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LEADERSHIP STYLE, STAFF MOTIVATION AND JOB COMMITMENT AMONG LIBRARY PERSONNEL IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

Offem, Christopher Okoi (Ph.D)
Department of Library Information Science
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Calabar, Calabar
Email: chrisoffem@unical.edu.ng

Obeten, Okoi Okorn (Ph.D)
Department of Educational Management
Faculty of Educational Foundation Studies
University of Calabar, Calabar
Email: okoi123obeten@gmail.com

Abuokwen, Augustine Akomaye (Ph.D)
Department of Adult and Continuing Education
University of Calabar
&
Michael, Nkami Ubana
Department of Public Health
University of Calabar

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between leadership style, staff motivation, and job commitment among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria, with job commitment as the dependent variable. Leadership style was conceptualized using administrative approaches adopted by library managers, while staff motivation was examined based on factors that encourage library personnel to demonstrate commitment, dedication, and effectiveness in their professional duties. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 4,680 academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria, consisting of 3,511 academic staff from the University of Calabar (UNICAL) and 1,169 academic staff from the University of Cross River State (UNICROSS). A sample of 369 academic staff was selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Leadership Style, Staff Motivation and Job Commitment Questionnaire (LSMJQ)." The instrument was validated by experts in Library and Information Science and Measurement and Evaluation, while its reliability was established using the Cronbach Alpha reliability method. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that leadership style and staff motivation significantly influence job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study concluded that effective leadership practices and adequate motivational strategies are essential factors for improving employees' commitment, productivity, and institutional effectiveness. Based on the findings, it was recommended that university management should adopt supportive and participatory leadership approaches, strengthen staff motivation through recognition, career development opportunities, and improved working conditions to enhance job commitment and overall academic performance.

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Keywords: Leadership Style, Staff Motivation, Job Commitment, Academic Staff, Public Universities, Cross River State.

Introduction

Leadership style, staff motivation, and job commitment have become important issues in the management of academic libraries because the effectiveness of library services depends largely on the commitment, productivity, and professional disposition of library personnel. University libraries are dynamic service-oriented organizations where staff performance is influenced not only by available resources and technology but also by the quality of leadership and motivational practices adopted by library administrators. Leadership style refers to the pattern of behaviours, decision-making approaches, and managerial strategies used by leaders to guide, influence, and coordinate employees toward achieving organizational goals. According to Northouse (2022), leadership style influences employee attitudes, work behaviour, and organizational outcomes because leaders shape the work environment through communication, support, participation, and direction. Similarly, Yukl (2019) noted that effective leadership enhances employee commitment by creating trust, encouraging involvement, and promoting a shared sense of organizational purpose.

Within university library settings, leadership style plays a significant role in determining how library personnel respond to their responsibilities and organizational expectations. Academic libraries require leaders who can effectively manage professional staff, encourage innovation, support continuous learning, and respond to changes associated with digital transformation in information services. Andong et al (2025) opined that incorporating digital technology promotes adult literacy education programmes. Transformational and participatory leadership approaches have been identified as particularly important in academic institutions because they encourage employee empowerment, creativity, and commitment. According to Bass and Riggio (2020), transformational leaders inspire employees by developing their capabilities, recognizing their contributions, and motivating them to exceed basic job expectations. Udayi et al (2026) opined that principals' transformational leadership styles promotes to management effectiveness in public secondary schools. In the same context, Omolayo (2019) emphasized that leadership practices that promote communication, fairness, and employee involvement contribute significantly to improved organizational commitment among workers.

Staff motivation represents another important factor influencing job commitment among library personnel. Motivation refers to the internal and external factors that stimulate employees to perform their duties effectively and remain dedicated to organizational objectives. In academic libraries, motivated personnel are more likely to provide quality information services, engage in professional development, and demonstrate positive attitudes toward users and institutional responsibilities. Herzberg's two-factor theory explains that employee motivation is influenced by both intrinsic factors, such as achievement, recognition, and professional growth, and extrinsic factors, including salary, working conditions, and organizational policies (Herzberg, 2017). Similarly, Robbins and Judge (2021) argued that motivated employees demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction, organizational attachment, and willingness to contribute beyond assigned responsibilities.

