

Influence of Human Resources Management Practices on Staff Commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria

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Abstract- *This study examined the Influence of Human Resources management Practices on Staff Commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. Two research questions, two objectives and two hypotheses were formulated. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised of all the Academic and non-Academic staff in all the State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. A sample size of 9312 respondents was used for the study. The researcher developed an instrument tagged 'Human Resource Management Practices on Staff Commitment Questionnaire (HRMPSCQ) which was used for the study. The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Administration and Planning Department of Nasarawa State University, Keffi which yielded an index of 0.68, while the pilot test was conducted and the reliability index was established using Cronbach Alpha method to be 0.76. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics. The findings of the study revealed that; there was no significant influence of Compensation and benefits on Staff Commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. There was a significant Influence of Training and Development on Staff Commitment in State Universities in the North Central Zone, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that; Compensation and benefits packages should be enhanced in state Universities of north Central Zone, Nigeria in order to promote Staff welfare so that staff can concentrate and become effective in their jobs. Periodic training and development programmes should be organized for staff of state Universities within north Central Zone, Nigeria in order to build up their work skills and capacity for the purpose of enhancing their job commitment.*

Keywords: *Human Resources, Management Practices, Staff Commitment, Performance Appraisal.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The key to the success of any organization depends on the commitment of employees towards that organization and as such the commitment towards an organization goes beyond formal membership. However, commitment is define as involving an exchange of behaviour in returns for valued rewards. It also referred to the state in which employees' sense loyalty with their respective organization and aligns themselves with organizational goals and objectives. Without commitment the implementation of new ideas and initiatives will be compromised. Commitment has also been defined as a psychological state that binds the individual to the organization. This binding force can be experienced in different ways that can be accompanied by different mind sets including: an affective attachment and involvement with the target, a felt obligation to the target and an awareness of the costs associated with discontinuing involvement with the target.

However, staff commitment refers to the emotional attachment and involvement an employee has with their organization, which can influence their willingness to exert effort and stay with the organization. Staff commitment in universities is the degree to which employees identify with and are involved in the organization, reflecting their willingness to work towards achieving its goals. In the Universities, staff commitment can be understood as the extent to which employees are dedicated to their job roles and responsibilities, which can impact their performance and productivity. Staff commitment is seen as an effective response to the whole organization and the degree of attachment or loyalty employees feel towards the organization. Researchers such as Meyer & Allen (1991) proposed a three-component model

which describes three factors of attitudes and behaviours that are relevant to the characterization of commitment. They are; affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization. Affective commitment refers to that commitment that an individual has for an organization in which he is working (Folorunso, 2014). Monanu et al. (2015) also further stated that affective commitment is when the employee identifies with a particular organization and its goal in order to maintain a membership to facilitate the goal.

Therefore, affective commitment involves staff emotional attachment and feelings of belonging to the university. Continuance commitment is the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employees has with 'non-transferable' investments. Non-transferable investments include things such as retirement, relationships with other employees, or this that are special to the organization. Therefore, continuance commitment is the instrumental attachment an individual has to the organization based on individual's association assessment of his economic benefits gained. Normative commitment is the commitment that a person believes that they have to the organization or their feeling of obligation to their workplace. It is characterizes the obligation for a staff to remain a member of a university. In this case, the staff is animated by a feeling that obliges him/she to remain a staff of the university. Normative commitment is where employees have the willingness to contribute to the organization.

On the other hand, Human resources management is a strategic and coherent approach to managing people in an organization to gain a competitive advantage. It focuses on policies and systems to maximize employee performance and achieve the organization's objectives. Human resource management is the practice of recruiting, hiring, deploying and managing an organization's employee, with an emphasis on emphasis on employees as assets of the business. Human resource management practices include employee staffing, staff development, performance management and compensation and benefits, which

are essential for achieving sustainable organizational performance. However, human resource management practices involve training and developing competent and adapted employees, including employee benefits, performance appraisals and rewards. However, Dessler's definition highlights the key components of human resource management practices to include; Recruitment and Selection, Compensation and Benefits, Training and Development, Employee Relations, Performance Appraisal. In this work, only two components guided the study. They include; compensation and benefits, and performance appraisal.

