
KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences

DETERMINANT OF JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG EMPLOYEES OF A PUBLICLY FUNDED UNIVERSITY

Agatha Karundungu¹, Charmaine Makono², Paulus Kandjabanga³, Olufemi Timothy Adigun⁴ & Enock
Limbo Simasiku⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5} Department of Applied Educational Sciences, Faculty of Education and Human Sciences, University of Namibia, Namibia

Corresponding email: oluphemmy54@gmail.com

Citation: Karundungu et al. (2026). Determinant of job satisfaction and organizational commitment among employees of a publicly funded university. *KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 7(1), 20-34.

ABSTRACT

Apparently, the need to expand the frontiers of internalization of universities has influence concerns about job satisfaction and commitment of staff members while the university system. Thus, there is a continuous debate in existing literature about the potential connection between leadership styles, job satisfaction and organizational commitment which this current study aimed to resolve. The study which employed multisampling procedure, randomly sampled 226 (Male = 46%; Female = 54%) staff members of a publicly funded university in Namibia who responded to the paper-pencil question which was used for data collection. A test-retest reliability of the questionnaire yielded a Cronbach alpha of 0.72. Data gathered through the questionnaire were coded in SPSS version 26 package and further analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed a positively significant relationship exists between transactional leadership style and job satisfaction among the university employees ($r = 0.192$; $p < 0.05$) and a significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and organizational commitment ($r = 0.180$; $p < 0.05$). While all the three leadership styles collectively influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment, a significant contribution of transactional leadership style on job satisfaction and positively significant contribution of laissez-faire leadership on organizational commitments was observed. The study therefore concluded that transactional leadership favors job satisfaction while laissez-faire leadership style informs commitment of university employees. In view of the forgoing, practical recommendations were given.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Job satisfaction, Organisational commitment, Employees in higher education

INTRODUCTION

Since the millennium, the higher education spaces have witness significant changes not only in curricular but also a significant increase in competition for relevance have compelled every institution of higher learning to constantly evaluate their performance and global acceptability. Globalization remain a major factor the informs a significant shift in the operation of universities across the globe (Adigun et al., 2024; Hauptman, 2022; Lee & Stensaker, 2021). Globalization is a phenomenon that shapes 'what', 'how', and 'when'

to teach concepts that drives social change to create positive psychosocial wellbeing. Interestingly, application of technology in higher education system although with several associated challenges have helped the universities to advance towards the achievement for their mission and visions. However, despite the efforts exerted to ensuring constant growth within the university systems particularly among universities in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is existence of impaired satisfaction of university employees with their jobs (Ashraf, 2020; Kim et al.,

2023; Schroder, 2008) and their commitment to their organization has been found inconsistent in existing literature (Mwesigwa, Tusiime & Ssekiziyivu, 2020; Wiza & Hlanganipai, 2014; Mayowa-Adebara & Opeke, 2019).

Ultimately, some research evidences have shown that challenges within the operational activities of institutions of higher learning which further impedes expected internationalization is a factor that is influenced by leadership styles of various administrators within the university system (Ashraf, 2020; Dirwan et al., 2024). Although, while public universities in Sub-Saharan African countries, such as Namibia is striving towards being the best through innovation and academic excellence, the implications of leadership styles on job satisfaction and employees' commitment are yet to be empirically ascertained. Therefore, this study leveraged on the trait leadership theory which was first advanced by Thomas Carlyle in the mid-1800s (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). According to Benmira and Agboola (2021) assumed that leadership is an innate ability that can be measured and ascertain by behaviour and personality.

Hence, to bridge the identified research gap particularly within the university system, the following research questions were raised and answered in this study.

- 1) Is there any significant relationship between different leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire), job satisfaction and organizational commitment employees within the university system?
- 2) Is there a significant joint relationship between leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire), job satisfaction and organizational commitment employees within the university system?
- 3) Is there any significant relative contribution of different leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire), job satisfaction and organizational commitment employees within the university system?

Literature review

This section has reviewed existing literature based on keywords/variables in the study.

Leadership styles

Individuals who are at the helm of affairs within an organization or those who oversee a group of people with the aim of achieving definite objectives are said to be a leader. Thus, leadership is an act and a process through which an individual makes a decisive choice and decision from an array of alternatives to drive motivation of others (employees) to achieve collective goals. In other words, a leader must be capable of have a cordial relationship with others and move enthusiastically motivates them accordingly. In a description of leadership based on capability, Mshelia and Emmanuel (2021) akin capability to styles of leadership. Leadership Style is therefore describing leader's ways of controlling, leading, planning, and organizing both human and material resources to attain organizational goals (Mshelia & Emmanuel, 2021). Leadership styles may further be describing approaches, behaviors, characteristics, methods, and strategies deployed by a leader when directing, managing their teams. The foregoing description of leadership style implies that leadership is a function of personality types within a given operational space. In line with personality variation, Mshelia and Emmanuel (2021) posit that there are five different types of leadership styles which are autocratic style, democratic style, laissez faire, transactional and transformation. In this current study, three leadership styles (laissez faire, transactional and transformation) were considered.

Laissez-Faire Style of leadership allows employees/followers to have maximum freedom. In other words, a Laissez-Faire leader almost completely leaves decision-making to the subordinates. Laissez-Faire leadership style provides minimal intervention and with limited guidance (Bass & Avolio, 1990; Kasalak et al., 2022) and give maximum freedom to subordinates (Zheng & Li, 2024). According to Zheng and Li (2024), Laissez-

Faire leadership style allows subordinates to take responsibilities and take ownership of their own contribution which implies that employees under Laissez-Faire leadership style are the architect of their own motivation and satisfaction with their jobs. Hence, Laissez-faire can be said to be non-influencing, inactive, ineffective or zero leadership style (Ilyas, Abid & Ashfaq, 2020; Kasalak et al., 2022; Kebede & Demeke, 2017). Unlike the Laissez-faire leadership style, transactional leadership provides direction to employees/subordinates. It is a style of leadership that focuses on supervisory roles as it also provides both rewards and punishments. It may be said that transactional leadership style focuses on behaviour exhibited when carrying out instructions (Sokolic et al., 2024).

