

# **PERSONALITY ATTRIBUTES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING JOB COMMITMENT OF OFFICERS AND MEN OF NIGERIA POLICE FORCE**

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## **Abstract**

Research in the job commitment literature has focused less attention on commitment of employees in protective service organizations, in spite of the fact that global security challenges may have affected the level of commitment of security personnel. The present study extended prior job commitment literature by examining personality attributes (cynicism) and personal characteristics as factors affecting job commitment of personnel of Nigerian Police Force.

Using a cross-sectional survey design, three hundred and twelve (n=312) police personnel, consisting of 237 males and 75 females purposively selected participated in the study. Forty seven (47) respondents belonged to the officer cadre, while two hundred and sixty five (265) were non-officer cadre. A structured questionnaire comprising three sections; demographic information, cynicism scale and job commitment scale was used for data collection. Three hypotheses were generated from review of relevant literature and tested using t-test of independence. Results showed that cynicism had significant influence on job commitment, ( $t(310) = 2.042, p < .05$ ); cadre had significant influence on job commitment, ( $t(310) = 3.169, p < .05$ ). There was no significant gender difference in job commitment, ( $t(310) = -.088, p > .05$ ). The study concluded that cynicism predicted job commitment, and recommends personality profiling of prospective candidates as part of recruitment regime into the Nigeria Police Force.

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**Keywords:** Job commitment, cynicism, sex, cadre, Nigeria police force

## **Introduction**

The overarching objective of any organization is to be effective. This has led to a flurry of interest from organizational behaviour scholars and practitioners alike, fertilising the research in this area. Organizational effectiveness may be attained when employees relate with the organization and the job at the emotional level. This kind of relationship is known in the organizational behaviour literature as job commitment (Hogan, Lambert, Jenkins, & Wambold, 2006). Job commitment refers to employee's strength of identification and involvement with the specific job they hold within an organization (Morrow, 1983). It is a qualitative measure of the psychological bond existing between an employee and the job they do. Highly committed individuals are likely to be concerned with the fate of the organization, a situation that may make them stick with the organization during periods of 'ups and down'. This assertion is supported by research finding which reported that committed employees have a higher likelihood of extending their organizational tenure, synchronize personal goals with those of organization, thus improving effectiveness, and are more likely to exhibit OCBs (Gene & Jon, 2010; Mayer & Schoorman, 1992; Yousef, 2000).

With the operating environment of organizations becoming increasingly competitive globally, many organizations embraced change their structures, operations and practices (through processes such as downsizing, downgrading, right-pricing, mergers and acquisitions) which may have adversely affected employee-employer social relationship in the workplace.

However, despite the concerns that organizational change has elicited among employees (such as job insecurity, fear and despair) organizations nevertheless have demanded higher level of commitment from its workforce. This incongruence between employees' feelings and what the organization expects from them has led researchers to query whether organizations are justified in demanding increased commitment from employees.

Organizations have need for committed workers because of their contributions towards raising organizational competitive advantage and effectiveness. Organizations that have a committed workforce experience improved performance, stronger work teams, increased efficiency, increased profitability and lowered turn over. According to Lambert (2006), turnover intention is harmful to organizational effectiveness because of its distracting effect on the employee. From the managerial standpoint therefore, organizational sustainability and viability which are critical success factors for contemporary organizations can be attained by strengthening the psychological bond between the employee and the job. However, the challenge most organizations face in this regards centres on how to achieve increased commitment in the face of growing negative employee attitudes.

One such negative employee attitude is cynicism. Cynical employees are characterized by hopelessness, disappointment, and disillusionment (Andersson, 1996; Johnson & O'Leary-Kelly, 2003). In a critical analysis of cynicism, Dean, Brandes & Dharwadkar (1998) noted that cynics displayed three distinct characteristics viz, (i) a belief that the organization is lacking in integrity, (ii) a feeling of negative emotions directed at the organization and (iii) display of disparaging behaviours towards the organization that are consistent with the belief and cognition. Negative attitudes towards the organization may elicit cynicism elicit negative behaviours towards the job, co-workers and the organization.

