

## **Exploring the Nexus between Human Resource Management Practices and Job Commitment among Staff of Private Universities in Southeast Nigeria**

By

**Chukwujekwu Charles Onwuka, Tochukwu Emmanuel Madu,  
& George Igboanugo Nweke**

### **Abstract**

One of the important elements for employees' organisational commitment is the nature of Human Resource Management Practices (HRMPs) existing within the organisation. Yet, the influence of HRMPs has not been empirically investigated particularly within the context of the University system. This study was therefore positioned to investigate the influence of HRMPs on employees' organisational commitment in selected private Universities within the Southeast Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive correlational survey research design. The sample size for the study was 195 employees comprising of 83 males and 112 females, who were selected across the academic and non-academic staff categories through the self-sampling technique. Data for the study were collected through a web-based questionnaire administration which measured the two variables introduced in this study. Data collected were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software package version 26. Descriptive statistics including frequency count and simple percentage were used to analyse the socio-demographic variables and presented using tables and charts, while the research question was answered using the linear regression analysis in order to determine the influence of HRMPs on employees' organisational performance. Findings of the regression model showed that HRMPs statistically significantly influenced the organisational commitment of employees within the selected private Universities. The study therefore recommended among other things that, the need for management of private Universities to engage competent human resource personnel who can design appropriate programs and practices that could ensure employees' commitment to their organisations.

*Keywords:* employees, commitment, human resource, practices, private universities

## **Introduction**

One of the important elements for employees' organisational commitment is the nature of Human Resource Management Practices (HRMPs) existing within the organisation. HRMPs have been described as the practices, systems, and policies that influence the behaviour, performance, and attitudes of employees (De Cieri et al., 2008). It often entails patterns of selecting human resource needs, practices regarding addressing safety and health issues of employees, employee recruitment practices, training practices, reward and compensation, appraisal systems, creation of conducive working environment (Saifalislam, Osman & AlQudah, 2014), among others. HRMPs are very vital considering the fact that it is the major organisational mechanism that ensures the conduciveness as well as the welfare of the employees. Thus, while positive HRMPs promote a conducive atmosphere that could influence the commitment of employees and promote organisational efficiency, negative HRMPs do the opposite.

It has been established within extant academic literature that HRMPs have a link with various employee and organisation variables. For instance, HRMPs and employee job satisfaction (Bastida, Marimon & Carreras, 2018; Maimako & Bambale, 2016), HRMPs and employee turnover (Ozolina-Ozola, 2014), HRMPs and organisational performance (2021), HRMPs and employee retention (Imna & Hassan, 2015), among other studies. This present study is however interested in exploring the relationship between the nature of HRMPs and employees' organisational commitment, which seems to be a scanty area within the extant empirical researches on organisational behaviour.

This research direction is important for this present study because employee organisational commitment has been described as one of the important organisational variables that promote overall productivity of organisations (Oyewobi, Oke, Adeneye & Jimoh, 2019). It refers to an individual employees' sense of attachment and loyalty to his or her organisation (Kessler, 2013). Employees' organisational commitment is often measured when they are willing to exert effort to achieve their organisational goals, and when they desire to maintain their connection with the organisation (Kessler, 2013). However, employees' commitment to the organisation does not occur in a vacuum, rather certain variables are important in explaining employees' organisational

commitment, of which, the nature of HRMPs could be one of them. Previous studies have shown that employees' who are satisfied with the nature of their organisations' HRMPs are often motivated and tend to commit passionately to their organisational goals, while those who are dissatisfied with the HRMPs are often demoralized and tend to shy away from the organisational goals (Cherif, 2020).

