# Human Resources Practices on Employees' Commitment: Implication for Agricultural Colleges in Southwest Nigeria

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#### ABSTRACT

This study determines human resource practices on employee's commitment: implication from within the Federal Agricultural Colleges in Southwest Nigeria. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select 180 respondents from Federal College of Agriculture. Akure and Federal College of Agriculture, Ibadan through a structured questionnaire. Data were obtained on respondents' personal characteristics, prevalent human resource practices, and levels of employees' commitment. Data were analyzed using descriptive (percentage, frequency count, and mean) and inferential (Chi-square statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), Ttest statistics, and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression techniques) statistics.

Results revealed that 56.1% of the respondents were male and 85% were married. Major prevalent human resource practices identified were training and development ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.73), and recruitment methods ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.73). Also, it was discovered that most of the respondents were committed to their career path ( $\bar{x}$ = 4.14) and personal development ( $\overline{x}$ = 4.06). Furthermore. OLS revealed that training and development ( $\beta$  = 0.47, p <0.05), together with performance appraisal ( $\beta = 0.20$ , p < 0.05) strongly influenced employees' commitment level. This study concluded that training and development is paramount to employees' commitment in the study areas. Therefore, it is recommended from this study that Agricultural organizations should ensure that regular trainings and development are made available to their employees for personal and organizational development.

# (Keywords: human resources practices, employee commitment, agricultural colleges, Nigeria)

## INTRODUCTION

Current economic hardships in most of the developing countries have seriously affected organizational commitment by employees in the areas of discharge of duties and responsibilities. The input of such employees may not translate to returns in terms of amount earned and this may have serious effects on his or her psyche which may in turn reduce work commitment on the overall basis (Amangala, 2013, Amponsah and Mensah, 2016, Abiona, *et al.*, 2021, and Abiona, *et al.*, 2022).

In any organization, the human resources department is one of the most crucial departments, known to be saddled with the key responsibilities of recruiting the best staff who know the technical details with regards to the of dav-to-dav activities of runnina the Therefore, Human Resource organization. Practices (HRP) are some of the key functions of an organization which can be defined as the ways by which practices and results of organizational productivity are achieved via recruiting of qualified employees who have the desired competencies that will enhance corporate image and lower employee turnover and increase retention in an organization (Falola, et al., 2016, Chidir, et al., 2020, Davidescu, et al., 2020, and Abiona, et al., 2022). HRP are the integrated ways that are used in training and development, organizational development, and career development by which, if applied well, will improve individual employees' commitment and organizational effectiveness (Abdullah, et al., 2007, Ibrahim, et al., 2017, Giao, et al., 2020, and Dorta-Afonso, et al., 2021).

HRPs are premised on organizational performance improvement that can be mediated

through human expertise and effort (Abiona, et al., 2016. Qureshi. et al., 2019. Munfagiroh. et al., 2021, and Parihar and Sinha, 2021). It aims to add value to the achievement of an organizational goals and objectives. For instance, in a dynamic environment, the primary purpose of HRPs is to prepare employees to work, irrespective of their current environment, to their best possible abilities and to develop them for upcoming challenges. That is, employees will always combat with various challenges if they are well developed through training. Therefore, training and development programs create awareness among employees for using new technology (Purcell, 2009, Paauwe, et al., 2013, Dimelu, et al., 2014, and Rizki, et al., 2019).

HRPs are likely to create work conditions and environment where employees become highly committed to the organization (have positive attitude) and do their best to accomplish the organizational goals. The most important aspect or unit in any organization that structures the patterns of personnel is human resources department. This unit is to maintain a higher level of job satisfaction or employees' commitment among the workforce so as to achieve organizational aims and objectives. It is therefore important to know that there is no way an organization will build it image without exhibiting human resources practices.

In any profit driven organization, the most key resource that needs attention in a coordinated manner is the employee. This workforce must be committed to the level of building the image of the organization (Abiona, *et al.*, 2019, Rizki, *et al.*, 2019, Nanayakkara and Wilkinson, 2021, and Sadavoy and Zube, 2021).

