



Research Paper

Decision-Making Styles of Heads of Department and Organisational Commitment of Academic Staff in Makerere and Nkumba Universities

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I. Background

The concept of organisational commitment of academic staff dates as far back as the genesis of the human race. However, research into employee organisational commitment began during the Industrial Revolution that started in Europe and spread to America, Asia, Australia, and Africa through economic migration and colonization (Lambert, 2013). According to Saxena (2013), the first elaborate account of how employers could attain optimal organisational commitment is attributed to Fredrick Taylor's scientific management, published in 1911. The first research into organisational commitment as a concept is traced to Robert Dubin's 1956 publication about the industrial workers' central life interest (Akhtar & Udham, 2010). Through organisational commitment, academic staff own decisions made in the university hence developing a high sense of commitment to their job (Muindi, 2011).

In Uganda, Mugizi (2015) revealed that at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST), 76% of its lecturers who participated as respondents reported declining levels of organisational commitment. Research has shown that universities find it difficult to become centres of excellence without academic staff work involvement (Naikote & Bakkabulindi, 2011; Tabaire & Okao, 2009; Ssesanga & Garrett, 2005). While these universities are found on all continents, the vast majority of them are found in African countries, including, amongst others, Ghana and Tanzania (Mouton & Wildschut, 2015), Kenya (Nganga, 2015), Nigeria (Akpan, 2012; Akpan, Ekpiken & Okon, 2007), South Africa (Ngidi & Ngidi, 2015), and Uganda as shall be elaborated later. The universities therefore, need to establish how their academic employee organisational commitment, which is a critical success factor and a backbone of their ability to become centres of excellence, is affected by the decision-making styles of their administrators, especially the Heads of academic department who deal directly with these employees. Despite the above historical account of the study concepts, little effort had been made to undertake empirical studies on how decision-making styles affect organisational commitment of academic staff in Makerere and Nkumba Universities which this current study did.

This study was based on the Contingency Theory of Decision Making. According to Miller (2013), the Contingency Theory of Decision-making was developed in 1973 by Vroom and Yetton after observing that there was no one best universal way of making decisions. The theory posits that different situations call for different ways of decision-making. It advances a view that the outcomes of a decision-making style depend on how the style suits the characteristics of the prevailing situation (Dubrin, Dalglis & Miller, 2006). The outcomes may be financial or behavioural outcomes (Miller & Wilson, 2006). This study adopted the contingency theory of decision making basing on the assumption that there is no one unified decision making style. Thus, it was relevant to guide an investigation on the styles of decision making like directive, analytical, behavioural, conceptual, sequential, logical, global and personable depending on the prevailing situation. If the situation is favourable that is when academic staff know what is required of them and willingly follow it in the execution of their duties, decision making styles applied by HODs should rhyme with this category of academic staff. However, unfavourable situations, that is, when academic staff are non-compliant, it would require heads of department to use decision making styles that are stringent without academic staff organisational commitment. If decisions are passed, as per the theory, by applying decision making styles in favour of

academic staff, their organisational commitment improves in terms of high affective, normative and continuance commitment leading to the realisation of intended goals and objectives and the reverse is true.

Decision making styles refer to the manner in which administrators take managerial, academic and financial courses of action intended to enable universities to attain their missions, goals and objectives through their employees, particularly members of academic staff (Prondzynski, 2013). These decision making styles may be directive autocrat, the permissive autocrat, directive, democrat and the permissive democrat (Nidadhavalu, 2018). In this study, the investigated decision making styles included the directive, analytical, behavioural, conceptual, sequential, logical, global and personable decision making styles. Work involvement defined as the positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by the level of deliberate participation, willingness, vigour, dedication, attachment, and absorption displayed by an employee when carrying out assigned tasks and responsibilities (De Klerk, 2013; Konrad, 2006; Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker, 2002). In this study organisational commitment of academic staff involved continued service delivery, desire to stay and organisational citizenship behaviour.

