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## **Employee Development Strategies and Employees' Commitment among Academic Staff of Universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract:**

*This study examined employee development strategies and employees' commitment among academic staff of universities in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to explain the concept of Employee development strategies, evaluate the impact of training on employee's commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State; investigate the effect of job sharing on employees' commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State; assess the effect of job rotation on employees' commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State and examine the influence of mentoring on employees' commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State. The study population was 1,146 academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State (Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Federal University, Oye and Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti). Two hundred and ninety seven academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State was used as sample size. Data were obtained from the sample of 283 respondents, out of a population of 297 academic staff in Universities Ekiti state using random sampling techniques. Four hypotheses were formulated and tested using Regression and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) method of analysis at 0.05 level of significant. The result showed a moderate and positive relationship between the training and employee's commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State ( $F = 17.7530, p < 0.05$ ). The result indicated that training influence employee's commitment of academic staff of universities in Ekiti State ( $r (283) = +0.232, p < 0.05$ ) at 0.05 level of significant. The result further showed that there is a significant relationship between job sharing and employees' commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State ( $F = 23.335, p < 0.05$ ), assess the effect of job rotation on employees' commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State ( $r (283) = +0.126, +0.137$  and  $+0.124, p < 0.05$ ). It was revealed that there is positive relationship between job sharing and employees commitment of academic staff of Ekiti State Universities. The research concluded that training lead to employees' commitment of academic staff of universities in Ekiti State if supported with other career development strategies such as recognition, promotion, and salary increase.*

**Keywords:** Employee development strategy, employee commitment

### **1. Background to the Study**

Academics can be considered the operational core of Universities and their performance determines, to a large extent, the quality of the students' higher education experience and the contributions that such institutions make to the society (CapellarAS, 2005). Academic staff who are well motivated and committed to their institution can build national and international reputation for themselves and the institution; the Universities can attract a higher calibre of students, research funds and consultancy contracts (Rowley, 1996).

To improve the ratings of Universities, it is important to develop a pool of excellent and experienced academics, as they play a strategic role in improving ratings in key areas such as research quality, academic reputation of faculty, academic program quality, research contribution to society, preparation of tomorrow's leaders and quality of graduates.

A team of committed and high quality academic staff improves teaching and learning methods and strengthens Nigeria's institutions into higher learning rate of world class standards and this is because a team of committed academics at the private higher education institutions play complementary role with their counterparts in the public higher education institutions to assist the government to develop the human capital who are smart, well-educated and have a first class mentality required to achieve vision 2020.

Employee development is a framework for the expansion of human capital in an organization. This is a combination of training and education that ensure the continual improvement and growth of both the individual and the organization. Adam Smith (1896) stated “The capacities of individuals depended on their access to education”. Human resources development is the structure that allows? for individual development and potentials for satisfying the organization’s goals. The development of the individual will benefit the worker and the organization. The Human Resources Development framework views employees as an asset to the enterprise whose value will be enhanced by the development. Its primary focus is on growth and employee development and emphasizes developing individual potentials. (Salako, Omotilewa & Sotunde, 2006).

Workers in contemporary society are expressing a strong desire to pursue more than just a job; they are looking for employment opportunities that promise an extension of their interests, personalities and abilities. They wait for a variety of things from their jobs besides a few fringe benefits and their loyalty to the organization depends upon the degree to which their employer satisfies their wants (Kent & Otte, 1982; Agba, Nkpoyen, & Ushie, 2010).

The variables of development strategies adopted for this study among others, are training, job sharing, job rotation and mentoring.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

The availability of Federal and State academic institutions in all the states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with sudden establishment of private institutions over the last decade. This has led to serious competition for valuable and experienced staff in the academic sector.