Unlike the inactive nature of laissez-faire leadership style, Abbas and Ali (2023) stated that subordinates are well motivated through rewards, and such may significantly lead to advancement in competence, mastery and more commitment to job and organization. Transformational leaders are very much involved, and they actively induce significant shift in the perspectives of employees/followers. According to Bass (1995), idealized influence; individualized consideration; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation are four components defines transformational leadership style. Transformational leaders do not only inspire followers, but they also create special bonds and exhibit understanding and compassion with integrity to advance positive reform within an organization (Haoyan et al., 2023; Sokolic et al., 2024). Hence, transformational leaders provide an enabling environment where employees/followers are empowered to contribute meaningful to activities that geared towards the achievement of organizational objectives. The foregoing further implies that transformational leaders are proactive with unique ideas to emancipate team members.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is not only an elusive but also a mythical and a multi-dynamic concept particularly

within the discourse of organizational psychology. Evidently, discussion about job satisfaction have continued unabated since the advancement of the Herzberg's two-factor theory (Herzberg, Mauser & Snyderman, 1959). Essentially, job satisfaction is used to describe employees' attitude towards their job in relation to how they are being treated within an organization (Adigun, 2020; Kim et al., 2023). In other words, job satisfaction is a concept that is influenced by various factors such as type of work and work environment. The foregoing further implies that a job is said to be satisfying when there is emotional state of an employee is positive with a significant achievement of one's expectations and value. Therefore, Dreer (2022) and Judge, Zhang and Glerum (2020) opined that job satisfaction is a concept that infuse both affective and cognitive reactions in relation to an individual's perception of his/her worth when compared to what an organization provides for the services being rendered. Within the higher education spaces, the state of job satisfaction among employees of various universities have been widely discussed (Sengar & Pandey, 2024; Schroder, 2008; Szromek & Wolniak, 2020). However, there is an increasing expression of concern about the state of job satisfaction of university employees. In the last two decades, there has been growing evidence of various episodes of industrial strike actions particularly from Sub-Sahara Africa where employees within the university system have protested various issues that resonates with undesirable working conditions and remunerations among others (See: Ewa & Eze, 2023; Hlatshwayo, 2020; Shimawua, 2020). Arguably, increasing uneven patterns of disruptions of academic activities due to rising expressing of concerns and uneasiness that influence job satisfaction within the university system raises a concern over the quality of higher education.

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is a psychological construct that is used to describe an employees' state of affection, allegiance, attachment,

identification, and relationship with an organization. Existing studies allude that organizational commitment has significant implication for employees' decision to continue or discontinue attachment or identification with an organization (Ashraf, 2020; Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019; Mueller & Straatmann, 2014). In other words, organizational commitment may be said to have direct relationship with the employees' attitude and strength to identify as membership of an organization. According to Meyer et al. (2002), organizational commitment can further be describe based on three components, that is, affective (employees' level of emotional connection with the organization), continuance (perceived level of organization indispensability), and normative (employees' obligation to stay loyal to an organization) commitment respectively. While there is an existence of array research evidence on organizational commitment that arose from various industries, research activities on the construct of organizational commitment within the higher education space is becoming prominent in the last two decades (Bashir & Gani, 2020; Mwesigwa, Tusiime & Ssekiziyivu, 2020). Ashraf (2020) assert that the rapid emergence of research concerns about the state of the commitment of employees within the university sectors is partly due to the proliferation of private universities, job, and financial demands. Other studies indicated that are influenced by lack of adequate human resource management strategy, organizational culture, challenges associated with job autonomy, job stress, inequitable compensation plan and structure as well absence of proper training and development structures (Dirwan et al., 2024; Joarder et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). Khan et al., 2023; Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2023). Unfortunately, research on the implication of leadership style on organization commitment within the university system particularly from Namibia is sparse. Hence, this study.

Leadership styles and job satisfaction among employees of institutions of higher learning

The need to review the concept of leadership within the higher educational institution have increased significantly in the last two decades. The reason for such effort is multidimensional particularly because of the proliferation of both public and privately funded institutions of higher learnings. In addition, the revolving concept of leadership in relation to demographics, gender perspectives, globalization, and inclusivity geared towards the achievement institutional goals and attract students remain at the center point at which researchers have constantly reviewed the dynamic nature of leaderships in various institutions of higher learning (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Mefi & Asoba, 2020). Some existing studies have shown that the ratings received by universities reflects the leadership composition of such institutions (Iqbal & Piwowar-Sulej, 2022), therefore, Dirwan et al. (2024) aver that the performance of a university is directly proportional to the level of employees' satisfaction. However, variation in the established types of leadership style have been found to shape employees' level of job satisfaction. For instance, in a 2016 study by Alonderiene and Majauskaite among 72 faculty members and ten supervisors from Lithuanian public and private universities revealed a significant positive influence of leadership style on job satisfaction. Specifically, in relation to the findings of Aydin et al. (2013), Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) concluded that principals' transformational leadership style shows strong positive and significant relationship employees' job satisfaction.

On the other hand, Aydin et al. (2013) found higher positive correlation between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction of university employees than transformational leadership style. Some other studies also assert positive and significant links between transactional and transformational leadership styles and employees' job satisfaction (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Musinguzi et al., 2018; Mwesigwa, Tusiime & Ssekiziyivu, 2020). However, while Musinguzi et al. (2018) found that laissez-faire leadership style also has influence on job

satisfaction, laissez-faire may not promote active commitment of employees. In a related study among employees of an Ethiopian public universities Kebede and Demeke (2017) could not established a correlation between laissez-faire leadership style and job satisfaction. Affirmatively, Kasalak et al. (2022) assert that laissez-faire leadership style is ineffective for management of institution of higher learning.

