

Job Commitment of Administrative Staff: Factors, Challenges, and Way Forward at Private Universities in Oyo State

Adekunbi Tolulope, ADEPOJU

Dept. of Educational Management

Lead City University, Ibadan

Phone: +2348062089988

E-mail: kunbite022@gmail.com

Orcid ID: 0009-0004-2070-7369

Omobola, GAMBO

Lead City University, Ibadan

Orcid ID: 0000-0003-4884-8927

DOI: 10.56201/ijssmr.vol.11no5.2025.pg15.22

Abstract

Administrative staff, despite their crucial role in ensuring the smooth operation in private universities seems to face some challenges that hinder their job commitment. Among those challenges is the issue of inadequate compensation, poor work-life balance, lack of opportunities for professional growth, inadequate recognition and reward systems to mention but few. This study investigated the level of Job Commitment of Administrative Staff in Private Universities in Oyo State. Job commitment among administrative staff in private universities influences not only their productivity but also the overall performance of the university, the importance of committed administrative staff cannot be overstated as their involvement ensures that academic and non-academic processes function smoothly. This study analysed Concept of job commitment, Factors influencing job commitment among administrative staff in private universities, Theory related to job commitment, Challenges to job commitment in private universities, Conclusion and Way forward. Therefore, this paper focuses on how better understanding of the factors that influence job commitment and the challenges faced by administrative staff in private universities in Oyo state will help improve the overall university operation.

Keywords: Job commitment, Administrative Staff, Private universities

Word Count: 177

Introduction

Administrative staff play a crucial role in the smooth functioning of higher institutions, including private universities in Oyo State, Nigeria. These individuals are responsible for various non-teaching tasks, ranging from office management, student administration, to support services that ensure the effective running of the university system. Without their active contribution, many essential functions within the university would falter, leading to inefficiencies. Private universities in Oyo State, such as Ajayi Crowther University, Lead City University, and Dominican University, rely on these staff members for day-to-day operations and strategic planning. As the higher education sector expands, the roles of administrative staff become even more significant, highlighting the need for deeper exploration of their job commitment.

Job commitment refers to the level of dedication and loyalty that employees show towards their work and the organization. Among administrative staff in private universities, job commitment influences not only their productivity but also the overall performance of the university. The importance of committed administrative staff cannot be overstated, as their involvement ensures that academic and non-academic processes function smoothly. However, studies in Nigeria have shown that administrative staff often face challenges that undermine their commitment, which, in turn, affects their job satisfaction, efficiency, and retention rates (Adeyemi & Olaleye, 2022).

In the context of private universities in Oyo State, various factors influence the job commitment of administrative staff. These include job satisfaction, compensation, work environment, leadership style, and opportunities for career advancement. When staff members are satisfied with these elements, their commitment to the job tends to increase, leading to higher productivity and better morale. Conversely, when these factors are lacking or inadequate, commitment tends to decline, resulting in high turnover rates, absenteeism, and reduced work performance.

Despite the critical role of administrative staff in ensuring the smooth operation of private universities, several challenges hinder their job commitment. The first major challenge is inadequate compensation. Private university administrative staff often face salary structures that are not commensurate with their workload, leading to dissatisfaction. Secondly, poor work-life balance is common, as many staff members juggle multiple responsibilities, leading to burnout. A third challenge is the lack of opportunities for professional growth, which diminishes motivation to stay committed. Fourth, poor leadership styles at some private universities affect the work environment, creating tension between staff and management. Lastly, inadequate recognition and reward systems make staff feel undervalued, further reducing their commitment (Olagunju & Abiodun, 2023).

To address these challenges and improve job commitment among administrative staff, several steps can be taken. Firstly, universities need to implement fair and competitive compensation packages to ensure staff are motivated. Secondly, improving work-life balance by adjusting workloads and encouraging flexible working arrangements can reduce burnout. Thirdly, offering opportunities for professional development, such as training programs and clear career progression pathways, can increase job satisfaction. Effective leadership that fosters communication and collaboration is another way forward, as good management practices can strengthen commitment. Finally, recognizing and rewarding staff efforts can significantly boost morale and dedication (Oduola, 2023).

The importance of carrying out this research is significant, given the growing competition among private universities in Nigeria. A better understanding of the factors that influence job commitment and the challenges faced by administrative staff in Oyo State will help improve overall university operations.