In the last few years, Nigeria has witnessed an upsurge in the number of public and private-owned higher institutions. This obviously resulted in the demand for academic staff to boost institution’s profile and for accreditation purposes. This means that many academic staff who are in existing institutions may be wooed by other institutions. Till date, some academic staff move from state-owned institutions to federally-owned institutions or from the federal-owned institutions to the any of the newly established Universities.

The challenge to retain academic staff has become a new task for management of Universities in Nigeria. This is why the objective of attracting, retaining and maintaining of staff through employee development strategies becomes very germane in order to increase the level of organizational commitment of academic staff. Studies have been carried out to investigate the impact of career development, organizational commitment, the role of training, job rotation, and other, human resources practices on commitment.

Adekola (2012) opined that there is a significant difference in the degree of organizational commitment in public and private Universities. Gebremichael and Rao (2013) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment in terms of academic and supportive staff at Wolaita Sodo University. Akpan (2013) studied the extent to which job security and job satisfaction predicted organizational commitment of University teachers in Cross River State, Nigeria

Folorunso, Adewale and Abodunde (2014) examined the impact of organizational commitment dimension on employees’ performance among the academic staff of Oyo State owned tertiary institutions. Smeenk, Eisinga, Teelken and Doorewaard (2006) examined which factors affect organizational commitment among Dutch University employees in two Faculties with different academic identities. Oginni, Ogunlusi and Faseyiku (2013) examined retention strategies and organizational survival. The study identified retention strategies that affect organizational survival in the private Universities.

Owoyemi, Oyelere and Elegbede (2011) evaluated the role of training in human resource management practices has spurred renewed and vigorous debate about the need for training and development. This paper explores the relationship between training and employees’ commitment to the management staff of a financial firm based in the South Western part of Nigeria. However, research on employee development strategies and employees’ commitment are still scanty on academic staff of Universities. Hence, this study is aimed to investigate the employee development strategies and employees’ commitment among academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State.

### *1.2. Research Hypotheses*

The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. Training does not significantly influence commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State.
2. Job sharing does not have any significant effect on commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. The Concept of Training*

Jones, George & Hill (2000) believe that training primarily focuses on teaching organizational members on how to perform their current jobs and help them to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to have effective performances. According to Obisi (2011), training is a process through which the skills, talent and knowledge of an employee is enhanced and increased. Arnoff (1971) observed that training fosters the initiative and creativity of employees and help to prevent manpower obsolescence, which may be due to age, attitude or the inability of a person to adapt him or herself to technological changes. Scott, Clothier and Spriegel (1997) agree that training is the cornerstone of sound management, for it makes employees more effective and productive. They argue that training is actively and intimately connected with all the personnel and managerial activities. It would be difficult for a new employee to grow on the job and become a manager without adequate training. Mamoria (1995) defined training as a practical and vital necessity because; it enables employees to develop and rise within the organization and increase their value, earning power and job security. Mamoria explains that training helps to mould employees’ attitudes and help them to contribute meaningfully to the organization. According to Aina (1992), training is an acquisition of the technology which permits employee to perform according to standard.

### 2.2. Training and Development Opportunities

According to Cataldo, Assen and D'Alessandro (2000), employees with key information technology skills have become increasingly hard to find. Many companies have realized that proactive strategies are required for building and maintaining a high technology company's knowledge reservoir. Training is therefore essential for the survival of any information technology worker, and is the only way they can stay employable over the span of their careers. Tomlinson (2002) suggests it is critical that organizations keep the leading edge by having their employees well trained in the latest technologies. Employees stay at companies that promote career opportunities through learning, and the ability to apply their newly learned skills (Cataldo et al., 2000; Jiang & Klein, 2000). The primary mechanism by which training is predicted to increase organizational commitment is through increased self-worth and importance.

### 2.3. Training and Staff Development

Workers training and development is an important programme that promotes the workers in an industrial set up. The need for manpower development programmes cannot be over-emphasized, as the application of acquired skills will go a long way to ensure effective commitment in a world of work. Many employees have failed in organisations because of lack of basic training which was not identified and provided for as an indispensable part of management function (Nwachukwu, 1988).

