# A Comparative Study of the Relative Merits of Employee Commitment among the Academic Librarians in Nigerian Public and Private Universities

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**Abstract**
The study utilized the expose-facto survey design to evaluate the relative merits of employee commitment among academic librarians in Nigerian public and private universities. In a bid to effectively carry out this study, the descriptive research design was adopted. A population of four hundred academic librarians (400) was selected for the study, using random sampling technique. The questionnaire was used to gather relevant data. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentages, t-test and F- ratio.  The findings revealed that academic librarians in public and private universities have Affective, Continuance and Normative commitment to their institutions. It was also observed that public university academic librarians are highly more committed to their institutions than the private ones as evidence by the calculated mean, t-test and F- ratio. The study recommended that managers of university libraries should intensify and sustain policies that will enhance the three fundamentals of commitment components, so that they can discharge better services to library users in order to enhance the efficiency of the institution and accomplish the set objectives of the university. There is also the need for training and retraining of academic librarians in both public and private universities so that they will be more affectively, continually and normatively committed to their institutions.
**Keywords**: Affective, Continuance, Normative, Commitment, Academic Librarians, Public University and Private University.

**Introduction**
Libraries form a vital part of the world's systems of education and information storage and retrieval. They make available through print and non-print media, knowledge accumulated through ages. For libraries to achieve their objectives, they require human resources made up of individuals with various intellectual competencies. These individuals are either professional or paraprofessional librarians.

University libraries have the responsibility to support their parent bodies in achieving their goals. Ola and Adeyemi (2012) noted that University libraries are established to promote and enhance teaching, learning, research and community development mandates of their parent institutions. To achieve these, libraries engage in the selection, acquisition, organization and dissemination of information materials in furtherance of their patrons' ideals.

Employees are among the most important determinants and leading factors that determine the success of an organization in a competitive environment. If properly managed, employees' commitment can lead to beneficial consequences such as increased effectiveness, performance, and productivity, and decrease in turnover and absenteeism at both the individual and organizational levels (Fiorita, Bozeman, Young and Meurs, 2007). An employee who is satisfied with his job would perform his duties well and be committed to his job, and subsequently to his organization. Committed employees take pride in organizational membership, believe in the goals and values of the organization, and therefore display higher levels of performance and productivity. Thus, it is of utmost importance for employers to know the factors that can affect their employees' job commitment level since it would affect the performance of the organization as well.

Studies have shown that employees in Nigeria, including library personnel in academic institutions are poorly committed to work (Aborisade and Obioha, 2009). This is also reflected in the constant strike embarked upon by Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria on several occasions over poor working conditions which has no doubt, affected their job commitment. Therefore, this study will examine the relative merits of the employee commitment of the academic librarians in both Nigerian public and private universities.

The rest of this study is divided as follows: section two deals on literature review, theoretical framework of the study is presented in section three. Section four is the data presentation and analysis while section five is the conclusion of the study.

**Literature Review**

Organizational commitment has been operationally defined to be multidimensional in nature, involving an employee's loyalty to the organization, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, degree of goal and value congruency with the organization, and desire to maintain membership (Bateman and Strasser 1984). Robbins and Judge (2007) define organizational commitment as the desire to identify with an organization; an unwavering acceptance and self induced loyalty to the organization and its goals; the desire to stay with the organization in spite of attractions from alternative jobs. Herscovich and Meyer (2002) asserted that organizational commitment is the "degree to which an employee identifies with the goals and values of the organization and he is willing to exert efforts to help it succeed."

Allen and Meyer (1996) asserted that each person's definition of organizational commitment relates to his/her approach to the concept. In other words, the definition of organizational commitment is influenced by the individual's perception of the term. Organizational commitment has thus witnessed three conceptual development territories, which include affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment.

Affective commitment is the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that an employee has with his organization and its goals. This is characterized by three factors (1) "belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, (2) a willingness to focus

effort on helping the organization achieve its goals, and (3) a desire to maintain organizational membership".