Leadership styles and Organizational commitment among employees of institutions of higher learning Evidence in literature that span over three decades have shown the depth of research findings on issues of employees' commitment to their organization. Studies on the concept of organizational commitment have been widely reported across diverse professions and industries around the globe (Arokiasamy & Tat, 2019; Ashraf, 2020; Mayowa-Adebara & Opeke, 2019; Mwesigwa, Tusiime & Ssekiziyivu, 2020). Apparently, findings reported in existing studies on organizational commitments has been inconsistent across the three components, that is, affective, continuance, and normative commitment respectively (Abasilim et al., 2019; Meyer et al., 2002; Wang et al., 2020). Despite the variance in findings in several findings across the three components of organizational commitments, majority or research findings have favored positive organizational commitments of employees when leadership style is favorable (Wiza & Hlanganipai, 2014; Mwesigwa et al., 2020; Sokolic et al., 2024). Despite the direct and positive significant relationship that studies have established between leadership style and organizational commitment, some studies such as have Abasilim et al. (2019), Erkutlu (2008), Mwesigwa et al. (2020), Ndlovu et al. (2018), Randeree and Chaudhry (2012), Wiza and Hlanganipai (2014) as well as Sokolic et al. (2024) among others advanced correlation between variations in leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership) and organizational commitment.

While strong and positive significant relationship was found between transformational leadership as well as transformational leadership on organizational commitments in the studies of Bass and Avolio (1993), Mwesigwa et al. (2020), and Wiza and Hlanganipai (2014), one other study by Hayward et al. (2008) found a moderate and positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment and a weak correlation coefficients between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. Findings presented in the study of Hayward et al. (2008) was supported by that Garg and Ramjee (2013). Unlike the positive and significant association found between transformational and transformational leadership on organizational commitments, Laissez-faire type of leadership style had shown a weak negative yet significant correlation to organizational commitment as indicated by Garg and Ramjee (2013). According to Garg and Ramjee (2013) Laissez-faire leadership style does not play any significant role at motivating employees' commitment to an organization. An earlier study of Gul et al. (2012) affirmed an insignificant but positive relationship between Laissez-faire leadership style and organizational commitment. Another study by Erkutlu (2008) also recorded that laissez-faire leadership style has negative correlation with organizational commitment. In other words, an increase in the proportion of laissez-faire leadership style would lead to a significant reduction in the level of employees' commitment to the organization.

Research design and sampling procedure

This study employed a descriptive research design of the correlational type an understanding on the potential influence of leadership styles on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees the University of Namibia, Namibia. The University of Namibia (UNAM) is a publicly funded multi-campus. There are 12 campuses of the university which are in different region of the country. The university is the largest university in the country. Out of the 12 campuses, we purposively

selected the main campus which is in the capital city because of the population of the University's employee at the main campus is a representative of the country's population. All employees of the university at the main campus form the population of the study. The study further adopted a simple random convenient sampling approach to identify and selected 226 staff members of the University which cut across various offices of the academic and non-teaching staff members, administrative, management and support staff members who were from various faculties and administrative units.

Data gathering instrument

The study made use of a paper-pencil structured questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. The research instrument was a four-part questionnaire in which the first part which was crafted by the researchers sought for demographic data of the respondents. Information gathered in the second and third sections of the question sought for information on leadership styles, job satisfaction and organizational commitment respectively. Leadership style questionnaire (Lewin, 1939) was adopted. The Leadership Style Questionnaire (LSQ) was an 18-item questionnaire with three dimensions that describes three (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire) leadership styles. Each of the dimensions of the LSQ has six question items. In terms of job satisfaction, the Overall Job Satisfaction Scale (OJSS) developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) was adopted for the study. The OJSS is therefore an 18-item psychologically worded recognized as a suitable measure to assess an individuals' overall satisfaction with their jobs. Lastly, we adopted the 15-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) which was developed by Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979), the OCQ was designed to measure employees' commitment and how they feel about the workplace to their organization. The OCQ has 10 positively worded and 5 negatively worded statements. The LSQ, OJSS, and the OCQ respectively were designed in a 5-response options where '1 = Strongly disagree' to '5 = Strongly agree'.

Validation and Reliability of the research instruments

To test the reliability of the LSQ, OJSS, and the OCQ within the higher education space, a reliability analysis was performed. The constructed questionnaire was share with three researchers/lecturers with cognate experience in issues of organizational development. There researchers/lecturers confirmed the face and content validity of the instrument. Further, we assess the instrument to established it internal consistency. A test-retest reliability procedure on the research instrument yielded a Cronbach alpha of 0.72, indicating an acceptable level of reliability. This suggests that the items within the scales are measuring a similar construct and can be considered reliable for research and practical applications in higher education settings.

Test administration and procedure of data analysis

With approval from the institution, hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed to all university employees on the main campus to invite their participation in the research. The questionnaire included a brief description of the. To ensure maximum participation, the researcher conducted follow-up sessions to remind employees about the opportunity to complete the questionnaire. The data collection process involved the researchers personally administering the questionnaires on campus and aiding as needed to enhance understanding and ease of use. The questionnaires were available to employees for a duration of three days, during which they could fill them out at their convenience. After this period, the completed questionnaires were collected, and the data were prepared for analysis. Data obtained from the survey were coded in the SPSS version 26 package and further analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to demographic data collected while inferential statistics which involved correlational and multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the relationships between leadership style, job

satisfaction, and organizational commitment of employees of the selected institution of higher learning.

