

## Gender Factor And Journalists' Work Commitment In Nigeria

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### Abstract

The clamour for gender equality as at today is gathering more momentum following the United Nations Affirmative Action. Women are now seeking representation and equality in all spheres of human engagements ranging from politics to job placement. It is against this background that this study examines the Gender Factor and Journalists' Work Commitment in Nigeria (Samples were drawn among Journalists working in *NTA* and *The Nigerian Observer* Benin, Edo State, Nigeria). Anchored on the theory of gender equality, the study establishes the fact that male journalists are not more committed to their job than their female counterparts. This novel result negates the postulation of a scholar named Rosenberg who in the year 1983 theorized that gender factor can influence individual perception and response to their immediate milieu. The outcome of our result presupposes the fact that the theoretical position on the extent at which men and women can perform on a task is no longer a general rule. This latter claim is still evident by our current finding that Nigerian male journalists are not more committed to their job than their female counterparts; based on responses from journalists working in *NTA* and *The Nigerian Observer* Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. There seems to be a similar level of zeal for work between the male and female journalists in these two media houses in Edo State, Nigeria probably because they did not face some of the task barriers that have made male workers to be more committed to their job than their female counterparts in most other business organizations in Nigeria. The researchers, therefore, conclude that the uniqueness of work commitment of journalists is not a function of their gender and that media houses in Nigeria should adopt proper job placement and adequate staff hiring in order to increase quality output and encourage work commitment amongst journalists. The researchers, however, recommend that media organizations in Nigeria should fully maximize work commitment of journalists through training and re-training locally and internationally

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**Keywords:** Gender Equality, Gender Factor, Work Commitment, Male Journalists, Female Counterparts

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### INTRODUCTION

In the beginning journalism practice used to be patriarchal, hence the common phrase gentlemen of the press. In precise language, Journalism practice at the early stage remained the sole domain of men and this is one of the reasons why women were less recognized in the practice of print journalism in the early period of the profession in Nigeria. The increase in global agitation for gender equality and empowerment in all sectors of human endeavour has however given credence to gender role in print and broadcast journalism practice in Nigeria. It is noticeable that women oriented stories started appearing in Nigerian newspapers in the early 1950s. It is as a result of this breakthrough that Coker (1952) chronicles the events that led to women participation in Nigerian journalism profession.

Ikem (1996: 189) gives detailed account of Coker's records of events on Nigerian journalism when he says: "The first breakthrough for women in this male dominated profession was in feature writing published by the *Nigerian Daily Times* with boxed title-heads linked to female activities".

When Nigerian women started venturing into journalism practice in the 1950s, they were restricted mainly to stories relating to women and domestic issues and at times they wrote under pseudonyms to hide their identity mainly because of the prevailing social and cultural specifications of that period. Abiola (1986) captures this period thus: "It was an era when the women's page is exclusively reserved for women regardless of their educational background and qualification... And the sad part is women accepted this notion almost as a God-given rule... They believed that the entry point for a woman journalist is through the women page".

Despite the earlier limited opportunities for Nigerian female journalists, they have, today, been making steady progress in number. From just being women or gossip columnists, many of them have ventured into mainstream genre of journalism and some have gone as far as becoming editors and publishers. Among the early Nigerian female journalists are: Adora Lilly Ulasi (a Women's page editor in *Daily Times*), Theresa Ogunbiyi, (who succeeded Ulasi as

Women's page editor of *Daily Times*); Ronke Ajayi (editor and publisher of the *Nigerian Daily Herald*), Doyin Abiola, (the first female editor of the *National Concord*) and Lizzy Ikem (editor of Home Studies under *Daily Times* group). Over the years, these skillful Nigerian female journalists have been so committed to their journalistic practice as much as their male counterparts.

