

Influence of Delegation of Duties on Job Commitment of Non-Teaching Staff in Public Universities in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study examined the influence of delegation of duties on the job commitment of non-teaching staff in public universities in southwest Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, drawing on six public universities and a sample of 70 non-teaching staff. Data were obtained using a Delegation of Duties Questionnaire. The findings showed that non-commitment among staff manifested through inadequate delegation of duties for efficient functioning, the non-delegation of duties based on staff specialisation and expertise, and an inability to consistently involve staff in the performance of duties; an inability to give staff the opportunity to represent management on official assignments was similarly found to hinder job commitment. The study further revealed that the level of job commitment among non-teaching staff in public universities in southwest Nigeria was high, and that non-teaching staff exhibited high affective commitment when their contributions were acknowledged by management through delegation of duties. Delegation of duties was found to be significantly related to job commitment ($r = .755, p < .05$). It was recommended that university management, supervisors, and departmental heads adopt transparent and fair delegation practices that match tasks to staff skills and strengths.

Keywords: Management, Job commitment, Delegation of duties,

Non-teaching staff,

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Introduction

Management has been widely defined as the process of achieving organisational goals through the effective coordination of people and resources within structured groups. It involves creating an environment in which individuals can work collaboratively and efficiently toward common objectives (Okon & Adeyemi, 2022). Drawing on contemporary administrative principles, management is also viewed as a systematic set of functions, including planning, organising, leading, and controlling, that together ensure the smooth operation and success of an organisation (Ibrahim & Chukwu, 2023).

Management has been described as “a universal human activity in domestic, social and political settings, as well as in organizations” (Boddy, 2017). It enables the efficient utilisation of limited resources, eliminates waste, and brings about order and discipline; in a university, the productive efficiency of the institution depends to a large extent on the quality and competence of its managers. Management is, in this sense, a distinct process consisting of planning, organising, actuating, and controlling, performed to determine and accomplish objectives through the use of human beings and other resources (Daft & Marcic, 2021). In traditionally organised institutions, the entire organisation forms a superordinate unit that contains divisions, which in turn contain departments, teams, and individual jobs.

Within this structure, delegation of duties is the managerial process by which a manager, supervisor, or administrative officer transfers part of his or her legitimate authority to a subordinate, such as a non-teaching staff member, without passing on the ultimate responsibility entrusted to that manager by a superior. Delegation refers to the intentional assignment of responsibilities to non-teaching staff, empowering them to act within defined boundaries of authority while ultimate accountability remains with the supervisor (Ojo & Eze, 2022). Delegation becomes particularly necessary when the volume of tasks exceeds the physical or mental capacity of a single individual, and effective managers must embrace it not only to enhance operational efficiency but also to foster a sense of responsibility and commitment among non-teaching personnel. As Aliyu and Benson (2023) observed, no institution can operate optimally without a well-structured delegation framework, since delegation promotes both productivity and institutional cohesion: no single manager can successfully discharge every responsibility in an organisation alone, and a university manager is, in practice, expected to manage the institution through a combination of personal expertise and the work of other staff and students.

Statement of the Problem

Non-teaching staff in Nigerian public universities require closer institutional attention because of the limited involvement of staff in the performance of their duties and the inadequate delegation of duties based on staff specialisation and expertise, conditions that have tended to make staff less responsible for their own work. The perceived non-commitment of non-teaching staff manifests in management's inadequate provision of opportunities for staff to represent the institution on official assignments, the underuse of staff's work-time schedules for daily duties, and the inadequate exercise of judgement in delegating duties to staff for efficient functioning; opportunities for staff to take on further responsibility are, correspondingly, not always provided.

The purpose of the study was to examine:

1. the relationship between delegation of duties and job commitment of non-teaching staff in public universities in southwest Nigeria; and

2. the level of job commitment of non-teaching staff in public universities in southwest Nigeria.