Niederhoffer's (1967) study on antecedents of police cynicism remains one of the most influential works in this area. The author found a curvilinear relationship between demographic variables such as rank, tenure and organizational cynicism. Further differences showed that non-commissioned police recruits exhibited the lowest levels of cynicism. Regoli, Culbertson, and Crank (1991) found negative relationship between police cynicism, length of service and professionalism in a sample of 574 senior police officers. The author also found that commissioned police personnel with higher level of cynicism toward decision makers (such as superior officers) experienced less satisfied with the job among other negative work outcomes. Adebayo (2005) that a possibility of increased commitment when he reported that police officers with more favourable perception of organizational support had higher tendency to have positive attitudes towards professional ethics.

Outside the police profession, the relationship between cynicism and commitment has been investigated. Earlier research in this regard indicates that on important job attitudes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, cynical employees were low on both dimensions (Reichers, Wanous & Austin, 1997; Wanous, Reichers, & Austin 1994).

Promotion exercise in organization sometimes elicits mixed reactions from employees as those who were not promoted may perceive the decision as politically motivated. However, organizational politics is featuring prominently in modern workplace and when it does occur, cynical employees who did not benefit from the outcome may respond to this by withdrawing from work. Lambert (2004) reported a significant effect of job stress and supervision on job commitment in a sample of correctional workers.

The influence of workplace social relationship and organizational commitment has been investigated by researchers. The finding showed that strong social relationship correlates negatively with organizational cynicism (Bennett & Schmitt, 2002). English and Chalon (2011) conducted a study among nurses and found significant negative relationship between

organizational cynicism and commitment such that higher levels of cynicism were associated with lower levels of affective commitment. Research in the more generic organizational behaviour literature suggests a relationship between satisfaction and commitment, such that commitment was higher when satisfaction was high. Similarly, Slate, Wells, & Johnson (2003) reported a positive association between participatory management style and job satisfaction.

Iqbal (2010) investigated the relationship between selected demographic factors and organizational commitment and reported the following results; length of service had a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment; organizational supervisory agents were more committed than subordinates. The result also showed that age did not correlate significantly with organizational commitment.

Vance, Brooks, and Austin (1994) investigated employee cynicism towards organizational change and report that employees who were cynical of change had more negative attitudes on dimensions as organizational employee involvement program, impact of employee involvement, and opinions about change. Furthermore, type of employment predicted cynicism with salaried employees showing more cynical attitudes about change. In a similar vein, the authors reported negative correlation between affective commitment, job satisfaction, customer service and cynicism about organizational change. Of particular interest is the finding that cynicism was negatively related to customer service. This finding implies that employees high on cynicism will be more hostile towards clients with the possibility of lowering customers rating of the organization albeit indirectly. More importantly, cynicism about the company reduced employees' (self-reported) likelihood to perform organizational citizenship behaviours (Andersson, 1996).

The Nigeria Police Force has in the past embarked on programs to reform the service to meet the security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This resulted in change in the leadership of the force. Consequent upon this change in headship, there was the need for operational and administrative changes too that resulted to some officers been promoted to higher ranks, while others were transferred to other commands across the nation. These changes might not gone down well with many police men, and this has affected their commitment to the job. Besides, it seems likely that frequent changes in the workplace and the resulting real or perceived job insecurity it creates in the mind of workers may have made employees less trusting of the organization with significant detrimental effects on commitment. But the question begging for an answer is; what makes one police personnel to remain committed to her job, while the other is increasingly less committed, even as both are exposed to the same work environment?

In the past, efforts at increasing commitment of personnel of Nigeria Police Force focused on motivating them through measures such as improved welfare package, provision of additional gadgets and occasional pay raise. Unfortunately, the strategies may have failed to achieve their objectives because commitment is an attitude issue that can be better understood through psychological prism. Although studies on job commitment are not in short supply, yet research on job commitment of protective service employees, and in particular the Nigeria Police Force is sparse. This study is therefore intended to fill the gap by investigating the contributions of cynicism in predicting job commitment of personnel of Nigerian Police Force. It also seeks to examine the influence of gender and rank on job commitment of personnel of Nigeria Police Force.

Based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses were tested in the study:

- i. Participants low on organizational cynicism will be significantly higher on job commitment than participants that are high on organizational cynicism
- ii. There will be significant gender difference on job commitment of personnel of Nigeria Police Force
- iii. Participants on Officer cadre will be significantly higher on job commitment than non-commissioned personnel.