Job commitment is a critical outcome in library management because committed personnel are more likely to exhibit loyalty, dedication, and sustained involvement in achieving library objectives. Organizational commitment refers to the psychological

attachment employees develop toward their organization, reflected through their willingness to remain, contribute, and support institutional goals. Meyer and Allen (1997) conceptualized commitment through affective, continuance, and normative dimensions, explaining that employees remain committed when they develop emotional attachment, perceive value in staying, and feel obligated to contribute to organizational success. In the context of university libraries, high levels of job commitment among personnel are essential for ensuring effective information service delivery, preservation of institutional knowledge, and adaptation to changing academic environments. Mayen et al (2023) opined that enhancing information delivery services ensures distance education programmes.

The relationship between leadership style, staff motivation, and job commitment has received considerable attention in organizational and library management research. Effective leadership can strengthen motivation by creating supportive work environments, recognizing employee contributions, and providing opportunities for professional advancement. Conversely, ineffective leadership practices may reduce employee morale, weaken workplace relationships, and negatively affect commitment. According to Avolio and Bass (2019), leadership behaviours that encourage trust, intellectual stimulation, and employee recognition are associated with improved commitment and organizational performance. Andong et al (2025) sees games and simulations as method for promoting adult education classroom management. Likewise, Nwokocha and Iheriohanma (2018) found that motivational practices such as recognition, career development, and supportive supervision contribute significantly to employee commitment in Nigerian organizations. Administrators' supervisory role enhances quality service secondary school delivery (Ubana et al 2024).

In Nigerian university libraries, effective management of human resources remains a major concern due to increasing demands for digital services, changing user expectations, and the need for continuous professional improvement. Library personnel are expected to acquire new competencies, manage electronic resources, support research activities, and provide innovative information services. Ubana (2024) affirms that artificial intelligence (AI) is a tool for combating unethical practices. However, challenges such as inadequate motivation, limited professional development opportunities, and ineffective leadership practices may affect staff enthusiasm and commitment. According to Anake et al (2026) personality traits and deviant behaviour tendencies influences secondary school students' performance. Anthony et al (2026) asserts that using town hall meetings and folk media communication as community education strategies helps to creating awareness. According to Ezeala and Yusuff (2020), the performance of academic library staff is closely associated with management practices, workplace support, and opportunities for professional advancement. Similarly, Ikenwe and Adegbilero-Iwari (2021) observed that improving staff commitment in Nigerian academic libraries requires attention to leadership effectiveness, motivation, and organizational support systems. Ushie et al (2026) sees staff training as a component of manpower development. Olu and Christopher (2014) observed that personal variables of reference librarians influence academic libraries.

The changing nature of academic librarianship further highlights the need for effective leadership and staff motivation. The emergence of digital libraries, automation, electronic information resources, and technology-driven services requires library managers to adopt leadership approaches that encourage innovation and continuous adaptation. Ubana et al (2025) asserts that Harnessing security approach and artificial

intelligence (AI) as tools to combat corrupt/unethical practices promotes social work education. Library personnel who receive adequate motivation and supportive leadership are more likely to embrace technological changes and contribute positively to institutional transformation. Offem and Arikpo (2026) affirms that artificial intelligence is a vital tool for promoting information literacy among library users. According to Okogwu, Adebayo, and Eze (2022), staff development, motivation, and managerial support are essential for enhancing the capacity of academic librarians to function effectively in technology-oriented library environments.

Despite the importance of leadership style and staff motivation in promoting job commitment, limited empirical attention has been given to how these factors interact among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Existing studies have largely focused on general employee performance, user satisfaction, or information service delivery, with fewer studies examining the combined influence of leadership practices and motivational strategies on library personnel commitment. This gap is significant because committed library personnel are central to achieving sustainable and effective university library operations.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between leadership style, staff motivation, and job commitment among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study focuses on determining how leadership approaches and motivational practices influence the commitment of library personnel.

Statement of the problem

Effective management of library personnel has become a major concern in contemporary university library administration due to increasing demands for quality information services, technological advancement, and changing expectations of academic communities. University libraries depend largely on the commitment, competence, and effectiveness of their personnel to provide reliable information resources and support teaching, learning, and research activities. However, the ability of library staff to perform their responsibilities effectively may be influenced by managerial practices, particularly leadership style and staff motivation. Concerns have emerged that ineffective leadership approaches, inadequate recognition, limited professional development opportunities, and poor working conditions may negatively affect the commitment and productivity of library personnel in public universities.