Organizational commitment can be considered as the employees' willingness to help the organization in achieving its goals (Valaei and Rezaei, 2016, Vipraprastha, *et al.*, 2018, Lorincova, *et al.*, 2019, and Qureshi, *et al.*, 2019). According to Devananda and Onahring (2019) and Abiona and Orgwu (2018), organizational commitment involves the employees' levels of identification, involvement and loyalty to their job and image building of the organization. This loyalty will help them to know more about the practices of their organization. Also, employees' commitment is the process by which individuals are very much committed to their work. Murat, *et al.* (2014) defined employee commitment as a psychological state that binds the individual to their organization which helps in turnovers reduction. Employees' commitment can also be said to be a bond or link between employee and their organization (Mizanur, *et al.*, 2013). Sharing this bond will make employees more satisfied and committed which will reduce the rates of absenteeism and eradication of some deviant behavior among the staff (Murat, *et al.*, 2014).

It is paramount for any goal driven organization to know how to manage their workforce through various human resources practices. Also, mobilization of various measures that will make their employees more committed are highly necessary (Abiona, *et al.*, 2020). Based on the background of the study, the study sought to determine the implication of human resources practices on employee's commitment in Federal Agricultural Colleges, Southwest, Nigeria.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research study was carried out in Federal Colleges of Agriculture in both Ondo and Oyo State in Southwest, Nigeria. The Federal Colleges of Agriculture in the Southwest region of Nigeria play a significant role in promoting agricultural education and training. These institutions are dedicated to equipping students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and practical experience needed to contribute to the development of the Agricultural sector in the country.

## Sampling Procedure

A multistage random sampling technique was used to select the respondents from the study areas. Out of 579 respondents in entire selected Colleges of Agriculture, 31% were selected which is equivalent to 180 respondents that were interviewed for the study. The data for the study was obtained using a structured questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed to generate information about personal employee's characteristics, human resource practices and employee's job commitment. Human resource practices were measured with 4 domains (Training and development, recruitment method, performance appraisal and compensation methods) and also the effects on employee's job commitment were further measured using 5 points Likert typed rating scale (Strongly agree =5, agree = 4, undecided= 3, disagree = 2 and strongly disagree =1) to the statement relating to job commitment in a positive direction. Descriptive and inferential statistics were further used for data analysis. Regression analysis and T-test were used to determine the effects of human resources practices on employee's job commitment.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### Personal Characteristics of the Respondents

The mean age of the respondents was 38.7 years with 45.6% between the ages of 31-40 years. This implies that respondents in the study institutions are still in their youthful and active stage which enables them to carry out their tasks effectively. This study is quite in line with that of Oliveira and Honorio, (2020), Purwoharsojo, *et al.* (2020), Abiona, *et al.* (2020), Adeogun, *et al.* (2019), and Abiona, *et al.* (2017), who asserted that more than half of the employees in agricultural institutes in

Southwest Nigeria are within the age range of 31–50 years.

Abiona, et al. (2022), further opined that employees tend to have more sense of obligation and become matured as they grow older in their workplaces. Majority (56.1%) of the respondents were male while, 43.9% were female. This implies that both sexes were well represented in the study institutions; although, male staff were predominant in the study institutions. This result agrees with the findings of Abiona, et al. (2019), Abiona, et al. (2018), Abiona, et al. (2017), and Ibeun (2002), who reported that male employees have higher opportunities than female employees in terms of employment, most especially in agricultural institutes. This result also corroborates the assertion of Abiona (2015), who said most employees Agricultural Institutes in southwest Nigeria are predominantly male and this could also be because of rigorous and stressful activities carried out in the study institutions while females are believed not to be as strong as their male counterparts within the discipline.