## **Method**

### **Design and participants**

This study adopted survey method using cross-sectional research design. The reason for the choice is because the researcher did not actively manipulate any of the variables of interest. All the conditions already existed in the participants. The independent variables of the study are age, gender, rank and cynicism while the dependent variable is job commitment. The study was conducted using a total of three hundred and twelve (312) Nigeria Police Personnel in Oyo State Command. The respondents were selected purposefully from the State Headquarter and various Divisional Headquarters and Area Commands across Oyo State. Their ages range from 21 – 54 years with a mean age of 33 years and standard deviation of 7.48. They comprised of 237 (76%) males and 75 (24%) females. Also, 231 (74%) of the participants were married 76 (24.4%) were single, 4(1.3%) were divorced and 1(.3%) was widowed. Furthermore, their number of years of service in the Police Force ranged from 1 to 35 years and their educational qualification was from first school leaving certificate to first and second university degrees. Forty seven (47) were in the officer cadre while 265 were rank and file.

## Instrument

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Job commitment was measured with job commitment scale (Allen & Meyer, 1990). It is a 25-item self-report scale in Likert format with five-point response options assessing job commitment. The scale was subjected to item-total analysis using the present sample and the r-coefficient ranged from .45 to .87 with an overall Alpha Coefficient of .79 and split half reliability coefficient of .77. Organizational cynicism was measured with Police Cynicism Scale developed by Regoli (1976). It is also a self-report Likert format scale with five-point response options ranging from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. The author reported Alpha Coefficient of .86 the revalidation for the present study yielded Alpha Coefficient of .65.

## Procedure

Participants were approached at the Command Headquarters and at selected police divisions within Ibadan. The purpose of the research was explained to them with assurance of confidentiality of their identities and responses. They were also informed that there was no harmful or negative consequence that may arise from participation. In addition, the participants were told that they were not under any obligation to participate and that they reserved the right to withdraw from the research at any point they felt like doing so. Those who consented were given the questionnaires to fill, some filled and returned immediately, while others asked to be given a couple of days before they returned the questionnaire. Administration of questionnaires was carried out with the assistance of 4 research assistants.

**Statistical Analysis:** The three hypotheses of the study were tested with t-test of independent means, using SPSS version 17.0.

## Result

Table 1: t-test Summary showing the Difference on Job Commitment between Police Personnel with Low and High score on Cynicism

Job Commitment	Cynicism	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	t	P
	Low	220	48.90	5.13	310	2.042	<.005
	High	92	43.61	6.50			

Table 1 showed that Police officers with higher scores on cynicism ( $\bar{x} = 43.61$ , S.D=6.50) reported lower job commitment than those with lower scores ( $\bar{x} = 48.90$ , S.D=5.13) ( $t(310) = 2.042$ ,  $p < .005$ ). This implies that organizational cynicism had significant influence on job commitment. There hypothesis was supported.

Table 2: t-test summary showing the Difference between Male and Female Police Officers on Job Commitment

Job Commitment	<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	$\bar{x}$	<i>SD</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
	Male	244	48.84	6.22			
	Female	68	48.92	5.98			

The result in Table 2 indicated that the score of male respondents ( $N = 244$ ) ( $\bar{x} = 48.84$ ,  $S.D = 6.22$ ) on job commitment was not significantly different from that of female ( $N = 68$ ) ( $\bar{x} = 48.92$ ,  $S.D = 5.98$ ). The scores was found not statistically different ( $t(310) = -.088$ ,  $pns$ ). The result implies that gender did not significantly influence job commitment.

Table 3: Summary of t-test for independent measure showing Difference on Job Commitment based on Cadre

Job Commitment	<i>Cadre</i>	<i>N</i>	$\bar{x}$	<i>SD</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
	<b>Officers</b>	47	49.20	11.298			
	<b>Rank and file</b>	265	45.26	9.354			

The result showed significant difference on job commitment between police personnel in the officers cadre and the rank and file ( $t(310) = 3.169$ ,  $P < .005$ ). The result demonstrated that police personnel in the officer cadre significantly reported higher score on job commitment ( $\bar{x} = 49.20$ ) than police personnel in the rank and file cadre ( $\bar{x} = 45.26$ ). The result provided support for hypothesis three.

