Academics' Organisational Commitment and Creativity: Examining the University Type Difference

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Abstract: This study investigated university type difference on academics' organisational commitment and creativity. A descriptive research design was used in this study. Quantitative data were collected with questionnaires, administered to 525academic staff, selected through proportionate stratified sampling technique, while Qualitative data was collected using semi-structured interviews. Twelve participants were accidentally sampled for the interviews. Data collected were analysed using Multivariate Analysis of Variance and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.The result showed that university type significantly influenced both organisational commitment (F=36.374, p<0.05)and creativity (F=13.406, p<0.05) of academic staff.The interviews expressed the wide disparities between public universities (Federal and State) and private universities; however the differences between Federal and State are minor.The study concluded that a significant university type difference exists on the organisational commitment and creativity of academic staff of Southwestern Nigerian universities.

Keywords: university type, organisational commitment, organisational creativity, academic staff, work environment

I. INTRODUCTION

Higher educational institutions are generally viewed as development and change drivers because they are responsible forstimulating,shaping and sustainingcultural and socio-economicdevelopment through the delivery of quality education. Academics that drive these institutions are expected to teach, instruct, train, and facilitate students' acquisition and transference of knowledge in order for the nation to be able to acquire high manpower needs and maintain its competitive advantage. For academics to successfully drive these institutions of learningis likely to be shaped by a driving force which may not be far away from the work environment. Hence, the degree to which the university system presents unique opportunities to put to use their intellectual talent with an unfettered opportunity to explore their environment will go a long way to ensuring that quality is delivered.

It is unlikely that any University in today's overly competitive world would perform at peak levels unless their academic staffs are committed to its objectives and strategic goals. Cohen's (2003) study shows that high organisational commitment means low absenteeism which translates into high job performance and productivity. To remain competitive, organisations need active employee involvement, in order to engender unique, distinctive approaches and products (Shalley& Gilson, 2004). This implies that employees with high levels of commitment and creativity may be more likely to exert greater efforts and invest their resources in the university unlike those with low commitment and creativity.

Amabile, Schatzela, Monetaa,and Steven (2004) pointed out that the extent to which people will produce creative and useful ideas depend not only on their individual characteristics, but also on the work environment that they perceive around them.Herrmann and Felfe (2014) in the same vein, indicate that encouraging climate and an inspiring personal relationship are important prerequisites for the emergence of creative ideas, on the other hand, intolerance of differences, overly rational thinking, inappropriate incentives and excessive bureaucracy specified some barriers to creativity (Brennan and Dooley, 2005).

Ajala (1991) further asserts that the way a person sees and feels in his surroundings influences the way that person actually behaves in that environment. An environment that does not promote two-way communication would literally lead to fear of expression of ideas and opinions (Adeniji, 2011). Conducive work

environment in essence, ensures the well-being of employees which invariably enables them exert themselves to their roles with all vigour that may translate to higher productivity (Akinyele, 2007).

Dominant approaches view creativity in a functionalist and instrumental manner, by arguing that creativity is more than a collection of creative individuals and that creativity occurs under properly arranged stimulating conditions (Sundgren and Styhre, 2007). This means that an organisation being filled with creative individuals does not translate to organisational creativity because organisational creativity encompasses avariety of organisational factors. Cummings (1965) specified that organisations with highly bureaucratic features inhibited creativity, whereas those with non-bureaucratic features enhanced creativity. Similarly, Dormen and Edidin, (1989) suggests that conformity repressedorganisational creativity while Ahuja, Lampert, and Tandon (2008) posit that bureaucracy hindered organisational creativity.

The componential theory of creativity further suggests that everyone and anyone can be creative, at least some of the time; organisational factors, essentially the work environmentaffect the degree and occurrence of creative behaviour (Amabile, 1997). Organisational factors crucial to employee creative behaviour include the organisation's orientation and support for creativity and innovation. The theory emphasizes the significant role of organisational support on creativity by acknowledging that aspects of the work environment can be either favourable or unfavourable to organisational creativity. In essence, employees' perception of a negative work environment may trigger the feeling of worthlessness and/or helplessness which hinders commitment and creativity whereas the positive environmental perception will enhance commitment and creativity.