### 2.4. Job is Sharing

Job sharing is the ideal work arrangement. Simply put, two people voluntarily share the responsibilities of one full-time job, allowing employers to retain valued employees who prefer to work full time (Singh, 1991). Job sharing may also help to introduce a broader range of skills and experience to the workplace while providing a framework for continuity in the tasks performed.

Job sharing first formally appeared in the United States in the 1970, emerging as a means of offering part-time hours in career-oriented positions normally requiring full-time work. Teaching and Nursing were among the first professional positions to be shared, filled largely by women wanting to combine career and family.

### 2.5. Organizational Commitment

Definitions of the concept organizational commitment include the description by O'Reilly (1989) as "an individual's psychological bond to the organization, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the values of the organization". Organizational commitment from this point of view is characterized by employee's acceptance of organizational goals and their willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization (Miller & Lee, 2001).

Cohen (2003) states that "commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets". This general description of commitment by Arnold (2005) "is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in an organization".

## 3. Methods

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey design. Primary data were used for this study. The data were collected through a questionnaire that was administered to the selected respondents. The questionnaire was made up of eight (8) sections with each of the respective sections containing questions on demographic information, training, impact at work scale, measure of job sharing scale, measure of job rotation, scale, measure of mentoring scale, affective commitment scale, continuous commitment scale and normative commitment scale. In collecting the data, the population for the study were 1,146, while 297 was sampled using the Yamane. The questionnaires were distributed in all Faculties of the Universities in Ekiti State. The distribution was done irrespective of year of experience or the gender of those who indicated to participate. Statistical package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data collected through the questionnaire. The data collected was subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics were mainly frequency tables. Regression analysis was used to evaluate the impact of training on employees' commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State, investigate the effect of job sharing on employees' commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State

### 3.1. Model Specification

Independent variables are employees' development strategies variables which are: training, job sharing, job rotation and mentoring while dependent variable is employees' commitment.

$$EC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Tr + \beta_2 Js + \beta_3 Jr + \beta_4 Mt + \mu \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where;

$B_i$  = constant, Tr = training, Js = job sharing, Jr = job rotation, Mt = mentoring,  $\mu$  = stochastic / error term ( $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ , Coefficient)

## 4. Results and Discussion

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Sex</b>					
Valid	Male	202	71.4	71.4	71.4
	Female	81	28.6	28.6	100
	Total	283	100	100	
<b>Age Distribution</b>					
Valid	20-29	39	13.8	13.8	13.8
	30-39	93	32.9	32.9	46.6
	40-49	97	34.3	34.3	80.9
	50-59	43	15.2	15.2	96.1
	60 and Above	11	3.9	3.9	100
	Total	283	100	100	
<b>Marital Status</b>					
Valid	Single	54	19.1	19.1	19.1
	Married	228	80.6	80.6	99.9
	Widow	1	0.4	0.4	100
	Total	283	100	100	
<b>Institution</b>					
Valid	EKSU	148	52.3	52.3	52.3
	FUOYE	76	26.9	26.9	79.2
	ABUAD	59	20.8	20.8	100
	Total	283	100	100	
<b>Faculty</b>					
Valid	Agricultural Sciences	41	14.5	14.5	14.5
	Arts	15	5.3	5.3	19.8
	Education	34	12.0	12.0	31.8
	Engineering	45	15.9	15.9	47.7
	Law	22	7.8	7.8	55.5
	Management Sciences	15	5.3	5.3	60.8
	Medicine and Surgery	28	9.9	9.9	70.7
	Science	44	15.5	15.5	86.2
	Social Sciences	39	13.8	13.8	100
	Total	283	100	100	
<b>Higher Educational Qualification</b>					
Valid	B. Sc/B. Ed/B. Eng/LLB	27	9.5	9.5	9.5
	M.Sc./M.Ed./M.Eng/LLM	117	41.3	41.3	50.9
	Ph.D	139	49.1	49.1	100
	Total	283	100	100	
<b>Years of Experience</b>					
Valid	0-4	35	12.4	12.4	12.4
	5-9	62	21.9	21.9	34.3
	10-14	51	18.0	18.0	52.3
	15-19	57	20.1	20.1	72.4
	20 and Above	78	27.6	27.6	100
	Total	283	100	100	
<b>Status at Work</b>					
Valid	Graduate Assistant	35	12.4	12.4	12.4
	Assistant Lecturer	63	22.3	22.3	34.6
	Lecturer II	39	13.8	13.8	48.4
	Lecturer I	41	14.5	14.5	62.9
	Senior Lecturer	62	21.9	21.9	84.8
	Associate Professor	23	8.1	8.1	92.9
	Professor	20	7.1	7.1	100
	Total	283	100	100	