## Discussion

The study examined personality attributes and personality characteristics affecting job commitment among personnel of Nigeria Police Force. Result showed that organizational cynicism had significant influence on job commitment. The result indicated that organizational cynicism predicted job commitment such that higher level of organizational cynicism was associated with lower job commitment. The finding corroborates previous studies which found that cynical employees were less committed to the job than less cynical employees (Dean et.al, 1998; Kanter & Mirvis, 1989). This finding fits perfectly into the image portrayed of cynics in literature, as individuals who are emotionally detached from and critical of the organization and are given to making disparaging remarks about the job and the organization. Cynical employees are more sensitive to events going on in the workplace. They are more likely to develop negative attitude towards the organization when perceived that their contribution is not appreciated by the organization. Employees may resort to negative behaviours if they believe that they are not being treated fairly by management.

Despite several efforts by the top hierarchy of the Nigerian Police, warning its personnel to desist from negative acts that continued to dent the image of the service such as extortion, harassment of the public, unlawful arrests and detention, the practice is still on-going. Those engaging in such acts could be said to have detached emotionally from the organization and may view such orders as another strategy to deny them some benefits.

In line with the hypothesis of the study, there was significant influence of job position on job commitment. The finding showed that senior police officers were more committed to the job than junior officers. This finding in the present study is supported by at least one previous research (Iqbal, 2010), which reported that job position correlated positively with job commitment. There are plausible explanations for this outcome. The benefits and perks of office enjoyed by senior officers may provide explanation for the positive relationship between rank and job commitment as found in the present study. As is typical with most organizations, higher ranking personnel receive higher pay, have better opportunities and benefits (such as overseas training, housing allowance), less job risks and occupational hazards (such as physical abuse from aggrieved members of the public).

Additionally, senior police officers are responsible for the day-to-day running of their units, including the power to sanction, post personnel to outposts and discipline offenders. This leadership role may increase the feeling of having a higher stake in the organization which in turn may increase the level of job commitment of senior police officers.

The study did not find significant gender difference in job commitment of policemen. That is, both male and female police employees were equally committed to the job by the same degree. The outcome is at variance with past research which reported gender differences in the level of job commitment (Butler, Winfree, & Newbold, 2003). The authors reported that men showed more commitment to work than women. The absence of gender difference in job commitment as reported in the present study may be explained in terms of salary parity for public sector employees, of which Nigeria Police is one. Within the public service, employees who occupy equivalent job position receive comparable remuneration and benefits irrespective of performance. In fact, because promotion is not performance based, there may be no incentive for one sex to increase their level of commitment to the job.

Furthermore, in traditional societies like Nigeria, the gains made by advocacy groups for the inclusion of females into formal work organizations, and in particular, previously male-dominated occupations may have placed a burden for high performance on female employees, if only to justify their inclusion in the service. As a result, the finding that females were as much

committed to the job as males might be a realistic expectation within the context of the dynamics of the modern workplace.

### **Conclusion**

The present study concludes that organizational cynicism had significant influence on job commitment. The result showed also that cadre had significant influence on job commitment-senior police personnel had higher level of job commitment than junior police personnel. The finding showed that gender had no significant influence on job commitment. The result suggests a review of recruitment policies that seeks to restrict placement of a particular gender to specific roles in the protective service organizations. Re-design of the selection process to increase its power to screen out individuals high on cynicism was recommended. Finally, to increase employees' commitment, it is recommended that a scheme that rewards employees that have demonstrated high level of commitment in the discharge of their responsibilities be put in place to reinforce as well as model the behaviour for others. Recognition, accelerated promotion, material reward etc may serve this purpose.

### **Limitations**

Although the study found significant influence of organizational cynicism and cadre on job commitment, caution must be exercised in generalising the findings. There are several reasons for this. Because the study was cross sectional, it is not possible to draw true causal inferences from the results of the analysis. The findings may have been different supposing other variables such as remuneration, leadership and job satisfaction were included in the study. Secondly, the study was limited to one category of employees in the protective service; that is police personnel. The command structure, differences in the nature of job, promotion criteria and other administrative factors of the police differ from that of other security organizations. This implies that a different result might have been obtained if the sample was mixed such that included employees from other security organizations.

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