A scoping review through various research databases such as Google, PubMed, Science Direct, JSTOR, among others, proved that few researches have actually been conducted on the nexus between HRMPs and employees' organisational commitment (Aboramadan, Albashiti, Alharazin & Dahleez, 2019; Jawaad, Amir, Bashir & Hasan, 2019). However, such researches were conducted outside the context of private Universities; besides the studies were conducted in other geographical contexts outside the present study area. Hence, within the present study area, there is a gap in empirical research in relation to HRMPs and employees' organisational commitment. Consequently, this present study intends to investigate how the nature of HRMPs existing within the private Universities in the Southeast Nigeria influences the commitment of the employees to their organisations. A study of this nature has the potential of providing information on the policy directions that could enhance HRMPs within the University community, which would ultimately enhance employees' organisational commitment.

### **Research Question**

1. How does the nature of HRMPs influence organisational commitment among employees of selected private Universities in the Southeast Nigeria?

### **Methods**

#### *Participants*

This study was conducted among 195 employees (Males = 83, Females = 122) in two selected private Universities within the Southeast Nigeria, who aged between a minimum age of 24 years to a maximum age of 59 years, with a mean age of 35.9 years. The respondents included both the academic and non academic staff within the two selected private Universities. Considering that the study was conducted within an academic environment, all the respondents completed at least the secondary school level of

education which is an indication that all respondent could respond effectively to the research theme. The respondents were selected through self-selection sampling technique in which respondents participated voluntarily in the survey. This is considering the fact that the respondents participated in the study through a web-based data collection system (Google Form data collection tool).

### *Materials*

This study used the descriptive correlational design which according to Sousa, Driessnack and Mendes (2007) helps to describe the variables in a research and the relationships that occur naturally between and among them. In trying to determine the relationship among variables in this study, a web-based questionnaire was developed based on existing literature on the study variables. The questionnaire consisted of two parts – the first part contained multiple response items which were designed to collect information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second part consisted of two sets of questions designed to measure the variables introduced in this study. The first set was titled ‘Human Resource Management Practices Questionnaire (HMRPsQ)’ which was used to measure the nature of HRMPs existing in the selected private Universities. It consisted of 7-items scale that was designed to measure different aspects of HRMPs. The items were designed on 5-point Likert-type response options ranging from ‘1’ – Very poor to ‘5’ – very good. An example of the question is ‘How would you rate your organisation in terms of: i) providing security to employees?’ with response options of 5 – very good, 4 – fair, 3 – neither good nor poor, 2 – poor, and 1 – very poor. The second set in the second part of the questionnaire was titled ‘Employees’ Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (EOCQ)’. It contained 9-item scale designed to measure employees’ organisational commitment. The items were equally designed on 5-point Likert scale response options ranging from ‘5 – strongly agree, to ‘1’ – strongly disagree. An example of the items is ‘I am willing to put in a great deal of effort to help achieve the goals of this organisation’; with response options of 5 – strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – undecided, 2 – disagree, and 1 – strongly disagree.

### *Procedure*

The instrument was administered to the respondents through different social media groups for the staff of the selected private

Universities. First the researcher was able to get insiders persons in the two selected Universities who linked him up with the social media group administrators for the Universities' staff. After linking with the administrators, the researcher expressed the research his research intention as well as seeking their help in uploading the survey link to their various groups. In all, three different social media groups including Whatsapp, Telegram and Facebook were identified and used for data collection. Research confidentiality was guaranteed through the help of the groups' administrators who assured them the questionnaire link was authentic, as well as giving them the confidence that the research was purely for academic purpose. This was however, supplemented by the letter contained in the introductory part of the online-questionnaire, which informed them about the purpose of the research and equally informed them that the research was purely for academic purpose. The response time for the questionnaire was approximately 10 minutes. In order to avoid multiple entries, the questionnaire was customised in such a way that only one instance of data entry can be submitted by each participating respondent, which means that each respondent was allowed to complete the survey only once. Considering that data collection was online-based, a timeline of two weeks was set for the data collection process, after which any other entry was discarded. Thus, only data entries or responses obtained within the set timeline were used for data analysis. At the end of data timeline, only 195 data entries were obtained and used for data analysis. Data obtained in the original Excel format were transformed into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) data format, which allowed flexibility in process all the relevant data.