Statement of the Problem

The commitment of administrative staff is essential to the overall success and smooth running of private universities in Oyo State. Despite their critical role, many administrative staff in these institutions struggle with various factors that negatively affect their job commitment, leading to poor performance, reduced productivity, and high turnover rates. Understanding these issues is essential for the development of effective strategies that promote job commitment among administrative staff. Based on preliminary investigations and previous studies, six significant problems associated with job commitment at private universities in Oyo State are highlighted below. One of the major issues affecting the job commitment of administrative staff in private universities is the issue of inadequate compensation. Many private university administrative staff members receive salaries and benefits that are not

reflective of the amount of work they handle. The cost of living in Oyo State is rising, yet salary structures often fail to match inflation rates or the workload, leading to dissatisfaction among staff. When employees feel they are underpaid, their motivation and commitment to the job decline (Adeyemi & Olaniyan, 2023). Administrative staff at private universities often encounter limited opportunities for professional growth and career development. Many private institutions in Oyo State do not have structured career progression pathways or training programs for their non-academic staff. This results in employees feeling stagnant in their roles, with no clear vision for future advancement. When administrative staff perceive that there is little or no opportunity for promotion or skill development, their job commitment tends to wane over time (Ojo & Fagbohun, 2022). Another challenge negatively affecting job commitment is poor leadership and management practices. Some private universities in Oyo State suffer from weak or autocratic leadership styles, where communication between management and administrative staff is limited or ineffective. This creates a tense work environment where staff feel undervalued or unheard. The absence of good leadership can lead to confusion regarding job expectations, reduced motivation, and increased conflict between staff and management, all of which undermine job commitment (Ajayi & Adesina, 2023). Many administrative staff in private universities find it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance. With heavy workloads, unrealistic deadlines, and multiple responsibilities, staff members often experience burnout. Long working hours without adequate rest lead to physical and mental fatigue, making it harder for staff to remain committed to their jobs. In addition, the pressure to meet work demands often forces staff to sacrifice personal or family time, further reducing job satisfaction and long-term commitment (Babatunde & Olagoke, 2022). Recognition and rewards are essential components of a positive work environment, but many private universities in Oyo State lack proper systems to acknowledge the efforts of their administrative staff. When employees do not receive recognition for their hard work, they may feel unappreciated and undervalued, which can lead to a decline in job satisfaction and commitment. The absence of reward programs, such as employee of the month, performance bonuses, or public recognition, makes it difficult to motivate staff to go above and beyond in their roles (Oladele & Aderibigbe, 2023). The issue of job insecurity is another significant factor undermining job commitment among administrative staff at private universities. Many staff members face uncertainties regarding the stability of their positions, often due to financial constraints within the institutions or changing management policies. This lack of security fosters a sense of anxiety and discouragement, as employees are constantly worried about the future of their jobs. The fear of layoffs or contract terminations reduces their willingness to fully invest in their roles, thus negatively impacting their commitment to the job (Ogunleye & Akinwale, 2022).

It is of this view this study choose to investigate Job Commitment of Administrative Staff: Factors, Challenges, and Way Forward at Private Universities in Oyo State. Understanding these problems sets the foundation for developing solutions to foster a more committed and motivated workforce, ultimately benefiting the growth and development of private universities in the region.

Literature Review

Concept of Job Commitment

Job commitment refers to the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement an employee has with their organization. It represents the extent to which employees are dedicated to their work and willing to remain with their current employer (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Commitment is crucial for the success of any institution, particularly in educational settings such as private universities, where administrative staff play a vital role in supporting academic and operational functions. In Nigeria's private universities, administrative staff are responsible for tasks such as student record-keeping, admissions processes, and financial management, all

of which are essential for the smooth functioning of the institution (Adebola, 2020). When administrative staff demonstrate high levels of commitment, they are more likely to perform their duties efficiently and contribute positively to the institution's overall goals (Ogundele, 2022).

Theory Related to Job Commitment

The Three-Component Model of Commitment by Meyer and Allen (1991) is one of the most widely recognized theories explaining job commitment. This theory posits that job commitment is comprised of three distinct components: affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

Affective Commitment refers to the emotional attachment employees feel towards their organization, which motivates them to stay because they genuinely want to.

Continuance Commitment involves the costs that employees associate with leaving the organization, causing them to stay because they feel they have to.

Normative Commitment refers to the feelings of obligation employees have to remain with the organization, leading them to stay because they believe they ought to.