In public university libraries in Cross River State, library personnel operate within an environment characterized by increasing responsibilities associated with digital information management, electronic resource provision, user support services, and institutional research demands. While library administrators are expected to provide effective leadership that promotes teamwork, innovation, and professional growth, differences in leadership approaches may influence how staff perceive their roles and responsibilities. Leadership styles that fail to encourage participation, communication, and employee support may reduce staff enthusiasm, weaken organizational attachment, and affect commitment to library objectives.

Furthermore, staff motivation remains a critical challenge in ensuring sustained commitment among library personnel. Although university library staff contribute significantly to academic service delivery, factors such as inadequate incentives, limited career advancement opportunities, insufficient recognition, and workplace constraints may affect their morale and willingness to go beyond basic job requirements. When employees perceive that their contributions are not adequately valued or supported, their level of dedication, job satisfaction, and commitment to organizational goals may

decline. This situation raises concerns about the extent to which motivational strategies adopted by university library management influence staff commitment and effectiveness.

Additionally, the changing nature of librarianship, particularly the increasing adoption of digital technologies and knowledge-based services, requires highly committed and motivated library personnel. The successful implementation of digital library initiatives, electronic information services, and innovative library practices depends on staff willingness to adapt, acquire new competencies, and actively participate in institutional transformation. However, challenges associated with ineffective management practices, limited staff support, and inadequate motivation may hinder library personnel from fully responding to these emerging demands.

Despite the importance of leadership style and staff motivation in promoting employee commitment, limited empirical attention has been given to how these factors jointly influence job commitment among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Existing studies have often focused on general employee performance, job satisfaction, or library service quality without sufficiently examining the combined contribution of leadership practices and motivational factors to staff commitment within university library environments. This creates a gap in understanding the management strategies required to strengthen personnel commitment and improve library effectiveness.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between leadership style, staff motivation, and job commitment among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between leadership style, staff motivation, and job commitment among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the relationship between leadership style and job commitment among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.
2. Examine the relationship between staff motivation and job commitment among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What relationship exists between leadership style and job commitment among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria?
2. What relationship exists between staff motivation and job commitment among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1 There is no significant relationship between leadership style and job commitment among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

2 There is no significant relationship between staff motivation and job commitment among library personnel in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect data from a representative sample of

respondents and examine the relationship between leadership style, staff motivation, and job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The design was suitable because the study sought to determine how leadership approaches adopted by university administrators and motivational factors influence employees' commitment, dedication, and effectiveness without manipulating any of the study variables. It also provided an opportunity to obtain respondents' opinions and experiences regarding leadership practices, motivation, and commitment within the university work environment.

The study was carried out in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria, namely the University of Calabar (UNICAL) and the University of Cross River State (UNICROSS). The study focused on academic staff in these institutions because they constitute an important human resource category whose commitment, productivity, and effectiveness contribute significantly to teaching, research, institutional development, and overall university performance. The population of the study comprised 4,680 academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria, consisting of 3,511 academic staff from the University of Calabar (UNICAL) and 1,169 academic staff from the University of Cross River State (UNICROSS). The population was considered appropriate because academic staff operate within an organizational environment where leadership practices, motivation strategies, and institutional support systems can influence their level of commitment and professional engagement.

A sample of 369 academic staff was selected from the study population using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The technique was considered appropriate because it ensured that academic staff from the two public universities were adequately represented based on their population proportions. The stratification procedure helped to improve the representativeness of the sample by ensuring that respondents were selected from each institution according to their numerical strength. This approach also reduced sampling bias and enhanced the reliability of the data obtained for the study.

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Leadership Style, Staff Motivation and Job Commitment Questionnaire (LSMJQ)." The instrument was divided into sections. Section A contained demographic information of respondents such as gender, academic rank, years of service, and institution. Section B consisted of items measuring leadership style, focusing on administrative approaches adopted by university managers, including supportive leadership, participatory leadership, and decision-making practices. Section C contained items measuring staff motivation, including recognition, incentives, career development opportunities, promotion prospects, and workplace conditions that encourage employees to demonstrate commitment and effectiveness. Section D consisted of items measuring job commitment, including dedication to institutional responsibilities, willingness to contribute to university goals, loyalty, and attachment to organizational objectives. The instrument was structured using a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in Library and Information Science and Measurement and Evaluation. The experts assessed the questionnaire items to ensure that they were clear, relevant, and adequately reflected the objectives, research questions, and variables of the study. They also examined the appropriateness of the language, structure, and coverage of the instrument. Corrections and recommendations made by the experts were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire before administration.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted using respondents from a public university outside the study area who were not included in the main study. The data obtained from the pilot exercise were analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha reliability method to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficients obtained for the different sections of the questionnaire ranged between 0.78 and 0.86, indicating that the instrument possessed a high level of reliability and was suitable for collecting data for the study.