The following research question was raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of job commitment of non-teaching staff in public universities in southwest Nigeria?

The following null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study:

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between delegation of duties and job commitment of non-teaching staff in public universities in southwest Nigeria.

Literature Review

Job Commitment and the Role of Non-Teaching Staff

Job commitment is the level at which a non-teaching staff member is dedicated to the responsibilities entrusted to him or her at work. According to Edo and Nwosu (2018), high commitment reflects effort directed toward the achievement of organisational goals with the least available resources, and is considered one of the foremost goals of any organisation seeking to maintain its existence and survival. Effective and efficient management, in this regard, involves the optimal use of resources, including materials, labour, capital, information, and time, to achieve organisational goals (Robbins & Coulter, 2022), and employee commitment, reflecting an individual's personal sense of responsibility toward the mission, vision, and objectives of the institution, is a key component of organisational success.

Non-teaching personnel are employees of an institution who do not instruct students directly but provide services that, while not directly academic, substantially enhance the institutional environment. According to Garaba (2022), non-teaching staff are pivotal to the delivery of quality education and to providing a safe and positive learning environment for students. Because of the work of non-teaching staff, teaching staff are able to spend less time on non-teaching activities such as bursary duties, store-keeping, and catering (Lawrent, 2019), which together help create a conducive learning atmosphere. Non-teaching staff also assist teaching staff with daily administrative activities (Mwaisumo, 2016), performing duties for staff, students, the community, and other officials (Garaba, 2022), and providing services that range from library and procurement services to record-keeping, health services, facility repair, and the safeguarding of institutional premises (Barreto, 2020).

The Concept of Delegation of Duties

Delegation has been described as the process of assigning duties to subordinates to enable them to act within an authority granted to them, without the senior person relinquishing ultimate accountability (Marry, 2010). It involves the grant or conferment of authority by a superior to a subordinate for the accomplishment of a particular assignment, and is considered one of the core concepts of management and leadership (D'Souza, 2002). The concept has, in recent years, drawn increasing attention from educational managers, in part because authority should not remain centralised at the apex of an organisation given the range of problems and competing commitments faced by institutional administrators.

Delegation of responsibility is essential to the success and efficient running of any institution, since no single manager can successfully administer a university alone, however large or small. Ruto (2011) argues that delegation is not an act of evading responsibility or authority but rather an avenue for training non-teaching staff in managerial skills, and is necessary

whenever the volume of work exceeds an individual's physical and mental capacity (Smyth, 2011). Lunenburg (2010) cautions against confusing delegation with consultation: in delegation, decision-making authority passes fully to the subordinate, whereas in consultation the subordinate may offer an opinion while the manager retains the authority to decide. Gary (2013) identifies several reasons underlying the practice of delegation, including its capacity to develop staff skills and confidence, enable staff to resolve problems quickly, improve decisions by moving them closer to the point of action, increase staff commitment to a task, make work more interesting for subordinates, reduce a manager's workload so that time can be better managed, and satisfy superiors who expect managers to delegate more. Riisgaard et al. (2016) similarly note that delegation promotes empowerment, an effective tool through which management and leadership grant a team or individual the freedom and creativity to pursue an institution's strategic goals, while Orora (2007) cautions that poor delegation effectively reduces an enterprise to a single member, since no individual can singlehandedly manage the plans, decisions, and tasks of an entire organisation without risking failure.

Effective delegation offers several benefits in the educational setting: it allows managers to mobilise resources, share responsibilities, and focus on a smaller number of tasks performed well (Hubbard, 2016). It enables management to make the best use of available time and skills while assisting non-teaching staff and subordinates in their growth and development, which in turn enhances job commitment, builds trust and confidence, and increases the volume of work that can be completed. Delegation is, in this sense, essentially a two-way power-sharing process in which the manager retains overall responsibility for a delegated task while allowing the staff member genuine autonomy in carrying it out (Marry, 2010); when this balance is achieved, the time available for essential managerial tasks increases, staff feel more motivated and confident, stress levels across the workforce decrease, and job commitment is promoted. Where authority is delegated to staff who are not adequately qualified for the task, however, the quality of administrative work is unlikely to be effective, since unqualified staff may not know how to act in ways that strengthen, rather than undermine, job commitment.