Personal Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
	Age		
21 – 30	14	7.8	
31 – 40	82	45.6	38.7 years
41 – 50	65	36.1	
> 50	19	10.6	
	Sex		
Male	101	56.1	
Female	79	43.9	
	Marital Status		
Single	27	15.0	
Married	149	82.8	
Separated/Divorced	2	1.1	
Widow/Widower	2	1.1	
	Educational Level		
OND/NCE	7	3.8	
HND	9	5.0	
BSc	22	12.2	
MSc	103	57.2	
PhD	39	21.7	
	Years of Work Experience		
<5	43	23.9	11.1 years
6 – 10	57	31.7	1 Ó
11 – 15	48	26.7	
16 – 20	23	12.8	
21 – 25	8	4.4	
>25	1	0.6	
	Data <sup>.</sup> 2021	•	•

The mean years of experience of the respondents was 11.1 years, with 31.7% of the respondents having 6 - 10 years of work experience. This result implies that most of the respondents have stayed in the organization enough to share their view on how human resource practices affect their job commitment in the organization.

## Human Resources Practice of Federal Agricultural Colleges

Table 2 revealed the human resources practices in the studied Institutions. This was examined with indicators such as training and development, recruitment methods, performance appraisal, compensation, and benefits.

# <u>Training and Development (x = 3.73)</u>

Training and development of employees equips them with knowledge to use material or technology in an appropriate way so as to allow the organization to reach its desired output (Ajayi, 2009, Leonard, 2019, Lorincová, *et al.*, 2019, Cherif, 2020, and Tripathi, *et al.*, 2020). It can be deduced that the human resource department of the studied institutions paid adequate attention to training and development of employees, and was noted by the employees as one of the driving forces that has allowed them to improve on their employment skills ( $\overline{x} = 3.87$ ), because they are able to get access to professional training at local and international levels ( $\overline{x} = 3.77$ ).

More so, new techniques regarding teaching, research, and extension are being introduced to employees through training (x = 3.77) such that training programs in the studied institutions has enhanced the growth of the employee's career ( $\overline{x}$ = 3.69) and generally employees are satisfied with the training method in the organization ( $\overline{x} = 3.55$ ). This result implies that training had helped the employees in the study institutions to acquire new skills, sharpens the existing skills exhibited by the respondents which make most of them addicted to their job (Abiona, et al., 2021, Çelik and Oral, 2021, Al-Swidi, et al., 2021, and Chen, et al., 2018). Also, training and development proffer solution to employee's technical challenges and improves their performance and increases productivity of the organization.

# **Recruitment Methods (** $\overline{x}$ = 3.73)

Recruitment methods are ways through which qualified and suitable candidates for a job is selected out of pool of applicants to fill the available vacant position in an organization (Adeogun, 2014; Adeogun and Abiona 2017; Ogohi, et al., 2019). The overall goal of recruitment is to put a round peg in a round hole, in order to avoid error in terms of goals and objectives (Abiona, et al., 2019; Feng, et al., 2019; Abiona, et al., 2020). Major indicators identified were incorporation of criteria for selection of candidate ( $\overline{x}$  = 3.82), searching for the best during recruitment ( $\overline{x}$  = 3.80), and picking of best candidate through stages ( $\overline{x}$  = 3.67). This result implies that organizations must carry out selection methods before employment is offered, to maintain the image of the organization.

# Performance Appraisal (PA) ( $\overline{x}$ = 3.63)

Performance appraisal is a systematic, general, and periodic process that assesses an individual employee's job performance and productivity so as to compare actual performance with expected performance. Results in the Table 2 show that performance appraisal is largely used to promote highly performing employees ( $\overline{x} = 3.78$ ), which improve employees' performance at work ( $\overline{x} =$ 3.66) because compensation package is meant for effective employees after appraisal ( $\overline{x} = 3.46$ ).

The result implies that performance appraisal provides adequate feedback to each person on their performance which serves as a basis for modifying or changing behavior towards more effective working habits and to provide data to managers with which future job assignments judgment will be based on. This result follows the observations of notable scholars (Valaei and Rezaei, 2016; Vipraprastha, *et al.*, 2018; Lorincova, *et al.*, 2019; Qureshi, *et al.*, 2019) who said that employees will perform better if positive appraisal is carried out when due.

# Compensation and Benefits (x = 3.24)

Results in Table 2 also shows that the Human Resource Department ensures that the employees are actively compensated for job well done through availability of incentive ( $\overline{x} = 3.63$ ), pay and bonuses ( $\overline{x} = 3.56$ ).