Results

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of years of service among the respondents. Data obtained revealed that majority of respondents have been with the organization for less than 5 years, accounting for 46% of the total. Those with 6-10 years of service make up of about 35%, while 15% have been with the organization for 11-15 years. Only a small fraction, 4%, have served for more than 15 years. This distribution provides insight into the tenure of the staff, which could be relevant for analyzing factors such as employee retention and experience levels in relation to job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

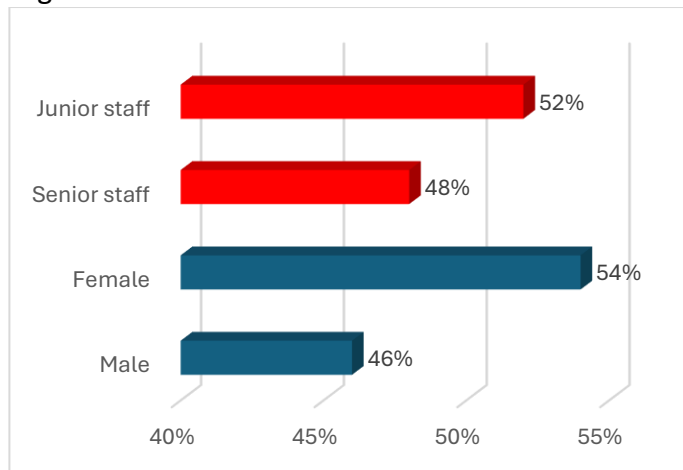


Figure 1: Job designation

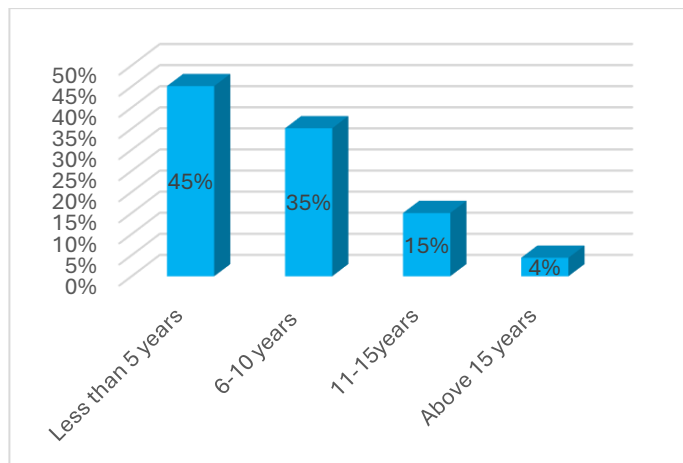


Figure 2: Years of service rendered.

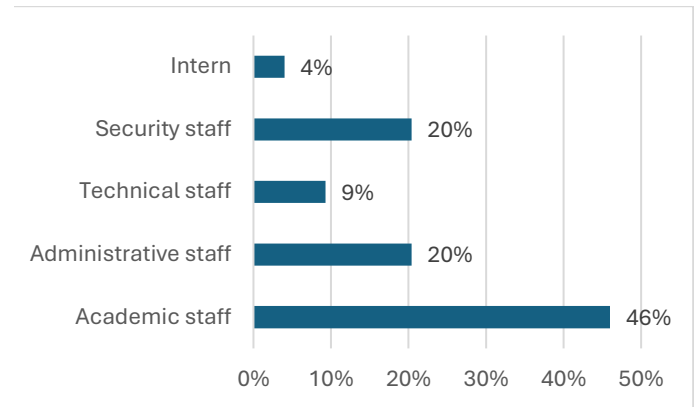


Fig 3: Respondents composition by designation

Figure 2 shows the composition of respondents by rank and gender. Junior staff make up 52% of the workforce. In terms of gender distribution, females represent 54% of the respondents. This table highlights the balance between junior and senior roles, as well as the gender distribution within the organization, which could be relevant for discussions on workforce diversity and equality. Academic staff members were found to respond more to the research instrument (See figure 3). Academic staff members composed of about 46% of the total respondents while 20% of Administrative and 20% Security staff members respectively provided their responses to the research instrument. Only about 4% Interns submitted a filled questionnaire.

Research question 1: Is there any significant relationship between different leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership) and employee job satisfaction?

Table 1: Relationship between different leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership), employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment

	JS	TrFL	TraL	LFL
JS	1	.011	.192**	.081
		.863	.004	.224
TrFL		1	.498**	.502**
			.000	.000
TraL			1	.511**
				.000
LFL				1
Mean	50.31	21.55	20.14	18.10
Standard deviation	5.34	4.19	3.77	3.69
	OC	TrFL	TraL	LFL
OC	1	.043	.057	.180**
		.519	.398	.007
TrFL		1	.498**	.502**
			.000	.000
TraL			1	.511**
				.000
LFL				1
Mean	37.15	21.55	20.14	18.10
Standard deviation	7.29	4.19	3.78	3.69

Note: OC = Organizational Commitment; JS = Job Satisfaction; TrFL = Transformational Leadership Style; TraL = Transactional Leadership Style, and LFL = Laissez-faire Leadership Style.

Table 1 captures the relationship between leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership), job satisfaction and organizational commitment of some 226 university staff members. The result as shown on Table 1 indicate that a positively significant relationship exists between TraL and job satisfaction among the

university employees ($r = 0.192$; $p < 0.05$) but not with organizational commitment ($r = 0.57$; $p > 0.05$). Similarly, a significant relationship was observed between LFL and organizational commitment ($r = 0.180$; $p < 0.05$) but not with job satisfaction ($r = 0.81$; $p > 0.05$) among the university employees. However, our investigation found no significant relationship between TrFL, LFL and job satisfaction among the university employees and no significant relationship between TrFL, TraL ($r = 0.57$; $p > 0.05$), and job satisfaction among the university employees was established. Therefore, the findings implies that university employees were more satisfied with their jobs when leadership of the institution of higher learning responds well to factors that relate to issues of perhaps transactions or other concerns that is of mutual benefit to the employees and the institutions alike. In like manner, our study note that employees may be satisfied with their jobs and have more commitment to such jobs within the institutions of higher learning when leaders of such institution exhibit the characteristic of a Laissez-faire type of leadership.