Statement of the Problem

Achieving an optimal level of academic staff organisational commitment is one of the critical success factors to which all universities aspiring to become centres of excellence should pay attention (De Klerk, 2013). However, not only was the organisational commitment of most of the lecturers in African universities were suboptimal but also declining. Lecturers in Ugandan universities are not any different. Empirical evidence indicates that the level of organisational commitment of over 95% of lecturers at Makerere University and 87% of lecturers in all private universities in central Uganda, Nkumba University inclusive (Yawe, 2010) is lower than expected. Further, there had been serious academic staff strikes which even led to the closure of the two universities in the recent years. In Makerere University, the academic staff strike which occurred in September 2016 led to the closure of the University for a period of over three months. Academic staff involvement in strikes depicts that their level of organisational commitment was low (Makerere University Visitation Committee Report, 2017). Since lecturers' organisational commitment is the bedrock of a university's ability to become a centre of excellence, failure by most of the lecturers to realize it at an optimal level constitutes a critical hindrance to the ability of these universities to become centres of excellence. Although several factors might have been responsible for the low organisational commitment of university academic staff, this study attributed this scenario to decision making styles adopted by HODs a factor that may have not been addressed by these earlier studies; hence, this study was prompted to establish how decision making styles of HODs affect academic staff organisational commitment in Makerere and Nkumba Universities.

Purpose of the study

To analyse the influence of decision-making styles of HODS on the organisational commitment of academic staff in Makerere and Nkumba Universities.

Study objectives

- i. To ascertain the level at which decision-making styles are used by HODs In Makerere and Nkumba Universities
- ii. To examine the level of organisational commitment of academic staff in Makerere and Kyambogo universities
- iii. Analyse the influence of decision-making styles of HODS on the organisational commitment of academic staff in Makerere and Nkumba Universities.

Conceptual Framework

From the theoretical review a conceptual framework was derived as in Figure 2.1.