Human Resource Practices		SD
Training and Development	3.73	
My exposure to training helps improve employment skill	3.87	0.93
In my organization employee gets access to professional training at local and international level	3.77	1.24
New techniques as regard teaching research and extension being introduced to staff through training		1.15
Training program in my workplace has enhance my growth career wise		1.10
Employees are satisfied with the training methods in the organization		1.27
Recruitment Methods	3.73	
The criteria for selection of candidate is always specified in the advertisement	3.82	1.09
Compensation package is meant for effective staff after appraisal		1.16
I am always motivated to work well based on performance appraisal	3.39	1.24
Compensation and Benefits	3.24	
Incentive is available at all times in my organization	3.63	1.43
I am satisfied with the pay and bonus at my work		1.40
Profit sharing is linked to employees' performance at work		1.39
My boss does reimburse me when I'm broke		1.58
Thirteenth month salary is a constant practice at my work	2.97	1.45

**Table 2:** Human Resource Practices in Federal Agricultural Colleges.

Source: Field Survey, 2023 S.D = Standard Deviation.

This finding follows the discovery of Abiona, *et al.*, (2019) who opined that pay and bonus are one of the monetary aspects or factors that urge employees to work effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, opportunity to partake in profit sharing according to individual's performance ( $\overline{x} = 3.04$ ) and arrangement for fund disbursement in case of emergency ( $\overline{x} = 3.01$ ) were some of the other ways to ensure that employees were well compensated n this study. It can be deduced from the findings that human resource practices in the studied institution allow for fair treatment of employees for better commitment which will also serve as a booster to their productivity and loyalty.

#### Employees´ Commitment in Federal Agricultural Colleges

Employee commitment defined was by Syardiansah, et al., (2020); Tripathi, et al., (2020); Feng, et al., (2019); Ogohi, et al., (2019); and Murat, et al., (2014) as psychological state that binds the individual to their organization by increasing job satisfaction, fostering organizational loyalty, and decreasing intentions to guit. Committed employees are more likely to exhibit positive organizational behavior, contributing to a lower turnover rate. However, the commitments of employees in the study institutions were examined with indicators such as career commitment, individual commitment, service commitment and

employees' satisfaction. Table 3 shows that career commitment was the major domain that depicts employees' commitment in the study areas.

# **Career Commitment** (x = 3.41)

Respondents agreed that their commitment towards the organization stems from the fact that, they can identify their career path within the organization ( $\overline{x} = 4.26$ ) which greatly gives them sense of achievement and are willing to recommend their profession as a career for younger generation ( $\overline{x} = 4.18$ ) because they regard their profession as a worthwhile and rewarding career path ( $\overline{x} = 4.10$ ). More so, the employees' career had helped them to contribute more to the realization of organizational goal ( $\overline{x} = 4.10$ ) thereby making their profession important to the organization ( $\overline{x} = 4.04$ ).

It can be inferred that, the employees' career is relevant to the organization, thereby giving the employees opportunity to carve a niche for themselves in the organization, which in turns make them to be more committed and productive (Maswani, *et al.*, 2019; Bezdrob and Šunje, 2021; Seema, *et al.*, 2021).

Employees' Commitment	Mean	SD
Career Commitment	4.14	
I know my career path in this organization	4.26	0.89
I would strongly recommend my profession as a career	4.18	0.86
My career had helped me to contribute to organizational goal	4.10	0.90
My career goals are important to my organization	4.04	0.99
Individual Commitment	4.06	
I am always punctual to work	4.43	0.85
I always complete my assignment and task before deadline	4.14	0.93
My organization inspires me to give my best at work	3.90	0.99
My opinion counts in the organization	3.77	1.15
Service Commitment	4.02	
I accept any assignment given to me in order to keep working with the organization	4.11	1.04
Sometimes I work overtime to achieve the set goals	4.02	0.99
I have a great team to work with within my workplace	3.97	0.95
Employees' Satisfaction	3.91	
I am well pleased with my job	4.19	1.03
I am proud of my organization	4.02	0.98
I am well pleased with the reputation my organization has in the society	3.76	1.17
LOW COMMITMENT (24-60)		13%
HIGH COMMITMENT (61-120)		77%

## Table 3: Employees' Commitment in the Study Institution (n=180).

Data: 2022 Note: S.D = Standard Deviation.

