

**Organisational Commitment among Employees. A Developing Nation  
Perspective: The Case of the Nigeria's Public Sector.****Michael Oyelere**Regent's University London, Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London, NW1 4NS, UK.  
[oyelerem@regents.ac.uk](mailto:oyelerem@regents.ac.uk)**John Opute**London South Bank University, 103 Borough Road, London, SE1 0AA, UK.  
[oputej@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:oputej@lsbu.ac.uk)**Peter Akinsowon**Regent's University London, Inner Circle, Regent's Park, London, NW1 4NS, UK.  
[akinsowonp@regents.ac.uk](mailto:akinsowonp@regents.ac.uk)

**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to provide a critical perspective on the level of organisational commitment among employees in the Nigerian public sector with a view to examining the effects of such commitment(s) on the level of productivity. Also, this paper intends to focus on the impact of the 'government's involvement' in addressing the gaps identified in the public sector as the main contributor the commitment(s) among employees in the public sector organisations. This paper will be informed by conducting a nationwide survey of National Civil Service Union (NCSU) members, exploring employees' attitude toward their organisation. There is also a plan in place to have focus group interviews with a number of employees in the Nigerian public sectors numbering about 20 employees from five (5) different public sectors organisations. A systematic non-probability sampling technique will be employed in selecting both the organisations and participants for the study. By providing critical evaluations of the past and current trends of commitments amongst employees in the public sector in Nigeria, the study hopes to enhance understanding of the level of commitments among employees in the public sector organisations and provide insights on how various administrations, either Military or Civilian have impacted on the level of commitment(s) in the public sector organisations. The proposed study remains a source of empirical investigation on the subject matter, an area which currently has a dearth of research led study. It will provide in-depth knowledge and understanding in this area and lend further theoretical and empirical data that aim to support future investigation.

The aim of this working paper is to invite comment on the proposed approach to the research paper described.

**Keywords:** Commitment, Economic Growth, Employees, Nigerian Public Sectors, Employment Law & Involvement, Participation.

**Word count:** 2,408.

## Introduction

This paper seeks to present insightful and in-depth perspectives on the level of organisational commitments among employees in public sector organisations with a view to examining the effects of such commitments on the level of productivity within the public sector in Nigeria. Furthermore, this paper will seek to provide in-depth perspectives on the impact of 'government's involvement' in addressing the level of commitments among the workforce in the public sector in Nigeria.

Studies in Nigeria have shown that the success or failure of any organisation depends on the performance of its employees (Ezirim, Nwibere, & Emecheta, 2010; Ezirim, Nwibere, & Emecheta, 2012). However, there appears to be a relationship between employee commitment and factors such as culture and reward. According to Corbett, et, al (2010:191) organisational commitment involves 'the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in a particular organisation'. However, taking this definition into account a number of interesting issues are likely to emerge. For example, there is overwhelming evidence to support the assertion that indicates that employees within the Nigerian context defy emotional attachment to and identification with as well as the involvement in a particular organisation (Diamond, 1988). Support for this assertion can be drawn from a number of publications within the government's reports and also within the recent Economic & Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) report in which it highlights in its December, 2014 report sheet that 'lack of organisational commitment among the civil servants in the Nigeria State has led to the downward trends of economic development in the country...'

In addition, the organisational cultural perception and attitudes of workers in the public sectors appeared to have eroded the need for commitment among the workforce (Ezirim, Nwibere & Emecheta, 2010). Implicitly, its significance in the mainstream literature is an acknowledgement of the imperfections of formal arrangements and practices, and as such, culture has been cast in the role of transforming the workplace to unlock the 'holy grail' of individual and collective employees' commitment, and to achieve extraordinary performance (Ezirim, Nwibere & Emecheta, 2012).

Available studies also suggest that organisational commitment among employees in the Nigerian public sector is lacking (Okurame, 2009). Support for this assertion can be drawn from a number of perspectives within the mainstream literature which appeared to have sighted the lack of continuous professional development (CPD) policy by the employers of labour (see Ajibade & Ayinla, 2014). For example, those who support this assertion have argued strongly that in a situation where there is no concrete and deliberate policy in line to train and develop employees; then, the issue of commitment amongst the employees within the public sector may be an impossible concept to achieve (see Faloye, 2014; Ajibade & Ayinla, 2014; Yasar, Emhan, & Ebere, 2014).