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis in this present study involved first, descriptive analysis of the socio-demographic variables using frequency count and simple percentage and presented in a composite table. Thereafter, the research question was answered using the linear regression analysis. Using the 'compute' function in SPSS, responses obtained from the seven items measuring HRMPs were summed to form a single variable. Likewise, same process was repeated for the nine items that measured employees' organisational commitment. This facilitated the cross tabulation of the two variables in order to test the relationship between them

## Results

**Table 1.**

*Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Males	83	42.6
Females	112	57.4
Total	195	100.0
<b>Age Categories</b>		
27 - 32 Years	15	7.7
33 - 38 Years	44	22.6
39 - 44 Years	21	10.8
45 - 50 Years	84	43.1
51 - 56 Years	31	15.9
Total	195	100.0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	56	28.7
Married	105	53.8
Separated	11	5.6
Divorced	10	5.1
Widowed	13	6.7
Total	195	100.0
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Secondary School	18	9.2
Tertiary (Diploma)	55	28.2
Tertiary (Bachelors)	45	23.1
Tertiary (Post-graduate)	77	39.5
Total	195	100.0
<b>Employees' Category</b>		
Non-Academic Staff	116	59.5
Academic Staff	79	40.5
Total	195	100.0

As contained in table 1, female respondents (57.4%) were more represented in the study compared to the proportion of males (42.6%) that participated in the study. The median age of the respondents was 35 years, with those aged between the ages of 45-50 years constituting majority (43.1%) within the population. Slightly above half proportion (53.8%) of the respondents was married compared to about a quarter proportion (28.7%) of them who were single. In terms of education, the largest proportion (39.5%) of them attained up to the Post-graduate level. This is not quite surprising since this study was conducted within the academic environment. However, the non-academic staff

constituted majority (59.5%) of the respondents compared to a slightly lower proportion (40.5%) of the academic staff.

Table 2 presents the result of the regression analysis which was run to answer the research question.

**Table 2.**

*Regression analysis showing the influence of HRMPs on Employees' Organisational Commitment*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup>
1	Regression	66.403	1	66.403	7.942	.005 <sup>b</sup>	.035
	Residual	1613.731	193	8.361			
	Total	1680.133	194				

a. Dependent Variable: Organisational Commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), HRMPs

**Table 3.**

*Regression Coefficients*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16.593	1.250		13.274	.000
	HRMPs	.192	.068	.199	2.818	.005

a. Dependent Variable: Organisational Commitment

In the regression model, the dependent variable (Employees' organisational commitment) was regressed on the predictor variable (HRMPs) in order to predict the relationship between the two variables. Result of the test showed that HRMPs statistically significantly influenced employees' organisational commitment,  $F(1, 194) = 7.942$ ,  $p = .005$ . However, the  $R^2$  value was .035, which indicates that the model only explains about 3.5% variability in the dependent variable (Employees' organisational commitment).

### Conclusion/Recommendations

The important of HRMPs to the organisational commitment of employees cannot be overemphasised. This aim of this study was to investigate the nexus between HRMPs and organisational commitment among employees of private Universities in the

Southeast Nigeria. This study has successfully described the influence of HRMPs on employees' organisational commitment within the context of private Universities in Nigeria, with particular reference to the Southeast Nigeria. This is an addition to the extant empirical researches on organisational management with specific reference to the University context. This study was also envisaged as a good step in the right direction to establishing the fact that HRMPs is very important for the promotion of employees' organisational commitment, which is a panacea for the overall organisational productivity. Based on the findings obtained from this study, it is concluded that the nature of HRMPs existing within the private Universities in the Southeast Nigeria, has a serious implication on the organisational commitment of the employees. This reinforces the fact that positive HRMPs are panacea for the commitment of the employees towards their organisational goals. Employees who feel satisfied with the HRMPs are likely to commit themselves to the organisational goals, whereas, those who feel dissatisfied with it are likely to be less committed to their organisations. Given the challenges associated with the HRMPs within the Universities' environment in Nigeria, which often create negative feelings for the employees, it is important that steps are taken to ensure that the human resource departments in various private Universities in Nigeria, particularly within the Southeast Nigeria are repositioned to align with the current global practices in human resource management. Based on the foregoing, the following are recommended:

1. There is need for management of private Universities in Nigeria, particularly within the Southeast zone, to engage competent human resource personnel who can design appropriate programs and practices that could ensure employees' commitment to their organisations.
2. There is equally need for the human resource department of private Universities to understand the different aspects of HRMPs that favour both the employees as well as the overall organisational growth, an design policies that could incorporate such aspects into the HRMPs within their organisations.
3. Steps need to be taken by the human resource department to address the unpleasant issues in the HRMPs particularly in the areas of health, compensation, flexible tasks and professional development.



## References

- Aboramadan, M., Albashiti, B., Alharazin, H., & Dahleez, K. A. (2019). Human resources management practices and organizational commitment in higher education: The mediating role of work engagement. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 34(1), 154-174. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-04-2019-0160>
- Al Adresi, A., & Darun, M. R. (2017). Determining relationship between strategic human resource management practices and organizational commitment. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, 9, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1847979017731669>
- Anwar, G., & Abdullah, N. N. (2021). The impact of human resource management practice on Organizational performance. *International journal of Engineering, Business and Management (IJEEM)*, 5(1). <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3824689>
- Bastida, R., Marimon, F., & Carreras, L. (2018). Human resource management practices and employee job satisfaction in nonprofit organizations. *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics*, 89(2), 323-338. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apce.12181>
- Cherif, F. (2020). The role of human resource management practices and employee job satisfaction in predicting organizational commitment in Saudi Arabian banking sector. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 40(7/8), 529-541. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-10-2019-0216>
- Imna, M., & Hassan, Z. (2015). Influence of human resource management practices on employee retention in Maldives retail industry. *International Journal of Accounting &*

Business Management, 3(1), 50-80. [https://doi:10.24924/ijabm/2015.04/v3.iss1/50.80](https://doi.org/10.24924/ijabm/2015.04/v3.iss1/50.80)

Jawaad, M., Amir, A., Bashir, A., & Hasan, T. (2019). Human resource practices and organizational commitment: The mediating role of job satisfaction in emerging economy. *Cogent Business & Management*, 6(1), 1608668. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2019.1608668>

Kessler, E. H. (2013). *Encyclopedia of management theory*. Washinton DC: Sage Publications, Inc.

Maimako, L. B., & Bambale, A. J. A. (2016). Human resource management practices and employee job satisfaction in Kano Stateowned Universities: A conceptual model. *Journal of Marketing & Management*, 7(2), 1-16.

Oyewobi, L. O., Oke, A. E., Adeneye, T. D., & Jimoh, R. A. (2019). Influence of organizational commitment on work–life balance and organizational performance of female construction professionals. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*, 26(10), 2243-2263. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ECAM-07-2018-0277>

Ozolina-Ozola, I. (2014). The impact of human resource management practices on employee turnover. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 156, 223-226. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.11.178>

Saifalislam, K. M., Osman, A., & AlQudah, M.K. (2014). Human resource management practices: Influence of recruitment and selection, and training and development on the organizational performance of the Jordanian public university. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 16(5), 43-46. <https://www.iosrjournals.org>

Sousa, V. D., Driessnack, M., & Mendes, I. A. C. (2007). An overview of research designs relevant to nursing: Part 1:

quantitative research designs. *Revista Latino-Americana de Enfermagem*, 15(3). <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-11692007000300022>

**\*About the Authors:** Dr Chukwujekwu Charles Onwuka (cc.onwuka@coou.edu.ng) is a lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State, Nigeria, while Dr Tochukwu Emmanuel Madu (emmanuel.madu@gmail.com) and George Igboanugo Nweke (gi.nweke@coou.edu.ng) are of the Department of Criminology and Security Studies of the same university.