Measuring organisational climate and culture as a combined construct,Obadara (2008) examined the influence of organisational climate and culture on workers' job satisfaction and commitment. The sample of the study consisted of 1000 respondents drawn from ten (10) universities in South-West Nigeria which comprised five state and five federal owned.The hypotheses formulated were tested using multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study indicate that organisational climate and culture has a significantinfluence on workers' job satisfaction and commitment, witha higher influence on workers' job performance than workers' commitment. The study indicates that organisations with positive culture and climate have employees who are committed and satisfied with their job, hence, are less likely to leave. The study concludes by emphasizing management'sresponsibility in providing a conduciveemployee-oriented organisational climate and culture.

Similarly, Zare et al (2010) cited in Shirazi, Amirpour and Shirazi (2014) examined the relationship between organisational climate and occupational stress andcreativity of the staffs in Western Azerbaijan Education centre. The study found that in open organisational climate where dynamism is emphasized, there is reduced stress and increase in creativity, while in close organisational climate, which is the opposite of open organisational climate, there is increased stress and reduction in creativity.

In the same vein, Adeniji, (2011) examined the relationship between different variables of organisational climate and job satisfaction among academic staff of five selected private Universities in South-West Nigeria. The study also sought to ascertain cadre difference, that is, whether there are differences in the way junior and senior academics perceive the existing organisational climate. Two hundred and ninety-three (293) academicstaff participated in the study. The results indicate that organisational climate is positively related to job satisfaction among academics in South-West Nigeria. It also showed that junior and senior academics perceive and experience their organisational climate differently.

Similarly, Yusuf and Metiboba (2012) found out that a significant relationship exist between work environment and attitudes of employees to their job. This means that an employee-oriented work environment that accommodates the needs and aspirations of workers will definitely attract positive attitudes and vice versa. It can be surmised that when people are happy with their job, they become satisfied with it, because employees that are happy with their work will spend less time away from work and will be less likely to leave the organisation. Relatedly, Akpan (2012) investigated the relationship between resource management and job involvement among 578 academics selected from three universities in south-south Nigeria. The finding of his study indicated that lecturers were highly involved, hence committed to their job and that perceived material and human resource management is significantly related to the job involvement of lecturers.

Similarly, Fapohunda (2012) examines pay disparity and pay satisfaction in public and private sector universities in Nigeria using two universities from each sector. The sample comprised 200 academic staff randomly selected from two public and two private universities in Nigeria. The results show disparity in pay between public and private sector academic staff with the private universities paying better than the public university. The result also showed that working conditions in the two university strata differ significantly; academic staff of public universities enjoys job security, flexible working hours, less supervision, lesser workloads, and clearer lines of communication, as against what is obtainable in private universities, which corroborates Olorunsola and Arogundade (2012) finding that federal universities have a better work climate than that of the state.

II.   METHODOLOGY

Design

This study employed a descriptive survey design using a mixed method that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect data simultaneously and facilitated triangulation of information received. The population of the study comprised male and female academic staff of Federal, State, and Private universities in South-west Nigeria. Research questionnaires were purposively administered to five hundred and twenty-five (525) academics in three federal, four state and eleven private universities, while twelve respondents for the interviews were accidentally selected from six universities.

Instruments

Two main research instruments were used in this study. The survey questionnaire and the interview guide. The survey questionnaire was divided into threesections; Section A is the personal information questionnaire (PIQ) which collected information on the socio-demographic variables of the respondents. Section B is the 15-item Organisational Commitment Questionnaire(OCQ) by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979).The psychometric properties of the scale have been demonstrated as strong withMajekodunmi (2013) establishing a co-efficient r=0.71.Section C is the 29 items adapted from Elegbeleye (2008) Work Value Scale, used to measure the organisational creativity of academic staff. The author indicated that the scale has a reliability co-efficient r= 0.83. The interview guide contained self-constructed open-ended questions with two sections. Section A elicited background information of respondents while Section B has eighteen questions which elicited information on the academic staff work environment and behaviour.