Challenges in the Practice of Delegation

A university manager cannot achieve institutional goals and objectives by handling every task alone: no single individual can adequately supervise all staff, head every department and club, ensure discipline throughout the institution, and personally oversee every class. Managers must therefore draw on the talents of the staff who work under them, delegating responsibilities and duties not out of fear that staff will usurp their position, but out of trust and confidence in their abilities. In the educational sub-sector, however, observation suggests that delegation of authority is not consistently practised; some administrators choose not to delegate, believing they can perform tasks better than anyone else. Fonkeng and Tamajong (2009) note that school administrators face problems such as poor administration, inadequate staffing, and rising indiscipline among staff and students, conditions under which the reluctance to delegate, often driven by a fear that subordinates will not perform the work well, can be especially pronounced. Staff, in turn, may fear criticism for mistakes and consequently prefer that decisions be made by their superiors, for fear of being held responsible for any resulting failure. Where administrators draw on staff experience and expertise when delegating authority, however, delegation is more likely to be welcomed as a constructive practice rather than resisted.

Delegation also helps to enhance the credibility of a leader: when non-teaching staff are given the opportunity to demonstrate their strengths and contribute meaningfully to institutional

work, the leader who delegated that responsibility tends to earn greater respect and loyalty from subordinates. Effective delegation, in this sense, allows for a fairer sharing of responsibility and work, provided managers select the most suitable staff for delegated tasks and support them with adequate training, supervision, and coaching.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which allowed data and information to be collected from a sample and used to describe characteristics of the wider population.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of 700 non-teaching staff, comprising administrative officers, school officers, secretaries, clerical officers, and cleaners, together with university managers (Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Registrars, Deputy Registrars, Librarians, Bursars, Deans, Directors, Heads of Department, and Heads of Unit) across six public universities in southwest Nigeria. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select the study sample. In the first stage, three of the six southwestern states (Osun, Ekiti, and Ondo) were selected using simple random sampling. In the second stage, two universities (one state and one federal) were selected in each state, giving a total of six universities. In the third stage, proportional sampling was used to select non-teaching staff from each university, while the fourth stage used purposive sampling to select managers from each university. The final sample comprised 70 non-teaching staff and university managers selected through this procedure.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used to collect data for the study: the Job Commitment of Non-Teaching Staff Questionnaire (JCNTSQ), covering items on the job commitment of non-teaching staff, and the Managerial Duties Questionnaire (MDQ), which included a delegation-of-duties subscale. Both instruments were administered to respondents on two occasions, two weeks apart, to establish their internal consistency. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, the test-retest reliability coefficients obtained were .85 for the JCNTSQ and .67 for the MDQ, indicating that both instruments were sufficiently reliable for data collection.

Data Analysis

Data collected for the study were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations) to answer the research question, while the research hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at the .05 level of significance.

Results

Level of Job Commitment of Non-Teaching Staff

The level of job commitment of non-teaching staff in public universities in southwest Nigeria was determined using a mean cut-off mark of 3.00: items with a mean score at or above the cut-off were classified as reflecting a high level of job commitment, while items below the cut-

off were classified as reflecting a low level. Table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of job commitment of non-teaching staff.