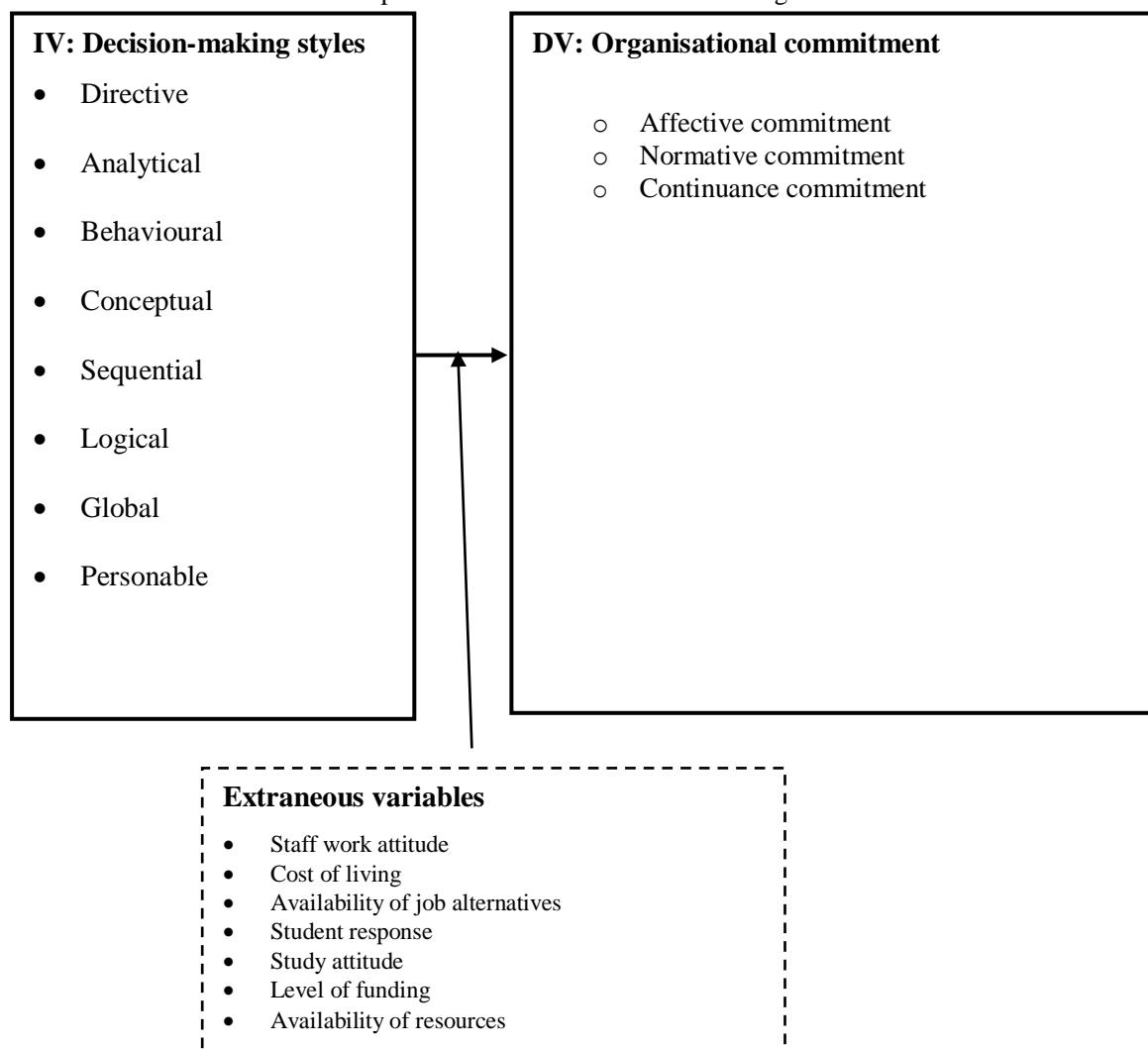


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of University Department Heads' Decision-making Styles and organisational commitment

Source; Wiza and Hlangampal (2014).

Related Literature.

Decision Making Styles of HODs

Olcum and Titrek (2015) investigated the effect of school administrators decision making styles of teacher and Job satisfaction. Findings revealed that that most school administrators mostly use the rational decision-making style and they rarely avoidant decision-making styles whereas Okongo, Orien and Okaka (2019) studied the effectiveness of decision-making approaches by academic Urut managers on academic staff performance in public Universities in Uganda. Results showed that administrators in the University use more of the democratic-decision making approach than do autocratic decision-making approaches. However, this study did not the contingency theory of decision making-making as was the case with this current study.

Igbal, Akhtar and Saleem (2020) in an analysis about decision making styles of academic managers in public sector Universities in Punjab revealed that autocratic style of decision making had the highest mean score as compared to other decision-making styles. Meanwhile this study was in the Asian context differing from what is happening in Makerere and Nkumba Universities.

Level of commitment of academic staff

Mushemeza (2016) showed that the level of academic staff organizational commitment was low in almost all Universities in Uganda. These were exposed as having low morale. There were high cases of resignation to join better paying Institutions after being sponsored for advanced degrees. This implied that in

addition to low effective commitment even the level of continuance commitment of academic staff was sub-optimal. However, this study was qualitatively done while this current study was quantitative. Garg and Ramjee (2013) in an empirical study on employee commitment indicated that 23.0% of the raters of general employees; viewed their commitment sometime as effective while 25% ascertained their commitment fairly often as normative only 24% of raters or general employees rated commitment fairly often as continuance.

Decision-making Styles of HODs and Organisational Commitment

The effect of decision-making styles on organisational commitment has attracted a number of studies (Bell & Mjoli, 2014; Wiza & Hlanganipai, 2014; Bhatti, Nawab & Akbar, 2011; Elele, 2010). In particular, the study of Wiza and Hlanganipai (2014) indicates that the participative decision-making style encourages organisational commitment, but the autocratic decision-making style discourages this commitment. Fako, Nkhukhu-orlando, Wilson, Forchen and Linn (2018) studied factors associated with organizational commitment of academic employees in Botswana, findings revealed that among these factors decisions that were directly or indirectly at the disposal and control of management highly affected organizational commitment of academic employees. This thus meant that through effective decision making using appropriate decision-making approaches have the potential to improve on organizational commitment of academic staff.

Similarly, Wiza and Hlangampal (2014) in a study about the impact of decision-making styles on employee organizational commitment in higher learning institutions established directive decision making styles had significant and positive relationships with normative commitment of all employees in a higher learning institution. Slightly different from the current study, this reviewed study used Spearman's correlation while the current study used simple and multiple linear regressions. Al-Daibat (2017) studied the impact of decision styles on organizational commitment and with use of regression analysis method established that leadership decisions making dimensions' transformational leadership, transactional and laissez faire leadership style had a highly positive significant impact towards organizational commitment. Besides, this study did no benefit from the Contingency Theory of decision making which the current study did.

Tchapchet and Iwu (2014) in a study about participation and productivity in a South African University revealed that while there is a desire on the part of academics to be incorporated into matters of concern and the faculty showed that there seemed to be obvious neglect of academic staff on matters of concern. This implied that failure to involve them would be more likely to affect their job commitment negatively.