Studies on continuance commitment are based on two antecedents: investments and alternatives. Meyer and Allen (1997) explained that employees who share continuance commitment with their employer often find it very difficult to leave the organization because they often look at investments such as time, money, or efforts which they have input into the organisation. Simply put, it is the opportunity cost that the employee associates with leaving the organization.

Normative commitment is defined as an individual's generalized value of loyalty and duty (Weiner 1980). It is the commitment that employees believe they owe the organization or their feeling of obligation to their workplace. Meyer and Allen (1991) supported this type of commitment with their definition of normative commitment being "a feeling of obligation". It was argued that normative commitment is only natural due to the way we are raised in the society. Normative commitment can be explained by other commitments such as marriage, family, religion, etc. Therefore when it comes to one's commitment to the work place, employees often feel they equally have a moral obligation to the organization, where they obtain the means for meeting their social needs. In other words, there is a symbiotic relationship between the employees and their organisations and the need for effective synergy cannot be overemphasized if they are both to attain their individual goals.

Suleiman and Isles (2000) postulated that four main approaches exist in the conceptualization and explanation of organizational commitment. These are attitudinal, behavioural, normative and multi-dimensional approaches. The first approach regards organizational commitment as a type of affective dependency and attitude about the organization. Based on this, commitment has been defined as a relative degree of a person's identification with organization and his / her contribution to the growth of the organization. The second approach regards organizational commitment as behaviour and defines commitment as having tendency towards continuance activity on the basis of a person's decision about cost that are associated with organizational abandonment. The third approach sees commitment as the belief a person has about his responsibility to the organization. Based on this assertion, all internalized strains for activity execution are geared toward attaining the organisational goals.

In terms of organizational commitment among librarians, McCormick (2000) posited that librarians' level of organizational commitment is significantly influenced by career stages, type of library work setting, and number of dependents. Furthermore, more committed and satisfied librarians have been found in libraries that support participatory management, open communication, and opportunities for achievement (Burd 2003).

Mbaegbu (2011) compared employee commitment of the academic staff of Nigerian public and private universities. The researcher in his survey design, utilized a structured questionnaire rated with the Likert type of scale, for data collection. A sample of the academic staff of universities was collected using the systematic and the stratified sampling techniques. The findings were that there was a significant difference in the means of employee commitment of public and private universities with the public universities showing more commitment. The test of hypothesis was significant at $P \leq 0.05$ level of significance. Secondly, there was a significant difference in the variance (spread) of commitment in public and private universities with the private universities varying more than the public universities. The test was also significant at the $P \leq 0.05$ level of significance. The study concluded that there is high level of disparity in the commitment levels of public and private universities with the public

universities academic staff showing evidence of more commitment; within the private universities there is also disparity in commitment between senior academic staff and junior academic staff with the seniors showing evidence of more commitment.

Hyder and Batool (2013) conducted a comparative study on job satisfaction among librarians who are serving in public and private sector universities. Questionnaires were used to collect data from librarians serving in ten Higher Education Commission (H.E.C.) recognized public and private sector universities/institutes in Lahore. The eight components of job satisfaction measured were derived from the reviewed literature: physical environment and Information Communication Technology infrastructure, personal growth, organizational culture, social prestige, salary, rewards, promotion and nature of work. The study observed that librarians serving in public sector universities were more satisfied as compared to the librarians working in private sector ones. They suggested that authorities in librarianship should formulate policies regarding job satisfaction such as proper reward system or work incentives, encouraging suitable working environment particularly in public sector, and a proper career infrastructure that can create job security for the employee etc.

