

# Does a Transformational and Transactional Leadership Style Predict Organizational Commitment among Public University Lecturers in Nigeria?

Jamilah Othman<sup>1</sup>, Kabeer Abdullahi Mohammed<sup>1</sup> & Jeffrey Lawrence D'Silva<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Laboratory of Citizenship & Leadership, Institute for Social Science Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Malaysia

Correspondence: Jamilah Othman, Laboratory of Citizenship & Leadership, Institute for Social Science Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Putra Infoport, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia. Tel: 60-19-328-9493. Email: jeffrey@ipsas.upm.edu.my

Received: June 21, 2012 Accepted: October 3, 2012 Online Published: December 31, 2012

doi:10.5539/ass.v9n1p165

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v9n1p165>

## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to seek the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment among Nigerian public university lecturers. Survey research design was employed to collect data from one hundred and fifty one (151) Nigerian public university lecturers currently undergoing their post-graduate studies in selected Malaysian universities. The study established that the leadership styles of top management in Nigerian universities influence organizational commitment among the lecturers. It is hope that the findings of the study will be a guide for the relevant authorities in Nigeria in drafting policies in the universities.

**Keywords:** Nigeria, leadership styles, university lecturers

## 1. Introduction

There is an unanimous agreement that education plays a very significant role in transforming the fortune of a country. It is due to this advantage that some developing countries around the world are investing in their educational system. As such, Nigeria's quest to be among the top twenty economies in the world will not be achieved without a quality university educational system that is effective in achieving the vision of the country as it strive to achieve vision 2020. Like in many other countries in the world, the goals of universities in Nigeria are primarily centered on research, teaching, and contribute to manpower development through dissemination of credible information for their immediate community and humanity in general. In order to carry out this important function Nigerian universities are confronted with two challenges, one is getting committed employees especially the academic staff, the other challenge has to do with getting effective leaders that have the required skills in unleashing the potentials of the employees.

It is based on the above scenario that this research seek to study the factors that influence organization commitment among Nigerian University lecturers in order to keep them on their job and also contribute to the vision of the country in achieving a vibrant university. One of the factors that influence organizational commitment that researchers have worked extensively in the literature is leadership (Burns 1978; Bass 1985; Bass and Stogdill 1990; Asgari, et al. 2008; Lussier and Achua 2009).

Furthermore, based on review of literature on organizational commitment, there is substantial evidence that suggest that committed employees are found to perform better in their responsibilities, also they engage in less absenteeism, stay longer and engage in organizational citizenship behavior (Chughtai and Zafar 2006). In this regard, over the years, studies that investigated the proposed linkages between leadership styles and organizational commitment have increased tremendously across many disciplines (Buchanan 1974; Pirola et al. 2002; Avolio, et al. 2004). The main concern of these researchers was to gain more insight into nature on how leadership styles influence organization commitment (Asgari, et al. 2008). However, as a result of many challenges facing university educational system in Nigeria which include inadequate funding, failure to meet staff expectation, industrial actions and violent demonstration by student's and a host of other problems associated with the system the universities are found to be lacking behind in achieving the main purpose which they were originally set up to achieve.

## 2. Review of Organizational Commitment Theories

A review of organizational literature has pointed out that the first theory was developed by Becker et al (1960) which is known as the side-bets theory. According to the theory, the relationship between employee and organization is purely based on economic exchange of reward. The term side-bet connotes accumulation of investment value by individuals. The theory proposed a strong relationship between employee's turnover behavior and organizational commitment. Furthermore, the side-bets theory identified organizational commitment as a major predictor of employee's voluntary turnover. However, by the late 1960s side-bets theory was found to be grossly inadequate in explaining employee's organizational commitment as most of the factors identified by the theory concentrated on economic exchange giving other factors that might influence employee organizational commitment little attention.

As a result of this inadequacy, Porter et al (1974) came up with middle-affective dependence theory. The theory seeks to explain psychological attachment an employee has with the organization. However, the affective dependence school does not rule out economic reward as a factor that influences commitment rather they see it as a kind of attitude-centered being influenced by economic reward. In other words according to this theory, employees are committed with their organizations basically because of attitude while the economic benefit served as a means to achieve their goals. The theory proposed three factors that influence organizational commitment. Furthermore, by the early 1980s a new approach to the study of organizational commitment came up known as the multi-dimension period. Previous theories were all considered as one dimension approach. The multi-dimension approach seeks to further explain employee's commitment by looking at it from different angles. The most prominent theories are the works of O'reilly and Chatman theory (1986), and Mayer and Allen (1997).