Procedure

The survey was conducted over a period of sixteen weeks, the researchers worked directly with field assistants to supervise data collection. A letter of introduction stating the nature/purpose of the research was attached to each questionnaire and participants were free to discontinue at any point.Similarly, the interviews were conducted over a period of five weeks. Four participants each were interviewed from Federal, State, and Private University category which makes a total of twelve. Each respondent signed an informed consent form before the start of the interviews. Confidentiality reassurances were continuously provided to participants before and after the interviews.

Results

A One way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was employed to test the university type difference in the commitment and creativity of academic staff at 0.05% level of significance, the summary of the analysis is presented in tables 1, 2, 3 and 4:

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Organisational Commitment and Creativity by University Type

Variables		N	Mean	Standard deviation
Org. Commitment	**Federal**	236	51.69	11.04
	State	122	47.33	9.61
	Private	167	43.83	5.15
	Total	525	48.18	9.81
Org. Creativity	**Federal**	236	105.80	28.30
	State	122	90.85	31.59
	Private	167	92.31	34.48
	Total	525	98.03	31.87

Table 2: Multivariate effect

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
University Type	Pillai's Trace	.136	19.025	4.000	1044.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.866	19.471[b]	4.000	1042.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	.153	19.916	4.000	1040.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.140	36.485[c]	2.000	522.000	.000

Table 2 shows a significant multivariate effect for the combined variables of organisational commitment and creativity in respect of the type of university: $\lambda = 0.866$, $F(4, 1042) = 19.471$, $p<0.05$.

Table 3: One-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance of Organisational Commitment and Creativity by University Type

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Commitment	6162.609[a]	2	3081.305	36.374	.000
	Creativity	26008.974[b]	2	13004.487	13.406	.000
Intercept	Commitment	1107622.776	1	1107622.776	13075.275	.000
	Creativity	4532459.909	1	4532459.909	4672.543	.000
University Type	Commitment	6162.609	2	3081.305	36.374	.000
	Creativity	26008.974	2	13004.487	13.406	.000
Error	Commitment	44219.269	522	84.711		
	Creativity	506350.409	522	970.020		
Total	Commitment	1268830.000	525			
	Creativity	5577988.000	525			
Corrected Total	Commitment	50381.878	524			
	Creativity	532359.383	524			

Table 3 shows that there is a significant university type difference on both levels of organisational commitment {F(2,522)=36.374, p<0.05} and creativity {F(2,522)=13.406, p<0.05} among academic staff. This suggests that both dependent variables differed significantly in respect to university type. A Post-hoc test was conducted to further explore the source of the significant difference and the summary is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Multiple comparisons Post-Hoc Test of University type on Organisational Commitment and Creativity

Dependent Variable	University Type		Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
	Group 1	Group 2			
Org. Commitment	Federal	State	4.3628*	1.02630	.000
		Private	7.8643*	.93070	.000
	State	Federal	-4.3628*	1.02630	.000
		Private	3.5015*	1.09618	.004
	Private	Federal	-7.8643*	.93070	.000
		State	-3.5015*	1.09618	.004
Org. Creativity	Federal	State	14.9484*	3.47293	.000
		Private	13.4955*	3.14941	.000
	State	Federal	-14.9484*	3.47293	.000
		Private	-1.4529	3.70938	1.000
	Private	Federal	-13.4955*	3.14941	.000
		State	1.4529	3.70938	1.000

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The Bonferroni post hoc test in Table 4 reveals that academic staff of federal universities display significantly higher level of organisational commitment **(N=236, $\overline{X}$ =51.69)**than those in state universities **(N=122, $\overline{X}$ =47.33) (Std, error=1.0263, P<0.05)**and also than those in private universities **(N=167, $\overline{X}$ =43.83) (Std, error=0.9307, P<0.05).** Furthermore, academic staff of state universities also exhibit significantly higher level of organisational commitment **(N=122, $\overline{X}$ =47.33)** thanthosein private universities **(N=167, $\overline{X}$ =43.83) (Std, error=1.0962, P<0.05).** Going further to organisational creativity, it is observed that academic staff of federal universities exhibit significant higher levels of creativity **(N=236, $\overline{X}$ =105.80))**than their counterparts in both state universities **(N=122, $\overline{X}$ =90.85, Std, error=3.4729, P<0.05)**and private universities **(N=167, $\overline{X}$ =92.30, Std, error=3.1494, P<0.05).** However, no significant difference exist between academic staff of state universities **(N=122, $\overline{X}$ =90.85)** and private universities **(N=167, $\overline{X}$ =92.30, Std, error=3.70938, p>0.05)**on creativity level.