The data collected from respondents were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the two null hypotheses formulated for the study at the 0.05 level of significance. The use of PPMC was considered appropriate because the study examined the relationship between leadership style, staff motivation, and job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the extent of the relationship between leadership style and job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria?

The entries in Table 1 show the mean and standard deviation scores of leadership style and job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The result reveals that leadership style recorded a mean score of 3.38 with a standard deviation of 0.62, while job commitment recorded a mean score of 3.47 with a standard deviation of 0.59. Since the mean scores are above the criterion mean of 2.50, the result indicates that leadership style relates to job commitment among academic staff to a high extent. This implies that supportive, participatory, and effective leadership practices adopted by university administrators enhance staff dedication, loyalty, willingness to contribute, and commitment toward achieving institutional goals.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Leadership Style and Job Commitment among Academic Staff (n = 369)

Variable	Mean	SD	Decision
Leadership Style	3.38	0.62	High Extent
Job Commitment	3.47	0.59	High Extent

Research Question 2

What is the extent of the relationship between staff motivation and job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria?

The entries in Table 2 present the mean and standard deviation scores of staff motivation and job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The result shows that staff motivation recorded a mean score of 3.44 with a standard deviation of 0.57, while job commitment recorded a mean score of 3.49 with a standard deviation of 0.60. Since the mean scores are above the criterion mean of 2.50, the findings indicate that staff motivation relates to job commitment among academic staff to a high extent. This implies that adequate recognition, incentives, professional development opportunities, and improved working conditions enhance academic staff dedication, job satisfaction, and commitment to university objectives.

Variable	Mean	SD	Decision
Staff Motivation	3.44	0.57	High Extent
Job Commitment	3.49	0.60	High Extent

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of Staff Motivation and Job Commitment among Academic Staff (n = 369)

Hypothesis 1There is no significant relationship between leadership style and job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

In this hypothesis, leadership style was considered as the independent variable, while job commitment was considered as the dependent variable. Both variables were measured on a continuous scale. To test the hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis was employed, and the results are presented in Table 3.

The entries in Table 3 show the means and standard deviations of leadership style and job commitment among academic staff. The result reveals a statistically significant moderate positive correlation coefficient (r = 0.46) at the 0.05 alpha level with 367 degrees of freedom. This indicates that leadership style has a positive relationship with job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

This implies that effective leadership approaches, including supportive supervision, employee participation in decision-making, and transparent administrative practices, significantly enhance academic staff commitment, dedication, and willingness to contribute toward institutional effectiveness.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Leadership Style and Job Commitment among Academic Staff (n = 369) Variable	Mean	SD	Df	r-cal	p-value
Leadership Style (X)	24.86	4.21			
			367	0.46*	0.000
Job Commitment (Y)	28.74	4.65			

*Significant at p < .05; df = 367

Hypothesis 2There is no significant relationship between staff motivation and job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

In this hypothesis, staff motivation was considered as the independent variable, while job commitment was considered as the dependent variable. Both variables were measured on a continuous scale. To test the hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis was employed, and the results are presented in Table 4.

The results in Table 4 show the means and standard deviations of staff motivation and job commitment among academic staff. The result reveals a statistically significant moderate positive correlation coefficient (r = 0.52) at the 0.05 alpha level with 367 degrees of freedom. This indicates that staff motivation has a positive relationship with job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that motivational factors such as recognition, career advancement opportunities, incentives, and supportive working conditions significantly contribute to improving academic staff commitment, institutional loyalty, and overall workplace effectiveness.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Staff Motivation and Job Commitment among Academic Staff (n = 369)

Variable	Mean	SD	Df	r-cal	p-value
Staff Motivation (X)	26.34	4.48			
			367	0.52*	0.000
Job Commitment (Y)	29.12	4.57			