Table 1

Descriptive Analysis of Job Commitment of Non-Teaching Staff in Public Universities (N = 300)

N	Item	Excellent (%)	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Fair (%)	Poor (%)	M	SD	Remark
1	Makes full use of work time schedule for daily duties	29 (9.7)	163 (54.3)	97 (32.3)	11 (3.7)	0 (0.0)	3.70	0.69	High
2	Is intelligent enough to carry out duties without being supervised	38 (12.7)	154 (51.3)	93 (31.0)	15 (5.0)	0 (0.0)	3.72	0.75	High
3	Passes appropriate information to staff	59 (19.7)	98 (32.7)	117 (39.0)	20 (6.7)	6 (2.0)	3.61	0.94	High
4	Encourages others to work hard	16 (5.3)	116 (38.7)	105 (35.0)	49 (16.3)	14 (4.7)	3.24	0.95	High
5	Does his or her work without being supervised	9 (3.0)	141 (47.0)	108 (36.0)	40 (13.3)	2 (0.7)	3.38	0.78	High
6	Makes use of the available resources given by the authority	39 (13.0)	166 (55.3)	95 (31.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.81	0.64	High
7	Ensures effective and efficient outcomes from the resources given	53 (17.7)	149 (49.7)	77 (25.7)	9 (3.0)	12 (4.0)	3.74	0.92	High
8	Always utilises the resources given	49 (16.3)	139 (46.3)	94 (31.3)	18 (6.0)	0 (0.0)	3.73	0.80	High
9	Always wastes the resources given to him or her	45 (15.0)	118 (39.3)	92 (30.7)	45 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	3.54	0.92	High
10	Ensures that work is done perfectly with the resources available, without seeking additional resources	64 (21.3)	100 (33.3)	110 (36.7)	12 (4.0)	14 (4.7)	3.63	1.01	High
11	Is always confident of his or her work among staff	25 (8.3)	120 (40.0)	96 (32.0)	45 (15.0)	14 (4.7)	3.32	0.98	High
12	Ensures that work is done competently and without bias	33 (11.0)	148 (49.3)	74 (24.7)	45 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	3.56	0.88	High
13	Knows the right things to do without being forced	36 (12.0)	164 (54.7)	100 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.79	0.64	High
14	Ensures good results that others emulate	38 (12.7)	153 (51.0)	73 (24.3)	19 (6.3)	17 (5.7)	3.59	0.98	High
15	Performs duties without pressure from the leader	0 (0.0)	113 (37.7)	140 (46.7)	47 (15.7)	0 (0.0)	3.22	0.70	High
16	Is prompt in undertaking duties without delay within the organisation	10 (3.3)	97 (32.3)	131 (43.7)	50 (16.7)	12 (4.0)	3.14	0.87	High
17	Ensures collaboration of work among co-workers	5 (1.7)	94 (31.3)	150 (50.0)	44 (14.7)	7 (2.3)	3.15	0.77	High
18	Completes all work given without delay	14 (4.7)	85 (28.3)	118 (39.3)	65 (21.7)	18 (6.0)	3.04	0.96	High
19	Ensures the institution is promoted among others through recognition	7 (2.3)	103 (34.3)	139 (46.3)	42 (14.0)	9 (3.0)	3.19	0.81	High
20	Keeps records of both students and academic staff on a daily basis	47 (15.7)	134 (44.7)	89 (29.7)	30 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	3.66	0.86	High

N	Item	Excellent (%)	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Fair (%)	Poor (%)	M	SD	Remark
21	Ensures thorough job performance among colleagues within the system	41 (13.7)	126 (42.0)	96 (32.0)	13 (4.3)	24 (8.0)	3.49	1.04	High
22	Provides positive reinforcement to students for appropriate behaviour	10 (3.3)	116 (38.7)	141 (47.0)	33 (11.0)	0 (0.0)	3.34	0.72	High
23	Has adequate knowledge of daily activities	29 (9.7)	123 (41.0)	114 (38.0)	34 (11.3)	0 (0.0)	3.49	0.82	High
24	Makes other staff aware of the consequences of misconduct	90 (30.0)	68 (22.7)	108 (36.0)	34 (11.3)	0 (0.0)	3.71	1.01	High
25	Creates a supportive and pleasant climate for leaders	0 (0.0)	105 (35.0)	124 (41.3)	56 (18.7)	15 (5.0)	3.06	0.86	High
	Composite score						86.87	4.01	

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation. Mean cut-off = 3.00; items with $M \geq 3.00$ were classified as reflecting a high level of job commitment.