Analysis of Qualitative Data
Table 5 shows the distribution of interview participants by socio-demographic variables. Twelve participants took part in the interview sessions, of which four were from federal, state and private universities respectively, out of which eight (66.7%) were males and four (33.3%) were females. The age ranged from 30-47

years while the years in their present institution ranges from 2-10 years. Four (33.3%) participants indicated that they have been with the present university for 2 years, while one (8.3%) indicated 5 years. Similarly, two participants (16.7%) indicated 7 years, one (8.3%) 8 years, two (16.7%) 9 years and two (16.7%) 10 years, although the fewer years were indicated by participants from the private universities and the longer years were from the federal and state universities. Lastly, three (25%) participants were SL, five (41.7%) were LI and four (33.3%) were LII.

Table 5: Distribution of Interview participants' by Demographic Variables

S/No	University Stratum	Gender	Age	Designation	Years in institution
P1	Federal	M	39	SL	9
P2		F	35	L I	8
P3		M	33	LII	5
P4		M	32	LI	7
P5	State	F	39	L II	7
P6		M	47	SL	10
P7		M	35	LI	10
P8		F	36	LI	9
P9	Private	M	32	LII	2
P10		M	43	SL	2
P11		F	34	LI	2
P12		M	30	LII	2

Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), following the four principles provided by Smith (2003), three master themes were identified by the researchers following data analysis and interpretation. Although these master themes impinge on each other, they nonetheless provide a rich insight into the experiences of the participants in their work environment. Results description and a discussion of their implications are supported with quotes from the transcript. The sources of the quotes are illustrated using the format: Participant identifier number: page number: line number (e.g. P3:2:14)

Theme 1: Climate

This emerged as a strong topic in the review of the transcripts. All participants had something to say about the climate of their institution. There were so many mixed views which shows that climate in the federal universities are not purely organic. Participants described the climate of the institution as having co-operation, openness, flexibility but that the relationship amongst staff is somewhat strained which is evident in surface relationships and that there is an element of godfatherism which goes on to induce stress.
"…there is a kind of co-operation between uhm constituted authority and the members of staff and the kind of uhm inflow of em information…"
(P1:1:7)
"It's an environment where you should be able to criticise people, criticise people's work but you find out that when you criticise people's work, they theythey hold you, they hold your words and look for a way of flogging you, you know and many things, many things I can't enumerate all."
(P2:1:28)
"…and you must also be someone that can lobby, you know that the academic world is highly political."
(P4:1:39)
Participantsfrom state universitiesnoted that although the environment is flexible and warm with average opportunity for creativity, it is full of fluctuations which in essence mean that the environment is quite unpredictable and similar to military fractions.
"…in academic it's just like military, there are still fractions, when you are a friend, if you are a friend to this one automatically you become an enemy."
(P5:1:38)
…you are not safe, your ideas must be teleguided, your marking must be teleguided, your teaching must be teleguided, your interaction must be teleguided, your expression must be teleguided, a lot of things even your socialisation must be teleguided."
(P6:2:51)
"…an atmosphere of warmness, like home away from home feeling, although not uhm in all cases but 70percent of the time."
(P8:1:7)

It is noteworthy that all respondents from private universities expressed that the climate is mechanistic in nature which is in line with the assumption of the study but there is divided opinion amongst the state and federal university respondents of which the summary is that their institution climate can't be said to be purely organic, but that the mechanistic part is not so bad as to make them want to leave. The view was more emphasized amongst the federal university respondents than the state university respondents.