Compensation and Benefits refers to the processes and systems used to reward employees for their contributions to the organization. Compensation and benefits are critical components of an organization's total rewards strategy, aimed at attracting, motivating and retaining top talent. Compensation refers to the monetary rewards provided to employees in exchange for their work while Benefits refers to the non-monetary rewards provided to employees to support their well being and quality of life. Benefit system is a key element of any effective management practice, as it provides incentives for employees to perform well. A benefit system is the structure an organization puts in place to provide tangible forms of recognition to its employees. It can be as small as an initiative to provide tangible forms of recognition to its employees. The goal of any system is to deliver rewards that employees actually want, showing them that the organization appreciates their contribution and keeping them motivated (Aleksandra, 2022).

Performance Appraisal others known as 'annual review', 'performance review', 'evaluation' or 'employee appraisal'. Performance Appraisal refers to the systematic process of evaluating an employee's job performance and providing feedback to improve future performance. It involves regular feedback through performance evaluations including constructive criticism and recognition for achievement which motivates employees to improve and feel valued. Performance Appraisal is a regular review of an employee's job performance and the overall contribution to an organization. It is often the link between additional pay and rewards that a staff receives for job performed well. Performance appraisal

is the periodic evaluation of staff members measured against the job's stated or presumed requirements. It is part of the process of guiding and managing career development in both private and public sectors.

Hence, these Human Resources management practices when administered may mar or favour some employees or better influence their commitment in their various state Universities. If employee performance is to be improved upon, then their job commitment level within the work place must be put into consideration. In other words, Employees in state universities of North Central Zone, Nigeria can only exhibit or show maximum commitment to work if the right human resource management practices are employed by the management staff of such universities. It is based on this realization that the current study is geared towards examining the influence of Human Resource management practices on employees' commitment amidst socioeconomic stress in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Staff commitment to work in State owned universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria has declined in recent times. Despite the massive recruitment of qualified and experienced categories of employees to coordinate affairs at various levels, the desired returns or output from their efforts have not been attained. Staff commitment is crucial for increased output performance in any organization or higher institution of learning but this seems to have eluded most higher institutions, especially state universities in the North Central Zone, Nigeria. The major question one is bound to ask therefore is "what is responsible for poor rate of employee commitment to work in state universities of North Central Zone of Nigeria?"

It is important to assert that even though commitment to work is a major demand by the management of any organization from its employees, most of the employees undergo challenges in the course of exhibiting commitment to work. On the other hand, most of the universities do their employment without following the due process of human resource management practices of recruiting & selecting, compensating, training & developing and appraising their staff as it should be. Accordingly many state universities have reported very poor commitment in

terms of meeting their obligations which end up affecting the performance of their workplace? The university education in Nigeria is undergoing considerable changes in response to a multiplicity of factors like the development of information and communication technologies, globalization, and advancing network and knowledge society and the marketization in higher education among others. Hence, to ensure effective employee commitment, most successful universities implement credible human resource management practices. Furthermore, universities are expected to provide to communities both local and international market with high-skilled graduates (Darleez et al, 2016) hence the need to adopt best practices of HRM to stimulate university staff commitment which in turn promotes university performance. However, the researcher observe that university standard in Nigeria particularly in North Central Zone is lagging behind due to staff commitment related issues, researches done by Mutahi et al (2015) have mainly focused on HRMP's and performance of universities without exploiting staff commitment. Staff in state universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria can therefore only exhibit or show maximum commitment to work if the right management practices are employed by the management staff of such universities. Therefore, it is based on this realization that the current study is geared towards examining the influence of Human Resource Management Practices on staff commitment in state Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the influence of Human Resource Management practices on staff commitment in North Central Zone, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to;

- i. Examine the influence of Compensation and Benefits on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.
- ii. Examine the influence of Performance Appraisal on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the influence of compensation and benefits on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria?