Akinyemi and Ifijeh (2012) examined the relationship between leadership style and job commitment of library personnel in private universities in the Southwest, Nigeria. The research instrument used in the collection of data was questionnaire. In measuring the research questions and testing hypotheses, mean and standard deviation, analysis of variance (one way), correlation and multiple regression analysis and multiple pair wise comparison were used. The result of the study shows that Leadership Style had a significant relationship with the job commitment of respondents ($\beta$=.102, P>.05). Moreover, the study found out that there was significant difference in the comparative Job Commitment of library Personnel of University (F (14,155, P <.05). Based on the findings, it was concluded that library managers should evolve leadership styles that will motivate the job commitment of their subordinates. It was also concluded that the respondents are committed to their job but the degree of commitment varies from one university to the other. The study recommends that the management can improve working conditions of the library personnel, especially through the provision of work tools, and human and financial resources so as to enhance their job commitment.

Ali, Jafar, Mehdi and Mehdi (2013) investigate the relationship among life styles, job satisfaction and organization commitment components. The statistical population involves all female and male principals of Iran-Marand schools.113 persons were selected by cluster random sampling proportionate with sample by Cochran method. The research method is descriptive and correlation and the application was based on goal. In order to collect the data, three standard Field and Ouch Roth Questionnaire of job satisfaction, Mavdi and Porter Standard Organization Commitment Questionnaire and Author Made Life Style Components Questionnaire were used. Furthermore, SPSS software and descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed for analysis of data. The results showed that there are significant and direct relationship among life styles components, job satisfaction and organization commitment. The results of regression analysis showed that it predicted 17 percent job satisfaction and 23 percent organizational commitment according to life styles components (responsibility, socialization and conservativeness).

**Theoretical Framework**

Organizational Commitment Theory according to Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) consist of three component parts namely: Affective, Continuance and Normative which

reflect a psychological state "that either characterises the employee's relationship with the organization or has the implications to affect whether the employee will continue with the organization or not". Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) further reiterated that those employees with a strong affective commitment will remain with an organization because they want to, those with a strong continuance commitment remain because they have to, and those with a normative commitment remain because they felt they have to.

Organizational commitment has emerged as an important construct in organizational research owing to its relationship with work-related constructs such as absenteeism, turnover, job satisfaction, job-involvement and leader-subordinate relations (Arnolds and Boshoff 2004). According to Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982), people who are committed are more likely to stay in an organization and work towards the organization's goals. Arnolds and Boshoff (2004) indicated that organizational commitment is a useful tool for measuring organizational effectiveness even among librarians

## Methodology

The study utilised the expo-facto survey design. A multi-staged probabilistic sample of 400 academic librarians was obtained from 40 universities in their clusters using systematic and stratified sampling techniques. From this sample data were collected with the "Organizational Commitment Questionnaire" (OCQ) containing 15 structured statements and providing 5 response options adapted from Allen and Mayer (1990). It comprised of (15 items) presented in three parts relating to the extent to which the library staff are committed to their institutions. The parts include: Affective Commitment (5 items), Continuance Commitment (6 items) and Normative Commitment (4 items). To measure the response options the instrument was calibrated with a 5-point summated Likert type ordinal interval scale numbered from 1 to 5. These numbers tallied with respondents' agreement or disagreement with the statements. The data obtained were analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The software employed the t-distribution which approximated the z-test for large numbers and the F-ratio. These inferential statistics were used to test the research hypotheses.

## Statement of Hypotheses

Fadiya (2010) asserted that hypothesis testing has become the building block of any scientific research. To this end, it would be appropriate to test the following null hypotheses in respect of this study.

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in the mean levels of employee commitment of the academic librarians of Nigerian Public and Private Universities.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in the variances (spread) of employee commitment of the academic librarians of Nigerian Public and Private Universities.

