigeria.

The study of Olajojo, Oyeboade and Gbotosho (2017) on social support, work motivation and work commitment of library personnel in selected private university libraries in southwest, Nigeria, revealed that librarians are moderately committed to their organization in the different libraries. The descriptive research design of the correlation type was used to analyze the study with a total of 120 librarians. In addition, Igere, Adomi and Nwosu (2020) did a study on the predictive nature of work motivation and career commitment of librarians in universities in southern Nigeria. The study is made up of 197 librarians and a correlational survey was adopted. The study revealed that librarians' commitment is very high. Hakim (2020) carried out a study on the effect of compensation, career development, work environment on job satisfaction and its impact on organizational commitments in Pt Jakarata Tourisindo, India. The study revealed a moderate level of commitment among employees. Similarly, Nkhukhu-Orlando, Brown, Wilson, Forcheh, Linn and Fako T (2019) did a study on the affective commitment of academics in a university in Botswana and the study revealed that librarians is moderately low.

### **Conclusion**

Organizational commitment is germane and very pertinent to the development, growth, and productivity of organizations. Committed librarians are more likely to help provide standard quality service delivery most especially for the global era. This study reviewed the literature on affective, normative and continuance commitment of librarians in universities in Southwest, Nigeria. The study concludes that it is important that employees remain committed to their work. It was recommended that the government and the university administration should look into the things that can ensure a consistent high commitment from the employees, such as the reward system and organizational support.

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