Regional wise Weinaima, Iravo and Waititu (2014) studied the effect of employees' involvement in decision making and commitment of academic staff in public and private universities in Kenya and established that employees' participation in decision making significantly influence academic staff organisation commitment in Kenya. Besides, this study seems to have been based entirely on decision making styles that are logical and analytical with high involvement of all employees yet this study looked at other decision-making styles and how they impact on academic staff commitment.

In the same vein, Amakwaa and Anku-tsede (2015) studied linking consultative decision style to employee turnover (continuance commitment) and with use of correlational and regression analysis found out that transformational leadership behaviours negatively related to employees' voluntary turnover intention in Ghanaian Universities. However, this study was based on transformational leadership ignoring transactional, autocratic and others which were also considered in the completed study.

Nidadhavolu (2018) studied the impact of decision making styles on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the construction sector in India and with use of descriptive analysis means, standard deviations that the management of the company uses most appropriate styles in a given context which makes employees more committed on the job and that those components with employees who were not contented with the leadership styles were less satisfied and committed on the job. Opposed to the current study, this reviewed study applied descriptive data analysis while this study was correlational in an academic setting. More still, Dalue, Mohamed & Mohamed (2017) investigated leadership styles on organizational commitment in a Somali University. Data was analysed using Pearson's correlation coefficient index and the findings of the study revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between transformation leadership style and organizational job commitment of academic staff in a Somali University. This was because the transformational styles had with them aspects of consultative decision making. Alternatively, this suggested study utilized Pearson's Correlation Coefficient technique and simple linear regression to test the study hypothesis.

Ahuja and Gupta (2018) studied organisational commitment and work engagement as a facilitator for sustaining higher education professional. With use of Pearson's Correlation Co-efficient index results, revealed that work engagement is positively and significantly associated with organisational commitment. This consequently leads to high organisational commitment. This consequently leads to high sense of continuance commitment on the job. However, this study did not have simple linear Regression Analysis as was the case with this current study. In addition, Winarmo and Hermana (2019) investigated commitment, work engagement and research performance of lecturers in Indonesia private universities. Using structural Equation modelling

findings revealed that work engagement improved the commitment of academic staff on their jobs. This sense of commitment was highly reflected in a high sense of attachment on the job to the extent that they don't wish to quite their jobs. Alternatively, this study did not have decision making styles as a predicting variable.

Mugizi et al. (2015) further stated that employee commitment enhances knowledge sharing, skill or expertise are reciprocally among members of the organisation. Knowledge sharing leads to creation and forwarding of new ideas among employees which ideas are fundamental to the organisation. However, a direct link with decision making styles was not brought out which this study ascertained.

II. Methodology

The study was conducted using a correlational and cross-sectional survey research design with a total of 205 respondents. Academic staff and heads of department (HODs) were selected using stratified sampling techniques respectively. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire for academic staff. Data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations at univariate level while at bi-variate level, regression analysis was used.

Objective One. The first objective was to examine the extent to which decision-making styles are used by HOD. Results on this objective were arrived at using means and standard deviations.

Table 1: Descriptive results on heads of departments decision making styles.

Questionnaire items	Mean	STD
Makes decisions in consultation of others	2.385	1.34
Consults academic staff	3.741	1.13
Sufficiency of information	2.541	1.210
Involved in decisions made	2.549	1.264
Makes explanations	3.761	1.211
Creatively makes decisions	3.600	1.041
Calls for a meeting	3.678	1.095
Can logically make decisions	3.419	1.084
All possibilities are explored	3.834	0.976
Thinks about decisions first.	2.648	1.063
Relies on objectivity	2.878	1.089
Bases on pressure	2.619	0.966
Makes snap decisions	2.878	1.146
Bases on intuition	2.761	1.161
Quickly makes decisions	3.029	1.009
Better options are preferred	2.917	1.141
Right decisions are favoured	2.541	1.117
Last minute decision maker	2.917	1.141
Steered by some one	2.293	1.093
Promptly makes many decisions	2.517	1.194

The means in Table 1 Shows that the means were almost nearing or equal to code 3 Not sure. On all items the highest mean 3.834 was on the item I explore all possibilities before decisions are passed. The lowest mean 2.293 was on the item I am steered by someone when making decisions. This implied that Heads of department make decisions independently and that their decision making styles are effective.

