

WORKPLACE CONFLICT FACTORS AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT IN SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

There has been a growing concern amongst researchers on how to address the challenges of limited access, inability to compete globally, poor institutional branding, and issues of customer loyalty arising in private universities in Nigeria. These challenges are attributed to low commitment of employees which is possibly caused by workplace conflict factors. Research on commitment in the education sector particularly private universities in Nigeria is limited and the results of the few studies already concluded are divergent thus creating a need for further investigation. Consequently, this study examined the effect of workplace conflict factors on commitment in selected private universities in Southwest Nigeria. The population comprised 2,533 academic staff of seven selected private universities in Southwest Nigeria. Sample size was 468 academic staff determined using Raosoft calculator. The study employed survey research design and adopted multi-sampling technique. A validated questionnaire was used to collect data. The response rate was 75.6%. Data were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM). On the whole, the results revealed that workplace conflict factors had positive and significant effect on commitment of employees in selected private universities in Southwest Nigeria (Adj. $R^2 = 0.324$, GFI = 0.86, CFI = 0.92, $p < 0.05$). The findings further revealed that rewards ($\beta = 0.278$, $t = 2.614$, $p = 0.009$) and communication ($\beta = 0.431$, $t = 4.111$, $p = 0.000$) had positive and significant effect on the commitment of employees of selected private universities in Southwest Nigeria. Personality ($\beta = 0.113$, $t = 1.559$, $p = 0.119$) and leadership style ($\beta = 0.087$, $t = 1.287$, $p = 0.198$) had a positive but insignificant effect on commitment of the employees while work environment ($\beta = -0.234$, $t = -1.822$, $p = 0.069$), had a negative insignificant effect on commitment of employees in the selected private universities in Southwest Nigeria.

Keywords: Commitment, Communication, Leadership style, Rewards, Workplace conflict factors.