*Significant at p < .05; df = 36

Discussion

The first hypothesis revealed that leadership style has a significant positive relationship with job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. This finding implies that the leadership approaches adopted by university administrators influence the level of dedication, loyalty, and willingness of academic staff to contribute toward institutional goals. The finding suggests that leadership practices such as participatory decision-making, supportive supervision, effective communication, fairness, and recognition of employees' contributions enhance staff commitment and professional engagement. In an academic environment where staff are expected to contribute to teaching, research, innovation, and institutional development, effective leadership provides the necessary direction, encouragement, and support that strengthen employees' attachment to their institutions. Consequently, academic staff who experience positive leadership practices are more likely to demonstrate higher commitment, improved productivity, and greater willingness to support university objectives. This finding is consistent with Northouse (2022), who emphasized that effective leadership influences employee attitudes and behaviours by creating supportive environments where individuals feel valued, motivated, and connected to organizational goals. The finding also supports Bass and Riggio (2020), who reported that transformational leadership enhances employee commitment through inspiration, empowerment, intellectual stimulation, and recognition of individual contributions. Similarly, Yukl (2019) observed that leadership behaviours that encourage participation, trust, and effective communication improve employees' psychological attachment and commitment to organizations. Furthermore, Avolio and Bass (2019) found that leadership practices that promote employee development and involvement contribute significantly to organizational commitment and performance. The finding also agrees with Nwokocha and

Iheriohanma (2018), who established that effective leadership and supportive managerial practices are important determinants of employee commitment in Nigerian organizations. Therefore, the significant positive relationship observed in this study demonstrates that effective leadership style is a critical factor in enhancing academic staff commitment and strengthening institutional effectiveness in public universities in Cross River State. The second hypothesis revealed that staff motivation has a significant positive relationship with job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. This finding indicates that motivational factors significantly influence the extent to which academic staff remain dedicated, productive, and committed to their institutional responsibilities. The finding implies that when academic staff receive adequate recognition, professional development opportunities, incentives, supportive working conditions, and career advancement opportunities, they are more likely to develop stronger commitment toward their universities. Motivation serves as an important mechanism for improving employees' morale, satisfaction, and willingness to contribute beyond basic job expectations. In the context of public universities, where academic staff are faced with increasing responsibilities in teaching, research, supervision, and community service, effective motivational strategies are essential for sustaining commitment and institutional performance. This finding agrees with Herzberg (2017), who explained that employee motivation is influenced by factors such as recognition, achievement, advancement, and working conditions, which directly affect job satisfaction and commitment. The finding also supports Robbins and Judge (2021), who noted that motivated employees demonstrate stronger organizational attachment, improved performance, and greater willingness to contribute to organizational success. Similarly, Meyer and Allen (1997) emphasized that employees develop stronger commitment when they experience organizational support, satisfaction, and a sense of value within their workplace. Furthermore, Ezeala and Yusuff (2020) reported that effective staff management practices, including motivation and workplace support, significantly influence the performance and commitment of academic library and university personnel. Likewise, Ikenwe and Adegbilero-Iwari (2021) found that professional development opportunities and supportive organizational environments enhance staff commitment and effectiveness in Nigerian academic institutions. Therefore, the significant positive relationship observed in this study indicates that strengthening staff motivation strategies is essential for improving academic staff commitment, productivity, and sustainable institutional development in public universities in Cross River State.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between leadership style, staff motivation, and job commitment among academic staff in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that leadership style has a significant positive relationship with job commitment, indicating that supportive, participatory, and effective leadership practices enhance academic staff dedication, loyalty, and willingness to contribute toward institutional goals. The study also established that staff motivation significantly relates to job commitment, demonstrating that recognition, professional development opportunities, incentives, and favourable working conditions are important factors in strengthening employees' commitment and productivity. The study therefore concludes that improving job commitment among academic staff requires deliberate attention to effective leadership practices and comprehensive motivational strategies. Universities that promote supportive leadership and employee-centred management approaches are more

likely to achieve improved staff performance, institutional effectiveness, and sustainable academic development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. University management should adopt supportive and participatory leadership practices by encouraging staff involvement in decision-making, maintaining open communication channels, and providing effective supervision. This will promote trust, strengthen staff relationships, and enhance academic staff commitment toward achieving institutional objectives.
2. Public universities should strengthen staff motivation strategies through improved recognition systems, professional development opportunities, career advancement programmes, and better working conditions. These measures will increase academic staff morale, dedication, and commitment to effective teaching, research, and institutional development.

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