# **Individual Commitment** ( $\overline{x}$ = 4.06)

These are the little efforts that employees put to their work on daily basis, in order to ensure that are organizational goals adequately and appropriately met (Ghiyats and Aulia, 2020; Purnomo, et al., 2020; Abiona, et al., 2021). It can be inferred that each of the employees that individual commitment to the organization, such that they are always punctual to work ( $\overline{x}$  = 4.43) and ensure they complete their tasks and assignments before the deadlines ( $\overline{x}$  = 4.14). This result implies that most of the employees are committed to their job and carry out their duties effectively.

Also, they take the organization's problems and challenges as their utmost priority ( $\overline{x} = 4.06$ ). It is worthy to note that, employee's opinion counts in the organization, and it has really made them to be up and doing in order to maintain their track record of success ( $\overline{x} = 3.77$ ). This result is an indication that some employees in the studied areas are committed to their job and the organization they

work with (Valaei and Rezaei, 2016; Lorincova, *et al.*, 2019; Qureshi, *et al.*, 2019; Vipraprastha, *et al.*, 2018).

## **Service Commitment** (x = 4.02)

It is worthy to note that commitment support received from the side of the organization to the employee tends to increase their performance and strengthen the goals and objectives of the organization. Therefore, service commitment is another form of commitment that respondents displayed in the study institutions. Most of the respondents indicated acceptance and completion of assignment given by the organization which enhance permanence  $(\overline{x} =$ 4.11) which could also lead to overwork  $(\overline{x} =$ 4.02). Notable authors supported this finding that attachment of roles and responsibility will make the employee more committed to their organization (Maswani, et al., 2019; Syardiansah, et al., 2020; Bezdrob and Šunje, 2021; Seema, et al., 2021).

Predictor	Coefficients	Standard Error	Т
Constant	44.934	3.597	12.491
Age	0.67	0.145	2.789***
Sex	0.17	0.343	1.321
Marital status	0.23	1.023	1.678*
Educational level	0.77	0.981	1.988*
Years of experience	0.82	0.067	2.748***
Compensation and benefit	-0.182	0.170	1.744*
Training and development	0.470	0.263	5.336***
Recruitment method	0.233	0.276	2.906***
Performance appraisal	0.202	0.267	2.365**
R <sup>2</sup>	0.687		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.701		
Fratio	11.13		

**Table 4:** Contribution of Independent Variables to Employees' Commitment.

Data: 2021

# **Employees' Satisfaction** ( $\overline{x} = 3.91$ )

Job satisfaction can be defined as a psychological impact perceived by employees due to organizations' feedback (Rothausen and Henderson, 2019; Akey-Torku, 2020; Patricia and Asoba, 2020). Job satisfaction is very important with regards to the ways, manners, feelings, and emotions of the employee (Robbin and Judge, 2017a ; Steffens, et al., 2018; Wang, et al., 2020). Therefore, it is difficult for an employee who is not satisfied to be committed and remain loyal with their organization (Robbin and Judge, 2017b; Adeogun, et al., 2019; Abiona, et al., 2021).

It was also discovered that, respondents were satisfied with their job because they were well pleased with their nature of work and scheduling of tasks ( $\overline{x}$  = 4.19), which gives them confidence, commands respect, and offers a sense of achievement among their peers in their respective community ( $\overline{x}$  = 4.02). More so, employees are free to take initiative ( $\overline{x}$  = 4.06) and good reputation in the society ( $\overline{x} = 4.06$ ).

It can be inferred that the employees are pleased to be identified s one of the workers of the studied organizations, thereby fostering their commitment and loyalty to the organization, which reduce the rate of absenteeism and turnover in the organization. This result is in line with notable reports of Syardiansah, et al., (2020); Tripathi, et al., (2020); Feng, et al., (2019); Ogohi, et al., (2019) and Murat, et al., (2014) who were of the opinion that when employees are not satisfied,

their commitment level will decrease, then rate of absenteeism will be high. In addition, almost (87%) of the respondents are highly committed and loyal, which increases their bond with the organization.