Objective Two. The second Objective of the study was to establish the level of organisational commitment of academic staff in Makerere and Nkumba Universities. This was done using descriptive results means and standard deviations as in Table 2:

Table 2: Results on Level Organizational Commitment

Indicators of organizational commitment	Mean	STD
Happiness with university	4.244	0.964
Enjoying my university talks	4.170	0.931
Owning university problems	3.000	1.465
Attached to another organization	3.682	1.163
I feel part of the university	4.009	0.934
Emotional attachment	3.931	0.936
Meaningfulness of the university	4.073	0.862
Fear what may come next once I leave	3.087	1.086
Belongingness at work	3.873	1.421
It is very hard for me to leave	2.931	1.409
I think of negative outcomes once I leave	2.663	1.360
It is expensive to leave	2.873	1.322
Stay is a too much necessity	2.956	1.229
I have many options once I leave	3.351	1.181
There is a scarcity of jobs	2.746	1.218

Loyalty to employing organization	3.912	1.164
Unethical changing of jobs	3.440	1.307
Value to be a lecturer	4.356	0.825

Table 3 shows that the highest rating on decision making styles was on the item “I value to be a lecturer, mean 4.356 and the lowest mean = 2.663 was on the item I think of negative outcomes once I leave. These results that lecturer’s organisation commitment on the job was better.

Objective Three: The impact of decision making styles of HOD on organisation commitment of academic staff in Makerere and Nkumba Universities. To test this hypothesis that Decision making styles of HOD have a positive effect on organisation commitment of academic staff in Makerere and Nkumba Universities was tested using Simple Linear Analysis Technique.

Results from the simple linear regression analysis were offered in in Table 3:

Table 3: Simple linear Regression Analysis Model Summary for Heads of Department Decision Making Styles and Organizational Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.402 ^a	.162	.157	.41637

a. Predictors: (Constant), Ocommit

Table 3 shows that decision making styles of Heads of department explained 16.2% of the variation in organisational commitment, adjusted R Square = 0.162. This suggested that 83.8% of the variation is accounted for by other factors not considered in the study.

Table 4: Regression Analysis Model ANOVA for Decision Making Styles and Organizational Commitment of academic staff

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.751	1	6.751	38.941	.000 ^b
	Residual	35.020	202	.173		
	Total	41.771	203			

a. Dependent Variable: Decision

Table 4 shows that the regression model was good $F = 38.941$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$. This presupposes that the relationship between decision making styles and organisational commitment was good (significant). This was confirmed in Table 5.

Table 5: Simple Linear Regression Analysis Model Co-efficient for Decision Making Styles HODS and Organizational Commitment

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	2.012	.165		12.224	.000
	Ocommit	.303	.049	.402	6.240	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Decision
a. Predictors: (Constant), Commit

Table 5 shows that since the $F = 38.941$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$. This implied that decision making styles of heads of department significantly predicted organisational commitment of academic staff. Hence the null hypothesis that decision making styles have no relationship on heads of department decision making styles and organisational commitment of academic staff in Makerere and Nkumba Universities was rejected in favour the research hypothesis which stated that decision making styles of HODS significantly related with organisational commitment of academic staff in Nkumba and Makerere Universities was accepted and the null hypothesis which stated that there was no relationship between decision making styles of HODs and organisational commitment of academic staff was rejected. The findings meant the once decision making styles of HODs are favourable to academic staff their sense of commitment on the job enhances in one way or the other.

III. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings revealed that decision making styles level of use was fair, high levels of academic staff organizational commitment. Findings also revealed that there was a highly positive significant effect on organization commitment of academic staff in Makerere and Nkumba Universities; The findings that showed

fair use of decision making styles was in favour of Okong et al (2019) who showed that most academic staff managers in public Universities in Uganda were using rational decision making styles basing in the demands of the study. Findings on high organizational commitment were slightly in disagreement with Mushemeza (2016) who indicated that there was low morale of academic staff and low sense of organizational commitment reflected in continuous strikes and job turnovers.

Findings which indicated that there is a positive effect of decision making styles of HODS on organizational commitment of academic staff were in tandem with Wiza, and Hlangampal (2014), Al-Daubat (2017) who indicated that decision making styles used by leaders and administrators had a positive and significant impact on organizational commitment. From this discussion it was concluded that the level of HODS decision making styles was fairly applied, the level of organizational commitment of academic staff was high. It also concluded that HODS decision making styles have a positive and significant impact on organizational commitment of academic staff. Hence the study recommends University management to ensure that they recommend use of appropriate styles of decision making that are within the nature of academic staff response to work assignment.

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