"...not everyone likes to change, and to the question of whether or not my work allows me to try out new ideas, the answer is no because an environment that is fairly stimulating cannot breed ideas, those ideas will em die."
(P9:1:20)

"…highly bureaucratic in nature and rigidly formalised, so most individuals here usually avoid falling prey because the rod is not spared here."
(P10:2:60)

"Flexibility is a key ingredient lacking here, the university is not dynamic at all and refuses to change with season"
(P12:3:102)

Theme 2: Academic Politics

The second master theme revealed that academia is ridden with politics and that the politics obtainable in it is more than what is obtainable outside of it. All the participants interviewed had something to say about this theme although some of the participants laid more emphasis on it than others. Words like favouritism, unequal treatment, caucuses, in-group versus out-group, lobbying were used in describing how politically charged the academia is.

"…another thing for you to have the support maybe of your department and sometimes belong to the right caucus…"
(P1:1:43)

"I can say the disciplinary procedure is quite transparent but usually we can't remove the issue of godfatherism in some cases, these are some of the challenges we still face."
(P2:3:139)

"Usually grievances are settled one on one here so far you are able to identify the dons that can plead your cause because em even if you go through the formal channel, your case may be stepped down."
(P4:2:67)

"…guide our work like any other employment so yes there are rules here but some people obey it and some don't which also depends on whether you have a godfather backing you up."
(P5:2:54)

"…there is an extent of your attainment in a system, if they love you, you are the highest attainment you can get to is a Dean, if they don't love you, it's an HOD, you don't go beyond that."
(P6:2:60)

"…usually people can always lobby their way out out of any mess they find themselves usually if they have strong alliances with powers that be."
(P7:2:76)

"…there is an attached punishment and there is nothing new under the sun, some may go scot free while others may not"
(P8:2:52)

"…it is highly highly rigid and determined by the leadership depending on whether or not you are em liked."
(P9:2:56)

"…what to do when issues arise (talks busily with colleague), just know that it is not uniform."
(P10:2:66)

"It's an on your own thing, you face a panel and God help you if they have indicated before that they don't like your face, that ends your career at that university."
(P11:2:79)

"…em the school can give you the permission to go or not and this em depends on a lot of things; whether or not they like you, also whether or they can afford you time off and so on."
(P12:2:83)

There is evidence from the study that academic politics is obtainable in each of the university stratum, this means that being privately owned does not make it devoid of politics. As seen from the transcript, these academic staff did not talk about their work environment in abstract, they did that in relation to other academic staff from other universities and also because majority of them have worked in other universities as well.

Theme 3: Nigerian Culture

Following from the second theme, this theme suggests that the culture of a people cannot be dissected totally from the work environment as it goes on to affect the relationship at work. The participants from federal

and state universities expressed the fact that usually issues are settled in-house which in an ideal collectivistic society is realistic, but that there is no respect amongst the cadres as the upper level academics still continue to see the lower level academics as their students and not as colleagues and this can breed competitiveness especially when the lower ones are promising. P9 to P12 who are from the private universities on the other hand expressed that the private universities are more individualistic in nature therefore everyone, whether upper level or lower level treat themselves with a workable degree of respect and although it is not uncommon to see upper level academics sending the lower ones on errands (mentoring as it is formally called), it is done with thoughtfulness.

"…that is not always the case as some of these senior ones are even competing with junior ones. Usually, it is not noticeable to the outside person but em the mentoring thing is something I can say that it is very very shaky in not only this university but universities nationwide."
(P1:2:70)

"... you know the the older colleagues who have been in the the system from maybe 70s, 80s and most of their ideas are out-dated, and you, even when you are trying to introduce them into new ideas, they try to rubbish your ideas telling you what do you know? We made you, you know most of these people who are your professors, they taught you…"
(P2:1:48)

"... what do you want to try out when you some interests may be at stake and you're trying to be careful about the toes you step on. I'm not saying that you can't experiment things but it will be at em the level where it won't affect someone else's ego…"
(P4:1:36)

"... it favours some while it may not favour others, depends on the backing of people you have…"
(P5:2:59)

"...okay they will not teach, they will tell the guy, the lower person, come go and mark my scripts and all the rest, go and teach my classes, go and do this, that's not mentoring..."
(P6:3:104)