According to O'reilly and Chatman (1986) employees are committed to organization basically because of compliance or instrumental involvement, internalization or involvement predicted on the congruence between individual and organizational values, identification and involvement based on desire for affiliation. Furthermore, from the early 1990s there has been new approach to the study of organizational commitment especially from the works of Meyer & Allen (1993, 1997) which they classified as affective, continuous and normative commitment. Research conducted over the years revealed that even though there are many factors that influence employee commitment like occupation, career, manager, etc., leadership styles were found to be the important predictor towards organizational commitment (Bass and Avolio, et al 1995, Ben-Bakr, et al. 1994; Lok and Crawford 2001).

Hence, the aim of this study is to determine the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment among Nigerian public university lecturers.

## 3. Methodology

In conducting this study, data was collected on transformational and transactional leadership through an instrument known as Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995). In order to measure Nigerian public university lecturer's organizational commitment (dependent variable) an instrument developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was utilized. Prior to actual data collection a pre-test was conducted on a total number of 30 Nigerian public university lecturers who had enrolled as postgraduate students of International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The result of the pre testing indicated a high Cronbach alpha for the entire construct which ranges between .86 to .90 exceeding Nunnally (1978) recommended threshold. In terms of validity of the instruments the MLQ and OCQ were validated from previous researches, and a number of experts have agreed on its internal consistency before administering it on the respondents (Sarror and Santora, 2001, Meyer and Allen, 1997, Brown 2003).

The population of this study consisted of Nigerian public university lecturers currently undergoing postgraduate studies in a selected Malaysian Universities. The research utilized simple random sampling as its' sampling technique, while the selection of sample size was based on the formula by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The respondents were assured confidentiality and were given time to answer the questionnaires without any interruption. The total number of Nigerian public university lecturers from the selected universities obtained is about three hundred and eighty (380) lecturers. One hundred and eighty-one (181) respondents were selected using the table of random numbers. The questionnaires were handed over to the respective respondents from the selected sample of the population. At the end of the exercise, one-hundred and fifty-one questionnaires were fully completed and returned to the researchers representing a response rate of about 88.3% exceeding the recommended threshold of 60%.

#### 4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the latest SPSS statistical software. Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to see first if there is any correlation between leadership styles and organizational commitment. . Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to examine which of the variables contribute more in explaining organizational commitment among the lecturers as well as to examine the significance of the variables in the research model.

#### 5. Result

The following are the result of this study, showing Pearson correlation analysis and multi linear regression analysis

Table 1. Pearson correlation

|                                 | Organizational commitment<br>Pearson Correlation |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Individualized consideration    | .503**                                           |
| Intellectual stimulation        | .516**                                           |
| Inspirational motivation        | .537**                                           |
| Idealized influence behavior    | .431**                                           |
| Idealized influence attributed  | .560**                                           |
| Management by exception active  | .451**                                           |
| Management by exception passive | .502**                                           |
| Contingent reward               | .489**                                           |

\*\* Correlation is significant at .01 level (2 tail)

Table 2. Anova table

| Model |            | Sum of square | Df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig               |
|-------|------------|---------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 32.779        | 8   | 4.097       | 10.34 | .000 <sup>a</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 55.760        | 142 | .393        |       |                   |
|       | Total      | 88.539        | 150 |             |       |                   |

Table 3. Coefficient table

| Model                           | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients |       | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics |       |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|-------------------------|-------|
|                                 | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      | T     |      | Tolerance               | VIF   |
| 1 (Constant)                    | 1.016                       | .376       |                           | 2.702 | .008 |                         |       |
| Idealizedinfluence (behavior)   | .288                        | .138       | .262                      | 2.091 | .038 | .282                    | 3.547 |
| Idealizedinfluence(attributed)  | .003                        | .120       | .003                      | .029  | .977 | .429                    | 2.333 |
| Inspirational motivation        | .131                        | .153       | .117                      | .850  | .397 | .236                    | 4.235 |
| Intellectual stimulation        | -.029                       | .171       | -.026                     | -.167 | .868 | .189                    | 5.279 |
| Individualized consideration    | .197                        | .101       | .189                      | 1.957 | .052 | .473                    | 2.113 |
| Contingent reward               | .099                        | .134       | .083                      | .735  | .464 | .345                    | 2.900 |
| Management by exception passive | .111                        | .128       | .099                      | .868  | .387 | .343                    | 2.914 |
| Management by exception active  | -.038                       | .150       | -.028                     | -.254 | .800 | .356                    | 2.807 |

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment

Table 4. Model summary

| Model | R     | R Square | Adjusted Square | R Std. Error of the F | df     | df | Sig. Change | F   |
|-------|-------|----------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------|----|-------------|-----|
| 1     | .608a | .370     | .335            | .62664                | 10.434 | 8  | .000        | 142 |

## 6. Discussion

The overall objective of this study was to examine if transformational and transactional leadership styles predict organizational commitment among public university lecturers in Nigeria. Based on previous studies many factors have been identified as potential predictors of organizational commitment. Over the years, researchers have found that gender, race, personality, fairness of policies, age, attitudes, climate, and culture values, decentralization, job challenges as potential factors that predict organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997, Larrocca, 2003, Kabacoff, 2001, Oshagbemi, 2004). However, some researchers suggest that even though other factors are involved, commitment to the organization is probably most reflective of how employees feel about leaders and the behaviors they exhibit (Asgari et al 2008).