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Source: Output of Data Analysis, 2015

4.1. Data analysis and Interpretation

In order to investigate the impact of training on commitment, a bivariate regression model was developed to test the linear relationship between independent and dependent variables. The regression line gives an estimation of the linear relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables.

4.1.1. Hypothesis One

*Training does not significantly influence commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State*

Table 2 shows the relationship between Training and normative commitment. Training index has a positive relationship with normative commitment. A one percent rise in the Training index increases normative commitment by 43%, The high value of the R<sup>2</sup> at 0.588 indicates that about 58.8 per cent systemic variation in normative commitment were explained by the Training used in the model, this confirms the importance of Training on human commitment towards their jobs, in describing the relationship that exist between training and commitment to work, training captured 58.8% variation in normative commitment of worker while the remaining 41.2% were to explain by stochastic error. F-test, having satisfy the criteria of least square assumption F- calculated is greater than F Tabulated (F<sub>c</sub>>F<sub>t</sub>), (F>3.84). It shows that they are significant at 5% level of significant.

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.683	.043		16.003	.000
	Training	.430	.021	.767	20.044	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Normative Commitment

Table 2: Regression analysis (Beta co-efficient) for training and normative commitment  
Source: Output of Data Analysis, 2015

NC2 = b<sub>1</sub>+b<sub>2</sub>TIS<sub>4</sub>  
 NC = 0.683 + 0.430bTr  
 R<sup>2</sup> = 0.588  
 Durbin-Watson = 0.109

Table 3 above show the relationship between Training and continuous commitment. Training index has a positive relationship with continuous commitment. A one percent rise in the Training index increases continuous commitment by 0.992 percent, the high value of the R<sup>2</sup> at 0.847 indicates that about 84.7 % systemic variation in continuous commitment were explained by the Training used in the model, this confirms the importance on Training on human commitment towards their jobs, in describing the relationship that exist between training and commitment to work, training captured 84.7% variation in continuous commitment of worker while the remaining 15.3% were to explain by stochastic error.

F-test, having satisfy the criteria of least square assumption F theoretical is greater than F calculated (F<sub>c</sub>>F<sub>t</sub>), (F>3.84) It shows that they are significant at 5% level of significant.

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.211	.050		4.231	.000
	Training1	.992	.025	.921	39.498	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Continuance Commitment1

Table 3: Regression analysis (Beta co-efficient) Training and Continuous commitment  
Source: Output of Data Analysis, 2015

CC2 = b<sub>1</sub> + b<sub>2</sub>Tis3  
 Cc = 0.211 + 0.992Tr  
 Std. Error (0.050)\* (0.025)\*  
 R<sup>2</sup> = 0.847  
 Durbin-Watson = 0.088  
 F-test = 36.166 (3.84)

Table 4 above show the relationship between Training and affective commitment. Training index has a positive relationship with affective commitment. A one percent rise in the Training index increases affective commitment by 0.708 percent, the low value of the R<sup>2</sup> at 0.688 indicates that about 68.8% systemic variation in affective commitment were explained by the Training used in the model, this confirms the importance of training on human commitment towards their jobs, in describing the relationship that exist between training and commitment to work, training captured 68.8% variation in affective commitment of worker while the remaining 31.2%

were to explain by stochastic error. F-test, having satisfy the criteria of least square assumption F theoretical is greater than F calculated ( $F_c > F_t$ ), ( $F > 3.84$ ) It shows that they are significant at 5% level of significant.