"…talking about professional growth here, most of the things you do it yourself, research uhm conference attendance, you have you just do it yourself uhm you sponsor yourself."
(P7:1:14)

"Rigid format, they do it the way they want it. If it does not favour you and you do not em like it, you can leave the job now…"
(P9:2:54)

"No one cares whether you move up the ladder, it's even better for them if you don't which implies that they don't get to pay you more."
(P10:1:22)

"...You always have to watch your back and bend your standard if you have to. But on the surface, we all say warm greetings but that is as far as it goes."
(P12:1:40)

It is evident that academics in federal and state universities view their work like home away from home which is evident in the ways they treat their lower level colleagues; they see them as their "boys and girls" which is evident in the ways they talk and relate with them and this may be one reason why some academics may decide not to take up appointments in the schools they finished from in Nigeria.

III.   DISCUSSION

The result reveals that the level of organisational commitment and creativity is significantly different based on university type. This means that academic staff of federal universities display significantly higher level of organisational commitment than those of state universities and also than those of private universities. Furthermore, academic staff of state universities also exhibit significantly higher level of organisational commitment thanthoseof private universities. In the same vein, the result reveals that academic staff of federal universities exhibit significant higher levels of creativity than their counterparts in both state and private universities However, no significant difference exist between academic staff of state universities and private universities on creativity level.

The interview finding gives credence to the university type differences in the organisational commitment and creativity of academic staff found in the quantitative analysis. Respondents from the federal universities were of the opinion that their climate was more organic which therefore impacted on the higher levels of commitment and creativity, while those from the state universities also expressed a high level of commitment, though lower than the federal but higher than the private. They however recognised the "bigbrotherliness" of the federal universities.

Those from private universities emphasized the highly mechanistic nature of the climate which invariably impacted on the lower levels of commitment and creativity. They expressed that most private universities have stereotypic ideology about religion, restriction of movement, dress code among others, which hampers on the opportunity to inject into work. They also expressed that although they receive higher pay, it is insufficient to boost their commitment and creativity because it only focuses on extrinsically motivating them. It was further expressed that managements holds tightly to the way things are done so usually they follow the rules which inhibits the extent to which they can make changes. Usually these academics learn to cope in the work environment in order to achieve what they need to move on.

It is not surprising that there is no significant difference in the creativity levels of those from state and private universities as shown in the analysis.It is evident that although state universities have a higher level of organic climate than the private, the work environment however is highly controlled by powers that be and when their interest is at stake, they hold on tightly to the reins which may then influence the extent to which employees innovate. In essence, this means that there are some informally constituted authorities entirely different from management team that control the affairs of work. Also the general attitudinal disposition of those who work in the state universities can account for the result, in that there is so much laxity and most units are dissociated. Of note is also the overflow of state politics into the affairs of work unlike the federal universities. Results of previous studies support the present finding. Olorunsola and Arogundade (2012) found that the federal universities have a better work climate than that of the state while Fapohunda (2012) also found that working conditions differ significantly in the private and public sectors. Similarly,Zare et al (2010) cited in Shirazi, Amirpour and Shirazi (2014) found that in open organisational climate where dynamism is emphasized, there is reduced stress and increase in creativity, while in close organisational climate, which is the opposite of open organisational climate, there is increased stress and reduction in creativity. Yusuf and Metiboba (2012) also found out that a significant relationship exist between work environment and attitudes of employees to their job. This means that an employee-oriented work environment that accommodates the needs and aspirations of workers will definitely attract positive attitudes and vice versa.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes thatthe type of university is a high determinant of the organisational commitment and creativity of academic staff and asAjala (1991) asserts that the way a person sees and feels in his surroundings influences the way that person actually behaves in that environment. In essence, if a person feels psychologically well at work, he/she will be committed and creative. It is thus essential that management and education regulating bodiesemphasize an employee-centred culture and climate that constantly seeks to inspire personal relationships with clear systems of communication. Also important is the provision of avenue for employees to channel their grievances and ensure that standard is maintained across board, which serves to reduce the perception of unfairness and further reduce the propensity to engage in counterproductive workplace behaviours.

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