In addition, there are a number of literatures that have indicated that the lack of statutory legal framework is another area where organisational commitment among employees in the Nigerian public sector is lacking (Nwibere, & Emecheta, 2012; Ajibade & Ayinla, 2014; Yasar, Emhan, & Ebere, 2014). Those who subscribe to this notion have argued that the inability of successive governments, both Military and Civilian administrations to 'institutionalise' a proper legal framework, contribute to the lack of organisational commitment among employees in the Nigerian public sector (Nwibere, & Emecheta, 2012; Ajibade & Ayinla, 2014; Yasar, Emhan, & Ebere, 2014).

## Evaluation of evidence of commitment among public sector employees' in Nigeria

There is evidence to indicate that in order to successfully evaluate whether or not there is an organisational commitment among employees in the Nigerian public sector; one needs to consider the position highlighted by Corbett, et, al (2010) in which they noted that while 'cultural change within the context of organisational culture has its historical roots in paternalistic management practices which are partly based on the pre-modern assumption that employers owe a moral responsibility to look after the welfare of their workers'; then it can be argued that there is no concrete evidence to support the notion that employer of labour in the public sector in Nigeria has supported or accepted that it has ever been their responsibility to cater for the welfare of their

employees. This assertion has been supported by Tongo (2015) where it concludes that massive embezzlement at the highest level within the governmental structures and the irregularity in paying workers' salaries is hampering employees' commitment.

There is however studies that suggest that commitment level among the employees in the public sector in Nigeria is non-existence (see Balogun, Oladipo, & Odekunle, 2010; Nwibere, & Emecheta, 2012; Balogun, Adetula, & Olowodunoye, 2013). Support for the assertion can be drawn from the evidence submitted by the Nigerian Labour Congress in one of its annual reports in which it was stated that there is no statistical evidence to support the commensuration of productivity level with the input of services rendered by the civil servants (NLC, 2012). Other studies point to "I don't care" attitude among public sector employees (Okpara, & Wynn, 2008). This attitude is associated with lack of commitment within the public sector in Nigeria (Bambale, Shamsudin, & Subramaniam, 2012).

Furthermore, the incursion of military intervention in the Nigerian political space has been seen as a demotivating factor among public sector employees' (Sunday & David, 2007; Adebayo 2011). Those who subscribe to this school of thought have cited the Murtala/Obasanjo's regime between 1975/1976 as empirical example to support their assertion, stating that the administration retrenched a high number of public sector employees' (Akinbuli, 2012) without due compensation for those that were retrenched. Thus, this fuelled an attitude of despondency and the desire to syphon public wealth while in service. Support for this assertion can be drawn from the position tendered by Professor Sam Aluko – a renowned Economic guru in Nigeria in one of his publications on the State of the Nation's Affairs (Aluko, 2002). This perspective about wide retrenchment, no doubt has added to the lack of commitment among the employees because it was at that point in the civil service history in Nigeria that the culture of commitment, involvement and participation began to fall apart (Aluko, 2002; Akinbuli, 2012).

### **Methods and methodological issues**

This article will draw on documents and from public sector corporations and the Nigeria Civil Service Union – NCSU, Nigerian news reports, the relevant policy documents from successive governments in addition to explanatory research that will be carried out using questionnaires and interviews. It is hoped that the use of these methods will allow for some level of substantiation and evaluation (Cassell & Symon, 2004).

Non-probability sampling technique will be used in the study. A strategic sampling method will be employed in selecting firms for the study. The choice of firms is partly based on their important contribution and services they provider to the economy. A total of around 200 respondents is proposed for the questionnaire, and a further 20 interviewees will be selected from management members of the 5 corporations and NCSU officials.

A self-administered questionnaire will be used as part of data collection instrument in this study. Self-administered questionnaires are normally completed by the respondents (Saunders, Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2011). It is planned that the questionnaires will be administered electronically. The choice of questionnaire is influenced by the objective of this study and the type of data expected from the respondents. Moreover, the size of the population and sample required for analysis made questionnaire the most appropriate data collection option. The analysis of data collected through interview will involve the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences – SPSS.

The data collection will also include semi-structured interviews. The interview is designed to corroborate and compare with data collected through questionnaires. The interviews will be semi-structured and it will include questions around the main objective of the study – organisational commitment among public sector employees. The questions will explore the impact of successive governments (military and civilian) on employees' commitment. It will also examine whether remuneration affects commitment. All interviews will be tape recorded. This will be with the participant consent, and transcribed. The analysis of data collected through interviews will be undertaken by the use of qualitative data software – NVivo.

As outlined earlier, the aim of this working paper is to invite comment on the proposed approach to the research paper described. All input is welcome.

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