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.259	.057		4.576	.000
	Training1	.708	.028	.829	24.884	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment2

Table 4: Regression analysis (Beta co-efficient) for training and Affective commitment

Source: Output of Data Analysis, 2015

$$AC^2 = b_1 + b_2Tis6$$

$$AC^2 = 0.259 + 0.708b$$

$$R^2 = 0.688$$

$$\text{Durbin-Watson} = 0.147$$

$$F\text{-test} = 14.105 (3.84)$$

#### 4.1.2. Hypothesis Two

*Mentoring does not have any significant relationship with commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State*

Table 5 above shows the correlation coefficient provides measure of the strength of the linear relationship between independent and dependent variables. Pearson product-moment correlation for the 3 different types commitment results ( $r = 0.832, 0.929$  and  $0.765$ ). Table 5 shows that, there is positive relationship between Mentoring and employee’s commitment. Significant relationship between Affective Commitment with Mentoring, Continuance Commitment with Mentoring and Normative Commitment and Mentoring confirms that Mentoring, have strong impact on employee commitment and also on physical attitude to work. It can also be inferred from correlation matrices indicate the strong relationship between Mentoring and employee commitment. The correlation is significant at 1% level.

Correlations					
		Mentoring Commitment	Affective Commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Mentoring	Pearson Correlation	1	.832**	.929**	.765**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	283	283	283	283
Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.832**	1	.843**	.757**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	283	283	283	283
Continuance Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.929**	.843**	1	.814**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	283	283	283	283
Normative Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.765**	.757**	.814**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	283	283	283	283

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5: Correlation co-efficient between Mentoring and employee commitment

Source: Output of Data Analysis, 2015

#### 5. Conclusion

The researcher has been able to establish that mentoring programmes influence the employees’ commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State positively. This has been established through the findings that indicate that indeed mentoring programmes are used for knowledge transfer, career development guidance and skills enhancement which in turn lead to an increase in employees’ commitment.

The researcher established that mentoring programmes encouraged sharing of ideas and experiences between protégé and mentors, the protégé also received advice on career advancement and development and were allowed to carry out challenging tasks as well as role model which all contributed positively towards these employee’s performance.

This study showed that there is a direct correlation between job rotation and employees' commitment of academic staff of the Universities in Ekiti State, job satisfaction is higher than other variables and quality of work variable had the least rank. Thus, job satisfaction had the highest priority; while innovation and quality of work were next in ranks. Thus, based on the correlation between job rotation condition and employees' commitment of academic staff of the Universities in Ekiti State, it seemed that optimal use of job rotation can be effective on academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State.

Training lead to significant influence on employees' commitment of academic staff of Universities in Ekiti State if supported with other career development strategies such as recognition, promotion, and salary increase. Universities should use other motivational strategies alongside staff development to engineer staff interest for improved job performance. Such may include reward, recognition, or promotion.

## 6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to the management of the Universities in Ekiti State and other Tertiary Institutions in the country at large that are interested in modifying their employees' commitment in their own institution:

Instead of downsizing those employees with years of experience and recruiting new ones, Universities in Ekiti should rather invest in (committed to) training and development of their experienced staff. This will help them to reduce the cost of frequent recruitment and selection.

Universities should also introduce reward system for outstanding performance so as to motivate employees to always put in their best during each training period. This will assist them in identifying those staff that has special skills and talents.

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