This study offers additional insight into how transformational and transactional leadership predict organizational commitment among university lecturers in Nigeria. From the result of correlation analysis as in Table 1, it revealed that there is a positive correlation between leadership styles and organizational commitment. This result supports other research findings for example Brown (2003) and Sarror and Santora (2001) that reported similar correlation among transformational leadership sub-scales and commitment. Bass and Avolio (1997) also suggested correlation among the transformational and transactional sub-scales and commitment. Idealized influence (attributed) was found to be the variable that has the highest positive correlation ( $r=.560$ ). According to Sarror and Santora (2001), leaders who display this kind of leadership styles give consideration to their followers by encouraging and coaching them to develop appropriate working behavior. Furthermore, since leaders' behavior in workplace is very important to employees, they are expected to trust and have faith in the leader's decisions and actions (Sarros and Santora 2001). From the coefficient table 3 above since neither of the predictor variables have a variance inflation factor (VIF) greater than ten. The highest VIF from the table is intellectual stimulation (5.279), therefore there is no apparent multicollinearity problems in the coefficient table. In other words, there is no variable in the model that is measuring the same relationship as is measured by another variable or group of variables. In addition based on the collinearity diagnostic table obtained, none of the model dimensions had condition index equal to or above the threshold value of 30.0, none of tolerance value smaller than 0.10 and VIF statistics are less than 10.0. This indicated that there is no serious multicollinearity problem among the predictor variables of the estimated model.

From Table 2, the result of the Anova showed that the F. ratio obtained (F 10.434) and the p value from the model is significant at .000. Therefore this result suggested that final model fit the regression model proposed. Meanwhile, Table 3 displayed that the largest beta coefficient obtained was .262 for idealized influence attributed and this is a significant predictor. This means that the variable makes a unique contribution in explaining the dependent variable organizational commitment, when the variance explained by all other predictor variable was controlled.

Furthermore, from the model summary in Table 4, the adjusted  $R^2$  is 33.5 and this implies that the predictor variable is able to explain about 33.5% of the variation/variance in organizational commitment. Therefore about 33.5% of the variation in organizational commitment is explained by transformational and transactional leadership styles. Based on this value, the model is said to explain adequate variance meaning that leadership styles is an important predictor of organizational commitment among public university lecturers in Nigeria. Comparing this result with previous research findings like that of Brown (2003), Asgari et al (2008) and Howell et al (2003) maintained that transformational and transactional leadership styles are important for the realization of goals in organizations this study also support is in line with the argument. Researchers contend that leaders can be both transformational and transactional and that leader's actions within organization contribute significantly to employee's organizational commitment.

As stated earlier in the research question proposed in chapter one of this study if there is any relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment among Nigerian University lecturers? The findings support the research question. However, given that this findings support those of other researchers, the result of organizational commitment questionnaire revealed a high alpha this might not be unconnected with the fact that organizational commitment was treated as whole. In order words the three types of organizational commitment comprising (Affective, Normative and Continuous) were treated as a single variable. The rationale for doing this

was because to examine the overall level of organizational commitment among Nigerian lecturers and this explain the high alpha obtained .90. Meyer and Allen (1997) explained that this pattern of correlations is expected because the three subscales represent successively higher frequencies of active organizational commitment. Normative commitment where employees want to stay and continue working with the organization, continuous commitment where connotes the need to stay with the organization because the cost of leaving is too high. And affective commitment which refers to feeling of emotionally attached with the organization. Examining the variables together give us a clear picture of organizational commitment among the lecturers.

Furthermore, the pattern of scores obtained from this data suggests that some lecturers perceived their immediate supervisors as not exhibiting the inspirational motivational behavior levels of transformational leadership behaviors it was found to be the less important contributor variable. The key element in inspirational motivation is motivating followers by raising their consciousness on organizational mission and vision. Leaders that are rated high on inspirational motivation are found to communicate the vision of the organization by using gesture and symbols. In addition, inspirational motivation included engendering trust, inspiring a shared vision, generating enthusiasm, encouraging creativity, and providing coaching this was found to be lacking among the top management in Nigerian universities.