Research question 2: Is there a significant joint relationship between leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership), job satisfaction and organizational commitments of employees?

Table 2: Joint relationship between leadership styles, job satisfaction and organizational commitments of employees

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
						R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	F
1	.216 ^a	.046	0.34		5.245	.046	3.605	3	222	.014	
2	.189 ^a	.036	.023		7.214	.036	2.749	3	222	.044	

Predictors: (Constant), LFL, TrFL, TraL

Model 1: JS; Model 2: OC

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	297.502	3	99.167	3.605	.014 ^b
Residual	6106.432	222	27.506		
Total	6403.934	225			
2 Regression	429.240	3	143.080	2.749	.044 ^b
Residual	11552.941	222	52.040		
Total	11982.181	225			

a = Dependent Variable (Model 1): JS

a = Dependent Variable (Model 2): OC

b = Predictors: (Constant), LFL, TrFL, TraL

Note: OC = Organizational Commitment; JS = Job Satisfaction; TrFL = Transformational Leadership Style; TraL = Transactional Leadership Style, and LFL = Laissez-faire Leadership Style.

A joint significant relationship between leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership), job satisfaction and organizational commitments was presented on Table 2. Table 2 revealed significant joint significant contribution of the three forms of leadership styles on employee job satisfaction ($F(3,222) = 3.605$, $R = 0.22$, $p < 0.05$) and also a significant contribution of the three leadership styles was established for organizational

commitment ($F(3,222) = 2.749$, $R = 0.19$, $p < 0.05$). The table showed that about 46% and 36% of the variance accounted for the variance in job satisfaction and organizational commitment respectively. The finding therefore implies that the three components of leadership styles jointly have a combined influence on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of university staff members. Specifically, leadership style had heightened influence on job satisfaction than organizational commitment.

Research question 3: Is there any significant relative contribution of different leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership), job satisfaction and organizational commitments of employees?

Table 3: Relative contribution of leadership styles, job satisfaction and organizational commitments of employees

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	46.202	2.226		20.754	.000
TrFL	-.149	.102	-.117	-1.461	.145
TraL	.342	.114	.242	3.002	.003
LFL	.024	.117	.016	.201	.841
2 (Constant)	32.366	3.062		10.570	.000
TrFL	-.093	.140	-.053	-.663	.508
TraL	-.058	.157	-.030	-.370	.712
LFL	.439	.161	.222	2.727	.007

a = Dependent Variable (Model 1): JS

a = Dependent Variable (Model 2): OC

Note: OC = Organizational Commitment; JS = Job Satisfaction; TrFL = Transformational Leadership Style; TraL = Transactional Leadership Style, and LFL = Laissez-faire Leadership Style.

Table 3 showed there was a positively significant contribution of TraL on job satisfaction ($\beta = .242$, $t = 3.002$, $p < 0.05$) and positively significant contribution of LFL on organizational commitments ($\beta = .222$, $t = 2.722$, $p < 0.05$) of university employees to their organizational. On the other hand, TrFL and LFL were found not to have any significant contribution job satisfaction and no significant contribution of TrFL and TraL to employees' organizational commitment. Therefore, we affirmed that transactional interaction between the leadership of institutions of higher learning may be directly proportional to the level of satisfaction of employees and freedom of expression given to employees may significantly improve their commitment towards the institution.

Discussion

This current study assessed the potential relationship between variations in leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire), job satisfaction and organizational commitment employees within a public university system. The unending controversies in existing research outputs on variation in job satisfaction of employees within the university system and employee's commitment to the university system in the wake of proliferation of higher educational institution motivated the conduct of this study among some employees of a publicly funded university. In line with the trait theory of leadership (Benmira & Agboola, 2021), it is our expectation that all leaders within the framework of the university structure should have the physical, mental, and socio-emotional strength to motivate and positively with deal with their subordinates in a manner that informs positive organization growth, satisfaction, and commitment. Imperative in the traits of leaders, Penney, Kelloway and O'Keefe (2015) assert that intelligence factors, personality factors, and physical factors are three crucial factors that must be inherent in every leader to drive organizational growth. In other words, regardless of any type of leadership style (transactional, transformational, or laissez-faire), an individual must have adequate level of the three named factor to

positively shape or influence the decision of employees and their commitment as well.

In view of the foregoing, this current study based on research question one, transactional leadership was found to have positively significant relationship with job satisfaction among the university employees. Therefore, the findings implies that university employees were more satisfied with their jobs when leadership of the institution of higher learning responds well to factors that relate to transactional issues such as emoluments, salaries, wages, and other transactions that is of mutual benefit to the employees and the institutions alike. This further mean that the employees may be satisfied with the approach of their leadership being concerned about factors that enhance workers motivation. Although, there are plethora of findings in existing literature that have strongly associated job satisfaction with leadership style (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Kasalak et al., 2022; Mshelia & Emmanuel, 2021; Zheng & Li, 2024) but a few particularly within the higher education space have identified that a positive link between transactional style of leadership and satisfaction of employees with their job. Thus, findings in this current study provide support for the findings of Bass and Riggio (2006); Musinguzi et al. (2018), and Mwesigwa et al. (2020). On the other hand, the current finding does not correspond to association between transformational leadership, and job satisfaction as established by Aydin et al. (2013). Apparently, the insignificant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job satisfaction reported in this study was earlier established in the studies of Kasalak et al. (2022), Kebede and Demeke (2017) as well as Musinguzi et al. (2018) among employees of some publicly funded institutions of higher learning.

In terms of organizational commitment and leadership styles, we found also a positively significant relationship was established between laissez-faire and organizational commitment. The finding implies that employees in publicly funded institutions of higher learning may be commitment to such jobs within the institutions of higher learning when leaders of such institution give employees liberty to bring diverse ideas and innovation to their job description. This finding seems to have implication for the concept of academic freedom in various institution of higher learning.