As shown in Table 1, all 25 items returned mean scores above the cut-off of 3.00, ranging from 3.04 to 3.81, indicating that the level of job commitment of non-teaching staff in public universities in southwest Nigeria was high on every item assessed, with no item falling below the threshold.

Test of Hypothesis

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between delegation of duties and job commitment of non-teaching staff in public universities in southwest Nigeria.

Table 2

Relationship Between Delegation of Duties and Job Commitment of Non-Teaching Staff in Public Universities

Variables	N	M	SD	r	p
Delegation of Duties	300	15.83	2.22	0.755*	0.000
Job Commitment	300	86.87	4.01		

Note. * $p < .05$. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; r = Pearson correlation coefficient between delegation of duties and job commitment.

As shown in Table 2, the calculated correlation coefficient of .755 was significant at the .05 level, since the associated p-value (.000) was less than .05. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected, indicating a significant positive relationship between delegation of duties and job commitment of non-teaching staff in public universities in southwest Nigeria.

Discussion

The finding of a significant positive relationship between delegation of duties and job commitment among non-teaching staff suggests that, where managers transfer meaningful authority and responsibility to staff within clearly defined boundaries, staff are more likely to

feel a personal stake in institutional outcomes and to demonstrate stronger commitment to their work. This is consistent with the broader literature reviewed, in which delegation is understood to develop staff skills and confidence, increase staff commitment to a task, and promote a sense of empowerment that allows individuals or teams the freedom to pursue an institution's strategic goals (Gary, 2013; Riisgaard et al., 2016).

Related research similarly points to a significant relationship between staff supervision and job commitment: regular oversight, guidance, and support from supervisors is thought to improve staff attachment to work by providing clarity, performance feedback, and a sense of direction, all of which are important in boosting job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Armstrong, 2014). This is broadly consistent with the work of Fajana, Owoyemi, and Elegbede (2011), who found that supportive supervisory practices in Nigerian workplaces improved employee engagement and commitment, and with Albrecht et al. (2015), who reported that positive supervisory behaviour enhances employee motivation, reduces burnout, and builds the psychological safety associated with stronger commitment.

Other studies likewise point to a relationship between staff training and job commitment. Where non-teaching staff in Nigerian universities are able to rely on institutional training to upgrade their technical and administrative competencies, they tend to perceive the institution as supportive of their career progression, a pattern consistent with Jehanzeb and Bashir (2013), who found that training significantly enhances employee commitment by increasing satisfaction and perceived organisational support. Salisu, Chinyio, and Suresh (2016) similarly reported that training improves workers' sense of belonging and motivates them to remain committed.

Taken together, these findings reinforce the view that delegation of duties is one of several managerial practices, alongside supervision and training, that are associated with stronger job commitment among non-teaching staff, and that institutions seeking to strengthen staff commitment have good reason to invest deliberately in all three.

Conclusion

The study established that non-teaching staff in public universities in southwest Nigeria demonstrated a high level of job commitment, and that delegation of duties had a significant positive relationship with that commitment. These findings suggest that, where non-teaching staff are given genuine responsibility and the confidence of their managers through delegation, their personal investment in institutional goals and their commitment to their work are correspondingly strengthened.

Recommendations

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

1. Supervisors and departmental heads should adopt transparent and fair delegation practices, ensuring that tasks match staff skills and strengths, given that delegation of duties was significantly related to job commitment.
2. Managers should expand and institutionalise continuous delegation of duties to strengthen employee capacity, which can in turn significantly influence job commitment.

3. Government, university management, and other stakeholders should treat delegation of duties as a serious institutional priority in order to support the effective commitment of non-teaching staff.

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