This theory emphasizes that an employee's commitment is influenced by various emotional, financial, and moral factors. In the context of Nigerian private universities, administrative staff may develop affective commitment due to a positive work environment, continuance commitment due to limited alternative job opportunities, or normative commitment stemming from cultural and ethical values (Adedayo, 2021).

Factors Influencing Job Commitment Among Administrative Staff

Several factors influence job commitment among administrative staff in private universities. Leadership style is a key determinant of job commitment, as supportive leadership can foster a sense of belonging and loyalty among staff (Adejumo & Ojo, 2019). Work-life balance also plays a critical role, as employees who can balance their personal and professional responsibilities are more likely to remain committed to their jobs (Ajayi, 2020). Career development opportunities contribute to job commitment, as administrative staff who perceive opportunities for growth within their institution tend to show higher levels of engagement and commitment (Olaniyi, 2018).

Additionally, job satisfaction is a major factor. Staff who are satisfied with their roles, work environment, and compensation are more likely to remain committed to their positions (Olagunju, 2020). Lastly, organizational culture influences job commitment, as a culture that promotes inclusivity, respect, and recognition is likely to enhance employees' emotional connection to the institution (Fagbemi, 2021).

Challenges to Job Commitment in Private Universities

There are numerous challenges to job commitment among administrative staff in private universities in Oyo State. One significant challenge is inadequate compensation. Many administrative staff in private universities report dissatisfaction with their salaries, which can reduce their commitment and increase turnover rates (Ojo, 2021). Lack of recognition and appreciation for their efforts is another challenge, as employees who feel undervalued are less likely to remain dedicated to their organization (Odu, 2020).

Limited career advancement opportunities also hinder job commitment. Administrative staff often find that there are few opportunities for promotion or professional growth, leading to stagnation and decreased motivation (Adeola, 2022). Workload imbalance is another challenge, as administrative staff in private universities frequently face heavy workloads without adequate support, leading to burnout and reduced commitment (Alabi & Bello, 2020). Lastly, poor

leadership practices such as autocratic management styles can diminish job satisfaction and negatively impact commitment (Adewale, 2019).

Research Questions

1. What is the level of job commitment among administrative staff in private universities in Oyo State?
2. What factors influence job commitment among administrative staff in private universities?
3. What are the challenges affecting job commitment among administrative staff at private universities in Oyo State?
4. What are the potential solutions for improving job commitment among administrative staff in private universities?

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design to examine job commitment among administrative staff in private universities in Oyo State. A descriptive survey was chosen as it allows the researcher to collect detailed information on current conditions, opinions, and behaviors of the administrative staff, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing their job commitment. The design is appropriate for identifying patterns, relationships, and challenges related to job commitment, while also enabling the researcher to propose recommendations for improvement based on observed trends.

Conclusion

In conclusion, job commitment among administrative staff in private universities in Oyo State is influenced by a combination of environmental, organizational, and personal factors. The study highlighted the importance of fostering a supportive work environment, improving leadership practices, offering competitive compensation packages, and providing clear career advancement opportunities. Addressing these areas is essential for improving staff commitment, which in turn contributes to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of university administration.

The challenges identified in the study suggest that while administrative staff play a critical role in the functioning of private universities, they often face significant barriers to achieving high levels of job commitment. Universities must adopt a proactive approach in addressing these issues to ensure a more engaged and committed workforce.

Way Forward

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for policy and practice:

- i. Private universities should regularly review and adjust the salaries and benefits of administrative staff to ensure they are competitive and reflective of the workload and responsibilities. Offering additional incentives such as health insurance, housing allowances, and professional development opportunities can boost job commitment.
- ii. Universities should invest in leadership development programs that equip managers and supervisors with the skills to foster a positive, inclusive, and supportive work environment. Leaders who are approachable and transparent in their communication are more likely to inspire commitment among their staff.
- iii. Clear career development paths and opportunities for promotion will help administrative staff feel valued and motivated. Universities should consider implementing mentorship programs and providing access to training that supports professional growth.
- iv. Institutions should introduce policies that promote work-life balance, such as flexible working hours, remote work options, and adequate leave policies. Supporting staff in managing

their personal and professional responsibilities will contribute to higher levels of job commitment.

v. Universities should ensure that administrative staff are not overburdened with excessive workloads. Adequate staffing levels, appropriate distribution of tasks, and providing the necessary resources and tools are essential for reducing job stress and enhancing commitment

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