## Relationship between Independent Variables and Employees' Job Commitment

The personal characteristics of the respondents (age, sex, monthly income, year of experience, marital status, and educational level) were entered into the model to act as control (Table 4). Age (b = 0.67, p<0.01), years of experience (b = 0.82, p<0.01), monthly income (b = 057, p<0.001) and educational level (b = 0.23, p<0.001) were significantly related to job commitment. This implies that the higher the educational level of the federal agricultural staff, the better the commitment to their job. Similarly. the lesser the age of workforce in the organization, the better is their job commitment as indicated in the socioeconomic data of the study. Also, years of experience have a positive relationship and were significant at 1 percent level of probability. This result simply showed that most of the employees have gathered much experience that made them to be more committed to their organization. Also, the implication of the significant relationship between monthly income and job commitment is that; being able to earn much, in order to afford some level of comfort and also to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter by the

employees, help them to focus more on work and be more committed to their job.

Furthermore, human resources practices were coded in the model which had significant relationship between training and development, recruitment methods, performance appraisal, compensation and benefits on employees' commitment. Table 4 shows that training and development and performance appraisal significantly (p<0.05) contributes to employees' commitment.

The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.687 indicated that 68.7 percent of variance in employees' commitment was explained by components of human resource practice. Examining each component of human resource practice however revealed that all the components such as compensation and rewards  $(\beta = 0.20, p<0.001)$ , training and development ( $\beta$ = 0.47, p<0.01), recruitment methods ( $\beta$  = 0.23, p<0.01) and performance appraisal ( $\beta = 0.20$ , p<0.05) have contributed significantly to employees' commitment. They are positively significant to employees' commitment, which implies that employees in the organization. This result implies that compensation and serves as motivator that urges most workforce to attach themselves or commit themselves to their organization.

This result is supported by Abiona, *et al.* (2022); Tripathi, *et al.* (2020); Lorincová, *et al.* (2019); and Leonard (2019) who were of the opinion that human resources unit will function well if compensation and reward is given at the appropriate time and to well qualified staff. The rewards for compensated staff will be loyal and committed to their organization.

The significant relationship between training and development received by the staff from their respective organization will build and empower them for better opportunities outside their organization and promote the image and create a friendly environment among themselves. Training and development will help the employee to build their skills and help them to scale up high in terms competition (Maswani, et al., of 2019: Syardiansah, et al., 2020; Schleu and Hüffmeier, 2021). Moreover, performance appraisal was significant to employees' commitment in the study locations in the sense that evaluation of the employee is a medium to showcase the activities of the staff as regards productivity. This will give them a strong desire and willingness to admit their roles and build up their belief in the realization of organizational goals. It worthy to note that, profit oriented organization require employee optimal performance since competition and challenges are increasing on daily basis. This result is in line with the assertion of Abiona, *et al.* (2020); Abiona, *et al.*, (2021); Feng, *et al.*, (2019); Ogohi, *et al.*, (2019); and Adeogun and Abiona (2017) who were of the opinion that a well-trained employee will remain, stay loyal and committed to the organization.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the study has established that performance appraisal is a vital tool in human resource development in agricultural Colleges in Southwest of Nigeria and it contributes to employees' commitment. The study also established that yearly appraisals will help employees to increase their performance at work and increase their satisfaction with training programs and methods available in the organization.

The study also established that employees will be highly committed with the organization as long as they derive satisfaction in the harmonious working relationship prevalent in the organization. Furthermore, the study concluded that training and development, performance appraisal and recruitment methods have positive effects on employees' commitment thereby increasing employees' level of commitment.

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Agricultural organizations should focus more on training and development of employees so that they can be more committed and stay loyal to the organization.
- 2) Human resource department of agricultural organizations should be trained on how to handle and harness every form of political game during recruitment process to the benefit of the organization.
- 3) Organizations must ensure that qualified and well-performed staff should be compensated and rewarded.

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