- ii. What is the influence of Performance Appraisal on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria

Research Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho₁: There is no significant influence of compensation and benefits on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant influence of Performance Appraisal on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Staff Commitment

Commitment is defined as a stabilizing force that acts to maintain behavioural direction when expectancy/equity conditions are not met and do not function. Staff commitment refers to the level of dedication and loyalty that an employee has towards their organization and its goals. It reflects the extent to which employees are willing to invest their time, effort and energy in their work and go above and beyond their basic job requirements. It is a crucial factor in determining employee engagement, productivity and overall organizational performance. It consists of three dimensions and it includes; Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment and Normative Commitment (Innocent-Nwosu et al., 2024).

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment refers to that commitment that an employee has for an organization in which he is working. The staff that manifests affective commitment lives sense of belonging and identification to the organization (Folorunso et al., 2014). Naser (2007) also further stated that affective commitment is when the employee identifies with a particular organization and its goal in order to maintain membership to facilitate the goal

Continuance Commitment

Continuance commitment refers to the accumulated cost/benefit ratio. It is aimed at protecting the employees within the organization (Akintoye & Ofobruku, 2022). Continuance commitment is the willingness of employee to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employees has

which is 'non-transferable' investment. Non-transferable investments include things such as retirement, relationships with other employees. So if not well addressed by the management it could lead to strike actions by the employees in the universities/organization.

Normative Commitment

Normative commitment characterizes the obligation for an employee to remain a member of an organization (Onyeneje, 2015). Normative commitment is the commitment that a person believes that they have to the organization or their feeling of obligation to their workplace. An employee can also get assistance from his institution that can help control his marital stress and when that is not seen can affect his commitment at work generally.

Human Resource Management Practices

Human Resource is a strategic approach to managing an institution's most valuable assets of its staff. The concept of Human Resource involves the planning, organizing directing, and controlling of an organization's human resources to achieve its objectives. According to Gary Dessler (2017) defined as the process of acquiring, training, appraising and rewarding employees and attending to their labor relations, health, safety and fairness concerns. Human Resource Management practices can be defined as the strategies, policies and procedures that an organization uses to manage its workplace and achieve its goals (Gould-Williams, 2007).

These practices include areas such as recruitment and selection, compensation and benefits, training and development and performance appraisal. Ayanda and Sanni (2011) viewed HRM practices to include: recruitment and selection, training and development, career planning performance appraisal and employees participation.

Compensation and Benefits

In the context of work organization, benefit is the reward which an employee receives from an employer or organization for exchanging the service offered by the employee or as a return for work done. However, it is necessary for effective organizational performance. Basically, compensation is a form of reward to make up or a form of appreciation or an

award given to an individual as a make up for a loss, an injury or a suffering. In relation to work process, compensation is a form of monetary award given to an employee in recognition of his sacrifice as a result of loss of time or extra effort put to the work process to enhance the productivity (Byjus, 2020).

Performance Appraisal

A performance appraisal is a regular review of an employee's job performance and the overall contribution to an organization. Also known as 'annual review,' 'performance review or evaluation,' or 'employee appraisal'. Atiomo (2000) agrees with Fajana (1997) that performance appraisal is a system which provides organizations with a means of identifying not only what people's performance levels are but which areas those levels need to be improved if maximum use is to be made of human resource. Rao writes that performance appraisal is the process through which organization takes stock of its manpower in terms of its present performance, the aptitude and interest of each person, his strengths and weakness and his potential for growth.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher reviewed a few theories relevant to the study. They are Social Exchange Theory by Blau, 1964, and Vroom's Expectancy Theory by Vroom (1964) and Human Capital Theory by Gary Becker (1964).