## Data Presentation And Analysis

The frequency and percentage distributions are presented in tables 1 to 3:

Table 1:

Frequency Distribution of Affective Commitment of Public and Private Universities librarians

| S/N | VARIABLES | PUBLIC UNIVERSITY | | PRIVATE UNIVERSITY | | TOTAL | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No | % | No | % | No | % |
| 1 | Highly Committed | 175 | 70 | 45 | 30 | 220 | 55 |
| 2 | Committed | 15 | 6 | 42 | 28 | 57 | 14 |
| 3 | Uncommitted | 25 | 10 | 18 | 12 | 43 | 11 |
| 4 | Highly Uncommitted | 20 | 8 | 29 | 19 | 49 | 12 |
| 5 | Undecided | 15 | 6 | 16 | 11 | 31 | 8 |
| | Total | 250 | 100 | 150 | 100 | 400 | 100 |

**Source: Field Survey**

From table 1 above, 220 academic librarians of both public and private universities are highly committed to their institutions which represent 55% of the distribution. Also 57 (14%) are committed while 43(11%) and 49 (12%) are uncommitted and highly uncommitted respectively to their institutions. 31(8%) are undecided whether they are committed or not. From the above analysis, it means that academic librarians from private and public universities have affective commitment to their institutions. This is based on emotional attachment, identification, and involvement that the librarians have with their organizations and their goals.

Table 2:

Frequency Distribution of Continuance Commitment of Public and Private Universities librarians

| S/NO | VARIABLES | PUBLIC UNIVERSITY | | PRIVATE UNIVERSITY | | TOTAL | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No | % | No | % | No | % |
| 1 | Highly Committed | 70 | 28 | 40 | 27 | 110 | 28 |
| 2 | Committed | 60 | 24 | 25 | 17 | 85 | 21 |
| 3 | Uncommitted | 60 | 24 | 55 | 36 | 115 | 29 |
| 4 | Highly Uncommitted | 40 | 16 | 10 | 7 | 50 | 13 |
| 5 | Undecided | 20 | 8 | 20 | 13 | 40 | 10 |
| | Total | 250 | 100 | 150 | 100 | 400 | 100 |

**Source: Field Survey**

From table 2 above, 110 academic librarians of both public and private universities are highly committed to their institutions which represent 28% of the distribution. Also 85 (21%) are committed while 115(29%) and 50 (13%) are uncommitted and highly uncommitted

respectively to their institutions. 40(10%) are undecided whether they are committed or not. From the above analysis it means that academic librarians from private and public universities have continuance Commitment to their institutions. This is based on the opportunity cost that the librarians associate with leaving the organization, which may include for example, loss of seniority and pension benefits.

Table 3:
Frequency Distribution of Normative   Commitment of Public and Private Universities librarians

| S/NO | VARIABLES | PUBLIC UNIVERSITY | | PRIVATE UNIVERSITY | | TOTAL | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | No | % | No | % | No | % |
| 1 | Highly  Committed | 90 | 36 | 90 | 60 | 180 | 45 |
| 2 |  Committed | 50 | 20 | 28 | 19 | 78 | 19.5 |
| 3 | Uncommitted | 40 | 16 | 22 | 15 | 62 | 15.5 |
| 4 | Highly Uncommitted | 30 | 12 | 5 | 3 | 35 | 9 |
| 5 | Undecided | 40 | 16 | 5 | 3 | 45 | 11 |
| | Total | 250 | 100 | 150 | 100 | 300 | 100 |

**Source:  Field Survey**
From table 3 above, 180 academic librarian of both public and private university are highly committed to their institutions which represent 45% of the distribution. Also 78 (19.5%) are committed while 35(9%) and 45 (11%) are uncommitted and highly uncommitted respectively to their institute. 45(11%) are undecided whether they are committed or not. From the above analysis it means that academic librarians from private and public universities have Normative Commitment to their institutions. This arises from the moral obligation to stay with an organization.

**Group Commitment Means and Standard Deviations**
The group means (x) and Standard Deviations (s) of the Employee Commitment of the Academic librarians of both Public and Private Universities are shown in Table 4.

Table 4:
Differences in Group Commitment Means and Standard Deviation of the Academic librarians of Public and Private Nigerian Universities

| Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public University | 250 | 50.0000 | 4.088311 | 10.5559 |
| Private University | 150 | 30.0000 | 2.21649 | 5.72297 |

Source: Computation from Field Survey Data
From the above table, we observe that the mean levels of academic librarians' commitment are 50.0000 and 30.0000 in public and private universities respectively. This implies that there is more commitment in academic librarians in public universities than in private universities.