## 7. Conclusions

The overall purpose of the current study was to examine the influence of leadership on organizational commitment among Nigerian public university lecturers. The result of the study indicated that transformational and transactional leadership styles are positively related to employee organizational commitment among Nigerian public University lecturers. Therefore based on this study, leadership behavior that involves generating enthusiasm, recognizing accomplishments, providing direction, and encouraging creativity do explain some variation in how lecturers feel in wanting to stay and continuing working in Nigerian public universities. Furthermore, the predictor variable explained about 33.5 percent of variance of organizational commitment. The conceptual framework used for this study can emerge as reasonable model in the field of leadership considering that the predictor variable in the model explained adequate variance (33.3%). From the methodological perspective, the selection of the group of Nigerian university lecturers studying in Malaysian universities were found to be useful in exploring leadership styles of the top management in Nigerian public universities. Not only that the researcher had access to the respondents but also the representation of lecturers from different universities was quite useful. Hence, this study would be a platform for future research in Nigerian universities.

Future research will look into the influence of leadership styles on different types of organizational commitment (affective, continuous and normative) in public universities. In addition research will also look into social demographic factors that explain leadership behaviors among top management in the universities.

## References

- Asgari, A., Silong, A., D. Ahmed, A., & Abu Samah, B. (2008). The relationship between transformational leadership behaviors, organizational justice, leader-member exchange, perceived organizational support, trust in management and organizational citizenship behaviors. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, 23, 227-242.
- Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. (1995). Individual consideration viewed at multiple levels of analysis: A multi-level framework for examining the diffusion of transformational leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 6, 199-218. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843\(95\)90035-7](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(95)90035-7)
- Avolio, B. J., Zhu, W., Koh, W., & Bhatia., P. (2004). Transformational leadership and organizational commitment, Mediating role of psychological empowerment and moderating role of structural distance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25, 951-968. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/job.283>
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York, Free Press LTD.
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Bass, B., & Avolio, B. (1997). *Full range leadership development: Manual for the multifactor leadership questionnaire*. Redwood City, CA: Mind Garden.
- Becker, G. S., Duesenberry, J. S., & Okun, B. (1960). *An economic analysis of fertility*. Columbia University Press.
- Becker, T. E., Billings, R. S. Eveleth, D. M., & Gilbert, N. L. (1996). Foci and bases of employee commitment, Implications for job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39, 464-482.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/256788>

- Becker, T., & Billings, R. (1993). Profiles of commitment: An empirical test. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 14, 177-190. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/job.4030140207>
- Ben-Bakr, K. A., Al-Shammari, I. S., Jefri, O. A., & Prasad, J. N. (1994). Organizational commitment, satisfaction, and turnover in Saudi organizations: A predictive study. *Journal of Socio-Economics*, 23, 449-456. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1053-5357\(94\)90014-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1053-5357(94)90014-0)
- Bohn, J. G. (2002). The relationship of perceived leadership behaviors to organizational efficacy. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, 9, 65-79. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/107179190200900206>
- Brown, B. B. (2003). Employees' organizational commitment and their perception of supervisors relations-oriented and task-oriented leadership behaviors. PhD Thesis. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- Brown, F. W., Bryant, S. E., & Reilly, M. D. (2006). Does emotional intelligence as measured by the influence transformational leadership and/or desirable outcomes? *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 5, 330-351. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01437730610677954>
- Buchanan, B. (1974). Building organizational commitment: the socialization of managers in work organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 19, 533-546. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2391809>
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, Harper and Row Publishers.
- Chughtai, A. A., & Zafar, S. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment among Pakistani university teachers. *Applied HRM Research*, 11, 39-64.
- Howell, J. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1993) Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, locus of control, and support for innovation: Key predictors of consolidated-business-unit performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 891-902. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.78.6.891>
- Krejcie R., V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining Sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30, 607-610.
- Larocca, M. A. (2003). Perception of leadership qualities in higher education, Impact of professor gender, professor leader style, situation, and participant gender. PhD Thesis. University of South Florida.
- Lok, P., & Crawford, J. (2001). Antecedents of organizational commitment and the mediating role of job satisfaction. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 16, 594-613. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EUM000000006302>
- Lussier, R. N., & Achua, C. F. (2009). *Leadership: Theory, application, & skill development*. South-Western Pub.
- Meyer, J. P., Allen, A. N., & Smith, C. N. (1993). Commitment to organizations and occupations: Extension and test of a three-component conceptualization. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 538-551. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.78.4.538>
- Meyer, J., & Allen, N. (1997). *Commitment in the workplace*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- National Planning commission of Nigerian. (2009). *Nigeria's Vision 2020: Economic Transformation blue print, NTWGS induction Program*. Retrieved 23 March, 2012, from: <http://www.npc.gov.ng>
- Nunnally, J. (1987). *Psychometric Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Sarros, J. C., & Santora, J. C. (2001). The transformational-transactional leadership model in practice. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 22(8), 383-394. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01437730110410107>
- Weiner, B. (1985). An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion. *Psychological review*, 92, 548-573. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.92.4.548>
- Yukl, G. (1989). Managerial leadership, A review of theory and research. *Journal of Management*, 15(2), 251-289. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/014920638901500207>