Human Capital Theory (Gary Becker, 1964)

This theory was developed by Gary Becker in (1964). Economist in the past regarded personnel and their capabilities as a capital component and the personnel value was estimated through expenses incurred during production process and capital intensive earning procedures. In relation to this study, human capital theory emphasizes on the value addition that an organization obtain through investment in its staff for future gains and increase commitment. Therefore, universities in North Central States could invest on improving the talents of their staff through training & development, compensation & benefits, performance appraisal and recruitment & selection practices that can be used to generate worthwhile return and ultimately lead to improvement and commitment.

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964)

Social Exchange Theory contested that positive organizational action (stimulus) that is perceived to be 'fair' is the starting point for the proposed model. It also argues that when workplace or organization practices or relationship are effective then both the organization and employees benefits. Social exchange theory is relevant and benefit to the study because, it views social relations as an exchange process of negotiated exchange between parties. It also talks about the reciprocal relationships in which the organization provide a supportive, fair and just environment in exchange for loyalty and commitment on the part of the employees.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964)

Vroom (1964) proposed a theory of motivation that is by-product of how an individual's want something and how likely they think that they are to get the thing.

The theory is relevant because it suggests that universities should recruit and select employees who share similar values and goals, as this can foster a sense of reciprocity and interdependence, training and development provide with opportunities for growth and development as this can enhance their sense of reciprocity and commitment to the organization.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of this study was 9312 staff comprised of 3101 academic staff and 6211 non-academic staff in State Universities in the North Central States, Nigeria. A sample 931 staff (310 academic and 621 non-academic staff) in 3 State universities were selected for the study through simple random sampling technique. Proportionate and stratified sampling techniques were however employed to select a total sample size of 931 staff. A 30-item instrument tagged 'Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Commitment Questionnaire (HRMAPECOQ)' was developed by the researcher which consisted of five sections (Section A-F). Section A constituted the Bio data of staff, while Section B collects information on the influence of Human Resource Management practice of compensation and benefits on employees' commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. Section C collects information on the

influence of human resource management practice of recruitment and selection on employees' commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. Section D elicits information on the influence of human resource management practice of staff training and development on Employees commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. Section E consists of items for ascertaining the influence of human resource management practice of performance appraisal on Employees commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. The instruments were validated by experts in the Departments of Educational Management of Nasarawa State University, Keffi. The experts based on the appropriateness, clarity and relevance after which the corrections were made. The experts using the validation scale based on which the validity index of 0.68 were obtained. The instrument was subjected to pilot- testing. The instrument were then retrieved and

scored. Cronbach Alpha was used to analyze the responses. In the process, a reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained for the management practices and staff commitment questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Any mean value below 2.50 was considered low while those above it were considered high. The hypotheses were however tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test statistics.

Results

Mean and standard deviation was used for answering research question and t-test was used for testing research hypotheses.

Research Question 1: What is the influence of compensation and benefits on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria?

Table 4.1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Respondents on influence of Compensation and Benefits on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev	Remarks
1.	Performance based compensation have led to the enhancement of staff commitment in the university	262	595	72	2	3.20	0.57	Agree
2.	The award of cash bonuses to staff has enhanced Staff commitment to work	335	506	90	0	3.26	0.62	Agree
3.	Management prompt payment of salaries and other allowances influence staff commitment	230	608	71	22	3.12	0.64	Agree
4.	Staff in the university exhibit greater desire for promotion as a form of commitment	406	229	142	94	3.15	1.02	Agree
5.	The provision of fringe benefits such free transportation and accommodation enhances Staff job commitment	253	364	249	65	2.86	0.90	Agree
6.	Giving out token gifts has helped in improving Staff job commitment	134	659	69	69	2.92	0.71	Agree
Cluster Mean						3.09	0.74	

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.1 shows the mean and standard deviation scores of respondents regarding the influence of recruitment and compensation and benefits on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. It is observed from the table that most of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed to the items on the questionnaire. The cluster mean is given as 3.09. This value is above the mean benchmark value

of 2.50 for a four point likert scaled questionnaire. Thus, compensation and benefits has a high influence on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of Performance Appraisal on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria?

Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Respondents on Influence of Performance Appraisal on Staff Commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev	Remarks
1.	Feedback provided during performance appraisal is constructive and actionable for staff development and this enhances commitment	230	608	71	22	3.12	0.62	Agree
2.	Performance appraisal in the university contributes to staff professional growth and development thereby enhancing commitment	136	663	67	65	2.93	0.70	Agree
3.	Performance appraisal of staff fosters commitment among staff with respect to their academic work and administrative duties	157	528	158	108	2.75	0.85	Agree
4.	Continuous performance appraisals enables staff to understand the institution's expectations their and responsibilities	134	659	69	69	2.93	0.71	Agree
5.	Performance appraisals helps staff to develop a sense of accountability regarding their jobs	262	595	72	2	3.20	0.57	Agree
6.	Appraising the performance of staff propels them to work better to improve their level of productivity at work	335	506	90	0	3.26	0.62	Agree
Cluster Mean						3.03	0.68	

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.2 shows the mean and standard deviation scores of respondents regarding the influence of performance appraisal on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. It is observed from the table that most of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed to the items on the questionnaire. The cluster mean is given as 3.03. This value is above the mean benchmark value of 2.50 for a four point likert scaled questionnaire. Thus,

performance appraisal has a high influence on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Testing of the Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of compensation and benefits on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Table 4.3: T-test Statistics on Influence of Compensation and Benefits on Staff Commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria Variables

Variables	N	Df	Mean	Std Dev	t-cal	t-tab	Sig	Decision
Compensation and Benefits	931		3.09	0.74				
		930			12.60	1.96	0.62	Significant
Staff Commitment	931		3.07	0.72				

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The result on Table 4.3 above shows the t-test statistics for ascertaining the influence of compensation and benefits on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. The results show that at

mean values 3.09 and 3.07 and standard deviation values of 0.74 and 0.72 respectively, the calculated value of t is given as 12.60. It is observed that the calculated value of t-test is higher than the table value of 1.96. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.000 is less than

0.05 level of significance. Hence, there is a significant influence of compensation and benefits on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant influence of performance appraisal and staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Table 4.4: T-test Statistics on Influence of Performance Appraisal on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria Variables

Variables	N	Df	Mean	Std Dev	t-cal	t-tab	Sig	Decision
Performance Appraisal	931		3.03	0.68				
		930			16.30	1.96	0.019	Significant
Staff Commitment	931		3.07	0.72				

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The result on Table 4.4 above showed the t-test statistics for ascertaining the influence of performance appraisal on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. The results show that at mean values 2.96 and 3.0794 and standard deviation values of 0.80 and 0.78 respectively, the calculated value of t is given as 19.20. It is observed that the calculated value of t-test is higher than the table value of 1.96. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.019 is less than 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there is a significant influence of training and development on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Discussions of Findings

Findings on hypothesis 1 indicated there is a significant influence of compensation and benefits on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. Jenifer (2016), examine the influence of compensation policy on employee commitment at Teachers Service Commission in Kenya. Kariuki, (2020) examined the Influence of perceived employee benefits programs on employee job satisfaction at Kenya Railways Corporation. Results from the study revealed there was significant Influence of perceived employee benefits programs on employee job satisfaction at Kenya.

The second finding of the study showed that there is a significant influence of performance appraisal and staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. Atiomo (2000) agrees with Fajana (1997) that performance appraisal is a system which provides organizations with a means of identifying not only what people's performance levels

are but which areas those levels need to be improved if maximum use is to be made of human resource. According to Atiomo, every organization should ensure that the individual is clearly aware of what his functions and responsibilities are to make performance appraisal effective.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were draw for the study that there is a significant influence of compensation and benefits on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria. There is a significant influence of performance appraisal on staff commitment in State Universities in North Central Zone, Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. Benefits and compensation packages should be enhanced in state universities of North Central Nigeria in order to promote staff welfare so that staff can concentrate and become effective in their jobs.
2. Regular appraisal of staff performances should be conducted to appraise staff members for the purpose of motivating them and recommending them for promotion in order to reward them for their level of commitments.

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