Vokhobzhonovna (2023) in his article stated that one of the fundamental principles of higher education is academic freedom in which employees are allowed to pursue, create, and share knowledge without undue interference from institutional leadership. In a similar vein, in 2021, Chankseliani and McCowan aver that due to the significant level of academic independence being enjoyed through 'academic freedom', employees within the higher education spaces have reduced external influences for intellectual activities to advance teaching and learning. Hence, employees of higher educational institutions with such liberty would be highly committed to their job descriptions and institution.

In view of the foregoing, academic freedom and laissez-faire type of leadership style may have close affinity. However, while our current finding revealed a strong and positive correlation between laissez-faire leadership style and organizational commitment of employees of a publicly funded university in Namibia, Garg and Ramjee (2013) reported a weak negative yet significant correlation laissez-faire leadership style and organizational commitment.

This study established that all the three leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership) have significant joint contribution on employee job satisfaction and on organizational commitment. It is interesting to note that our current finding is consistent with earlier reports on the connection between leadership styles and job satisfaction (See: Adigun, 2020; Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Aydin et al., 2013; Dirwan et al., 2024; Iqbal & Piwovar-Sulej, 2022; Kim et al., 2023; Schroder, 2008). In a similar manner, finding of this student in relation to positive relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment agrees with the findings of Abasilim et al. (2019), Bass and Avolio (1993), Hayward et al. (2008), Meyer et al. (2002), Mwesigwa et al. (2020), Sokolic et al., 2024), Wang et al. (2020), and Wiza and Hlanganipai (2014).

This study established that all the three leadership styles (transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership) have significant joint contribution on employee job satisfaction and on organizational commitment. It is interesting to note that our current finding is consistent with earlier reports on the connection between leadership styles and job satisfaction (See: Adigun, 2020; Alonderiene &

Majauskaite, 2016; Aydin et al., 2013; Dirwan et al., 2024; Iqbal & Piwovar-Sulej, 2022; Kim et al., 2023; Schroder, 2008). In a similar manner, finding of this student in relation to positive relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment agrees with the findings of Abasilim et al. (2019), Bass and Avolio (1993), Hayward et al. (2008), Meyer et al. (2002), Mwesigwa et al. (2020), Sokolic et al., 2024), Wang et al. (2020), and Wiza and Hlanganipai (2014). However, even though our study established that collectively, the three-leadership style positively and jointly contribute to job satisfaction and organizational commitment, the study extend that only transactional leadership style can positively and significantly influence job satisfaction of employees of publicly funded universities and laissez-faire leadership style promotes organizational commitment of employees' of publicly funded universities. The findings thus implies that the transactions between the managements of institution of higher learning and employees is an important factor that determines how satisfied an employee can be with an institution. In other words, impaired transactions (financial or otherwise) may significantly lead to lack of satisfaction with job and therefore may lead to loss of employees to other institutions with better packages based on their transactional strengths. The contribution of transactional leadership as ascertain in this current study conform with the finding in the study of Bass and Riggio (2006), Musinguzi et al. (2018), as well as Mwesigwa, Tusiime and Ssekiziyivu (2020).

Although Mwesigwa, Tusiime and Ssekiziyivu (2020) remark that transformational leadership is important in the scheme of promoting the university mission and vision in their quest to meeting global standard and increase international rating however, the fact remains that when leadership shows less concern for positive transactional variables (financial or otherwise), employees may have depleted satisfaction with their job which may consequently affect commitment to the organization. While laissez-faire leadership style has been found in this study to significantly contribute to organizational commitment, this current finding therefore provided support to reports of Donkor, Dongmei, and Sekyere (2021), Garg and Ramjee (2013) as well as Thanh and Quang (2022) but failed to support the evidence provided by Erkutlu (2008) that laissez-

laissez-faire leadership style leads to significant reduction in employees' level of organizational commitment.

Conclusion and recommendations

This study has brought to fore the potential link between leadership styles, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees in an institution of higher learning. The empirical finding confirmed that a positive and significant relationship exist between leadership styles, job satisfaction and organizational commitment but one major take away from the study was the fact that transactional leadership style favours job satisfaction of employees within the publicly funded institution of higher learning as against transformational laissez-faire leadership styles. In terms of organizational commitment, this study concludes that employees within the university system are more committed to their jobs and their institutions when leaders employ laissez-faire leadership style. In other words, employees within the university system somewhat feel committed to their jobs when they are given liberty/free hands to explore and act according to their job descriptions provided it is in consonance with the aim and objectives of the organization. Therefore, based on the findings of the study thereof, the following recommendations were made:

Positive transactions that are of mutual benefits to both institution and employees should always be given necessary consideration when such need arises. In other words, leadership of publicly funded institutions of higher learning should endeavor to respond to need to review wages and salaries as well as other emoluments as such effort would not only motivates their employees but also influence the positive working environments where workers are satisfied with their jobs. It is equally believed that it is when working environment is conducive that is when expected and required institutional transformation can be achieved. Therefore, it is crucial for managements of public universities to focus more on exploring transactional leadership style.

In addition, to foster organizational commitment of employees with the university systems, academic freedom and university autonomy (Vokhobzhonovna, 2023) is essential. Therefore, the principles associated with laissez-faire leadership style should continually be enthroned. However, management of universities must cautiously foster the use of laissez-faire leadership style

because may be abused by employees (Erkutlu, 2008). It is equally important, that while personality shapes leadership traits (Benmira & Agboola, 2021), there should be recurrent leadership trainings for all management staff members of institutions of higher learning on how to improve and transform the working environment to holistically achieve organizational goals.

Limitation of the study

We acknowledged that there are some limitations in this study. For instance, the study adopted the use of close-ended question for data collection. Unfortunately, the questionnaire prevented the respondents to personally express their thoughts about the state of leadership styles in the identified university and perhaps the experience of the employees in relation to the various leadership styles and how it informs job satisfaction and their commitment to the institution. Therefore, future studies may adopt qualitative research approach or mixed method research methods to examine the relationship between variables of this study.