Nevertheless, the statistical significance of the difference in mean value is provided by the test of hypotheses using Table 5

**Test of Hypotheses**

**H0**1: There is no significant difference in the mean levels of employee commitment of the academic librarians of public and private Nigerian universities.

Table 5:

Means Difference Comparison of Level of Commitment of Public and Private Academic Librarians in Nigerian Universities

| Group | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | T | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Public university | 4.737 | 531 | .000 | 50.00000 | 27.3597 | 72.6403 |
| Private university | 5.242 | 214 | .000 | 30.00000 | 17.7255 | 42.2745 |

Source: Computation from Field Survey Data

In Table 5 the mean difference in librarian Commitment in public and private universities in Nigeria is 50.00 and 30.00 respectively. This value has a t-score of 4.737 and 5.242 with a probability value of 0.00. This is significant at 95% Confidence Interval. We, therefore, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses that a significant difference exists in the level of academic librarians' commitment in public and private universities. The level of commitment is higher in public universities with a mean value of 50.00 compared to 30.00 of private universities. The test of hypothesis is thus consistent with the mean analysis in Table 4.

$H_0$2: There is no significant difference in the variances (spread) of employee commitment of the academic librarians of Nigerian Public and Private Universities.

Table 6:

Standard Deviations, Variances and Degree of Freedom

| Group | N | Std. Deviation S | Variance $S^2$ | Df |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 250 | 4.088311 | 16.71429 | N-1=250 -1=249 |
| Male | 150 | 2.21649 | 4.912828 | N-1= 150 - 1=149 |

Source: Computation from Field Survey Data

From table 6 the F-ratio = $S_2^2 / S_1^2$

= 16.71429/4.912828

= 3.4023

The Critical Value of the F-ratio = 1.67. Since the F-ratio calculated (3.4023) is more than the Critical F-ratio, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, that there is significant difference in the variances (spread) of employee commitment of the academic librarians of Nigerian Public and Private Universities, with the commitment of public universities varying at 3.4 times more than the commitment of private universities.

## Conclusion

Literatures have shown that the university educational improvement depends, fundamentally, on the improvement of library services. Ways to increase librarians' motivation, satisfaction and capabilities should be the core processes upon which efforts to make university education more effective. In addition, highly motivated and needs satisfied librarians can create a good social, psychological and physical climate in the library which will make them committed to their duty in order to meet the institutional objectives. Nevertheless, it is hoped that if university administrators and educational policy makers can understand librarians job commitment, they can propose incentive system to motivate librarians and meet the educational goals of the universities. In this regard, the study evaluates the relative merits of the employee commitment of the academic librarians in Nigerian public and private universities.

In a bid to effectively carryout this study, the descriptive research design was adopted. A population of four hundred academic librarians (400) was selected for the study using a random sampling technique. The questionnaire was used to gather relevant data. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, t-test and F- ratio. The findings revealed that public and private university academic librarians have Affective, Continuance and Normative committed to their institutions. It was also observed that public university academic librarians are highly more committed to their institutions than the private ones which is consistent with Mbaegbu (2011) who reported that there is high level of disparity in the commitment levels of public and private universities with the public universities academic staff showing evidence of more commitment than their private counterpart.

Based on the above analysis, the study recommended that the university library management, should formulate and sustain policies that will enhanced the three fundamentals of commitment components, so that they can discharge better services to library clienteles, in order to enhance the efficiency of the institution and accomplish the set objectives of the university; Proprietors of private universities should form synergy with private investors, especially foreign investors to invest in their universities to address the myriad of challenges facing them including uncompetitive salaries, dearth of infrastructural development including laboratories/workshops and so on, in order to enhance job security in the sector to prevent brain drain from private universities to public ones. Finally, there is need for training and retraining of academic librarians in both public and private universities, so that they will be able to catch up with trends in development and be affectively, continually and normatively committed to their institutions.

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