References

- 1) Abasilim, U. D., Gbervbie, D. E., & Osibanjo, O. A. (2019). Leadership styles and employees' commitment: Empirical evidence from Nigeria. *Sage Open*, 9(3), 2158244019866287.
- 2) Abbas, M., & Ali, R. (2023). Transformational versus transactional leadership styles and project success: A meta-analytic review. *European Management Journal*, 41(1), 125-142.
- 3) Adigun, O. T. (2020). Relationship between personal and work-related factors and job satisfaction of Nigerian teachers in special schools. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(3), 599-614.
- 4) Adigun, O. T., Mpofu, N., & Maphalala, M. C. (2024). Fostering self-directed learning in blended learning environments: A constructivist perspective in Higher Education. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 79(1), e12572.
- 5) Al-Jabari, B. & Ghazzawi, I. (2019). Organizational Commitment: A Review of the Conceptual and Empirical Literature and a Research Agenda. *International Leadership Journal*, 11(1), 78-119.
- 6) Alonderiene, R., & Majauskaite, M. (2016). Leadership style and job satisfaction in higher

- education institutions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 30(1), 140-164.
- 7) Arokiasamy, A. R. A., & Tat, H. H. (2019). Organizational culture, job satisfaction and leadership style influence on organizational commitment of employees in private higher education institutions (PHEI) in Malaysia. *Amazonia Investiga*, 8(19), 191-206.
- 8) Ashraf, M. A. (2020). Demographic factors, compensation, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in private university: an analysis using SEM. *Journal of Global Responsibility*, 11(4), 407-436.
- 9) Aydin, A., Sarier, Y. & Uysal, S. (2013). The effect of school principals' leadership styles on teachers' organizational commitment and job satisfaction. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 13(2), 806-811.
- 10) Bashir, B., & Gani, A. (2020). Testing the effects of job satisfaction on organizational commitment. *Journal of Management Development*, 39(4), 525-542.
- 11) Bass, B. & Riggio, R.E. (2006). *Transformational Leadership*, NJLawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah.
- 12) Bass, B. M. & Avolio, B. J. (1993). Transformational Leadership Theory: A Response to Critiques. In: Chemmers, M. M & Ayman, R. A. (Eds.). *Leadership Theory and Research: Perspectives and Directions*. London: Academic Press, pp.49-80.
- 13) Bass, B. M. (1995). Comment: Transformational leadership: Looking at other possible antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 4(3), 293-297.
- 14) Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1990). Developing transformational leadership: 1992 and beyond. *Journal of European industrial training*, 14(5), 21-27.
- 15) Benmira, S., & Agboola, M. (2021). Evolution of leadership theory. *BMJ Leader*, 5, 3-5.
- 16) Brayfield, A. H., & Rothe, H. F. (1951). An index of job satisfaction. *Journal of applied psychology*, 35(5), 307.
- 17) Chankseliani, M., & McCowan, T. (2021). Higher education and the sustainable development goals. *Higher Education*, 81(1), 1-8.
- 18) Dirwan, D., Rajindra, R., Farid, F., Mande, H., Nursiah, N., & Supriadi, A. (2024). The Influence of organizational culture, organizational commitment, on motivation and job satisfaction of employees and lecturers at Muhammadiyah University of Palu. *International Journal of Health, Economics, and Social Sciences*, 6(3), 904-918.
- 19) Donkor, F., Dongmei, Z., & Sekyere, I. (2021). The mediating effects of organizational commitment on leadership styles and employee performance in SOEs in Ghana: A structural equation modeling analysis. *Sage Open*, 11(2), 21582440211008894.
- 20) Dreer, B. (2022). Teacher well-being: Investigating the contributions of school climate and job crafting. *Cogent Education*, 9(1), 2044583.
- 21) Erkutlu, H. (2008). The impact of transformational leadership on organizational and leadership effectiveness: The Turkish case. *Journal of management development*, 27(7), 708-726.
- 22) Ewa, I., & Eze, F. O. (2023). Effects of asuu strike on the performance of universities in the southeastern states of Nigeria-2012 to 2022. *International Journal of Research in Education and Sustainable Development*, 3(8), 17-33.
- 23) Garg, A. K., & Ramjee, D. (2013). The relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment at a parastatal company in South Africa. *The International Business & Economics Research Journal (Online)*, 12(11), 1411.
- 24) Gul, S., Rehman, S. U., Razzaq, N., Ahmad, B., & Saif, N. (2012). Impact of leadership styles on organizational commitment in pharmaceutical companies of Pakistan. *Information and Knowledge Management*, 2(7), 29-36.
- 25) Haoyan, X., Waters, D., Jinling, H., Qionglings, L., & Sien, L. (2023). Quantitative systematic review of the transformational leadership style as a driver of nurses' organisational commitment. *Nursing open*, 10(7), 4160-4171.
- 26) Hauptman, K. M. (2022). Comparative higher education research in times of globalisation of higher education: Theoretical and methodological insights. *European Educational Research Journal*, 21(4), 645-657.
- 27) Hayward, B. A., Amos, T. L., & Baxter, J. (2008). Employee performance, leadership style and emotional intelligence: An exploratory study in a South African parastatal. *Acta Commercii*, 8(1), 15-26.

- 28) Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). *The motivation to work* (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- 29) Hlatshwayo, M. (2020). Solidarity during the 'outsourcing must fall' campaign: The role of different players in ending outsourcing at South African universities. *Politikon*, 47(3), 305-320.
- 30) Ilyas, S., Abid, G., & Ashfaq, F. (2020). Ethical leadership in sustainable organizations: The moderating role of general self-efficacy and the mediating role of organizational trust. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, 22, 195-204.
- 31) Iqbal, Q., & Piwowar-Sulej, K. (2022). Sustainable leadership in higher education institutions: social innovation as a mechanism. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 23(8), 1-20.
- 32) Joarder, M.H.R., Ashraf, M.A. & Ratan, S.R.A. (2020). Quality education from faculty management perspectives in private higher education: does faculty commitment behavior mediate? *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(1); 190-206.
- 33) Judge, T. A., Zhang, S. C., & Glerum, D. R. (2020). Job satisfaction. *Essentials of job attitudes and other workplace psychological constructs*, 207-241.
- 34) Kasalak, G., Güneri, B., Ehtiyar, V. R., Apaydin, Ç., & Türker, G. Ö. (2022). The relation between leadership styles in higher education institutions and academic staff's job satisfaction: A meta-analysis study. *Frontiers in psychology*, 13, 1038824.
- 35) Kebede, A. M., & Demeke, G. W. (2017). The influence of leadership styles on employees' job satisfaction in Ethiopian public universities. *Contemporary Management Research*, 13(3), 165-176.
- 36) Khan, I. U., Idris, M., & Amin, R. U. (2023). Leadership style and performance in higher education: the role of organizational justice. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 26(6), 1111-1125.
- 37) Kim, L., Pongsakornrunsilp, S., Horam, N., & Suong, S. (2023). How to make employees happy: Evidence from Thai university lecturers. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 21(1), 482-492.
- 38) Lee, J. J., & Stensaker, B. (2021). Research on internationalisation and globalisation in higher education—Reflections on historical paths, current perspectives, and future possibilities. *European Journal of Education*, 56(2), 157-168.
- 39) Lewin, K., Lippitt, R. White, R.K. (1939). Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created "social climates. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 10, 271299.
- 40) Mayowa-Adebara, O. and Opeke, R.O. (2019). Leadership style as a predictor of employee commitment in university libraries in South-West, Nigeria. *Library Management*, 40(6/7), 441-452.
- 41) Mefi, N., & Asoba, S. N. (2020). Leadership styles for job satisfaction in knowledge-based institutions: the case of heads of departments at an institution of higher education in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. *Academy of entrepreneurship journal*, 26(4), 1-12.
- 42) Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., Herscovitch, L., & Topolnytsky, L. (2002). Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61(1), 20-52.
- 43) Mowday, R. T., Steers, R. M., & Porter, L. W. (1979). The measurement of organizational commitment. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 14(2), 224-247.
- 44) Mshelia, H. J., & Emmanuel, O. (2021). Leadership styles and their applications for effective school administration. *International Journal of Scientific and Management Research*, 5(2), 56-63.
- 45) Mueller, K. & Straatmann, T. (2014). Organizational Commitment. In A.C., Michalos (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*. Springer, Dordrecht.
- 46) Musinguzi, C., Namale, L., Rutebemberwa, E., Dahal, A., Nahirya-Ntege, P., & Kekitiinwa, A. (2018). The relationship between leadership style and health worker motivation, job satisfaction and teamwork in Uganda. *Journal of healthcare leadership*, 21-32.
- 47) Mwesigwa, R., Tusiime, I., & Ssekiziyivu, B. (2020). Leadership styles, job satisfaction and organizational commitment among academic staff in public universities. *Journal of Management development*, 39(2), 253-268.

- 48) Nanjundeswaraswamy, T. S. (2023). The mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment. *Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences*, 39(2), 286-304.
- 49) Ndlovu, W., Ngirande, H., Setati, S. T., & Zhuwao, S. (2018). Transformational leadership and employee organisational commitment in a rural-based higher education institution in South Africa. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16(1), 1-7.
- 50) Penney, S. A., Kelloway, E. K., & O'Keefe, D. (2015). Trait theories of leadership. In *Leadership in sport* (pp. 19-33). Routledge.
- 51) Piwowar-Sulej, K., & Iqbal, Q. (2023). Leadership styles and sustainable performance: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 382, 134600.
- 52) Randeree, K., & Chaudhry, A. G. (2012). Leadership—style, satisfaction and commitment: An exploration in the United Arab Emirates' construction sector. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*, 19(1), 61-85.
- 53) Schroder, R. (2008). Job satisfaction of employees at a Christian university. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 17(2), 225-246.
- 54) Sengar, S., & Pandey, M. (2024). To study the effect of job satisfaction on the performance of academic faculties working in private colleges and private universities in Indore. *International Journal for Global Academic & Scientific Research*, 3(1), 13-24.
- 55) Shimawua, D. (2020). Impact of industrial unions strike on the performance of public universities in Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Social Sciences and Strategic Management Techniques*, 1, 247, 256.
- 56) Sokolic, D., Croitoru, G., Florea, N. V., Robescu, V. O., & Cosac, A. (2024). The effect of leadership styles on employee motivation and organizational performance in public sector organizations. *Valahian Journal of Economic Studies*, 15(1), 53-72.
- 57) Szromek, A. R., & Wolniak, R. (2020). Job satisfaction and problems among academic staff in higher education. *Sustainability*, 12(12), 4865.
- 58) Thanh, N. H., & Quang, N. V. (2022). Transformational, transactional, laissez-faire leadership styles and employee engagement: Evidence from Vietnam's public sector. *Sage Open*, 12(2), 21582440221094606.
- 59) Vokhobzhonovna, X. S. (2023). The evolution of the concept of academic freedom in higher education institutions. *American Journal of Social Sciences And Humanity Research*, 3(12), 365-370.
- 60) Wang, P., Chu, P., Wang, J., Pan, R., Sun, Y., Yan, M., ... & Zhang, D. (2020). Association between job stress and organizational commitment in three types of Chinese university teachers: mediating effects of job burnout and job satisfaction. *Frontiers in psychology*, 11, 576768.
- 61) Wiza, M., & Hlanganipai, N. (2014). The impact of leadership styles on employee organisational commitment in higher learning institutions. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(4), 135-143.
- 62) Zhang, Z., & Li, B. (2024). The effect of secure-base leadership on employee radical innovation: a moderated mediation model. *Current Psychology*, 43(34), 27842-27858.