The objectives of this study are to: (1) examine the level of work commitment among male and female journalists in Nigeria: (Samples are from journalists working in *Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)* Benin and *The Nigerian Observer* in Benin, Edo State of Nigeria); (2) evaluate the marital status of the journalists and the effect it has on their work commitment and (3) ascertain the factors that affect the journalists' commitment to their work. Using samples among journalists working in *NTA* and *Nigerian Observer* in Benin-City, Nigeria the following hypotheses are tested in the study (1) Gender of journalists in Nigeria will have direct influence on the level of their job commitment (2) There will be an Interactive Influence between Gender, Job Status and Behavioural Attitudes of Nigerian Journalists focusing on their work commitment and (3) There will be an Interactive influence between gender, loyalty and turnover intention of Nigerian journalists on job commitment.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been several researches carried out in the area of organizational commitment of workers, but looking at the traditional limitation barriers facing women folks very few of these researches focus and/or pay attention to the gender factor. While it is argued that male workers in organizations have more to offer than their female counterparts, considering the fact that most of the married women and mothers mostly have divided attentions and loyalties because there is a strong belief that they have limited mental ability and they lack physical energies in the workplace as they are considered caretakers of the home. The journalism practice requires a lot of commitment and dedication, and the reason for this research is basically to tackle the problem of lack of commitment of workers in their various fields, with apt attention to gender.

To date, no work of general interest has been done on the topic of this present study, which is **Gender Factor and Journalists Work Commitment in Nigerian**, but extensive research has been done to investigate *Job Status and Turnover Intention on Work Commitment* in general by scholars such as: Coker (1952), Maslow (1954), Tiger (1969), Trivers (1972), Sanday (1973), Wilson (1975), Agassi (1979), Monday et al (1979), Steer and Porter (1979), Epstein (1981), Sanday (1981), Roseberg, (1983), Shepher and Lionel (1983), Meyer et al

(1989), Rosener (1990), Ikem (1996), Meyer and Allen (1997a), Meyer and Allen (1997b) Guest (1998), Cappelli (1999) and Ajibade (2003).

Most of these scholars postulate that employee commitment is one of the most important elements that help organizations to achieve their goals. They provide myriads of definitions to the concept of work commitment while they see work commitment as the willingness to work hard and give ones energy and time to a job or an activity. For example, Steer and Porter (1979) define organizational commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with an organization. They also offer a definition of organizational commitment, which has three components: (i) a strong belief in and acceptance of organizational goals and values (ii) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization and (iii) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.

According to Cappelli (1999) "the concept of work commitment was originally introduced as an alternative measure to job satisfaction, with a large body of subsequent research showing it to be a robust and stable construct". Guest (1998) describes work commitment as "something central to any study of Human Resource Management (HRM)". He argues that "the reason for introducing HRM policies is to increase employee commitment so that other positive organizational outcomes will follow". "Despite numerous studies spanning more than 40 years we still do not have a thorough understanding of work commitment", Guest (1998) has concluded.

Work commitment is a broad construct under which several other key constructs are subsumed. Of these constructs, commitment to profession, career and organization are central to this present study because most professional work incorporates each of these constructs to some degree. While delving into the issue of construct and concept in relation to work commitment Guest (1998) has suggested that "a lack of understanding of work commitment is due to a number of factors including the ineffectiveness of change programs, weak training, failure to understand the antecedents of commitment, failure to change leadership behaviors and failure to develop appropriate rewards structures". According to him, "over-reliance on positivistic approaches in researching work commitment, with its focus on measurement, has exacerbated the problem of low knowledge and lack of understanding of workers' commitment in their work place".

It has been observed that individual's personal factors such as age and gender can contribute to his/her work input and the overall work output. These factors sometimes affect workers' perception and processing of the work around them. To Rosener (1990) "age

and gender can have far reaching effect on how young and old male and female respond to their immediate milieu and work situation". This difference in the perception and responses to environmental/work cues has also been emphasized by Bernice (2007) as "having notable influence on a person's level of job performance".

Strict observance of work nature in the broadcast sector worldwide has changed from routine news gathering and presentation to rigorous, in-depth investigation, news gathering and real-time reporting. In fact, the internet has necessitated most of these changes in the sector. It is noticeable that there is much more advanced competition within the sector as information is provided in real time. The underlying assumption is that the revised nature of work will no doubt bring about issues of job commitment and performance. These issues are even more accentuated when one considers gender differences of broadcast employees especially in a developing country such as Nigeria.

The above argument is especially true if one considers Sunday's (2006) finding which states that "despite the barriers militating against the full participation of women in the labour market, the economic climate in Nigeria suggests that they have to provide financial support for their families". Sunday (2006), however, interrogates the situation of women in this regard by asking the question: "Could this mean that women may be much more under pressure to do more to stay on the same level with the men in the broadcast sector in Nigeria to perform, given their role in the family?"

Traditionally, women have been involved in different trade and profession from time immemorial. For journalism, women role as at today cannot be wished away. From humble beginning, women have risen through the ranks from being reporters to top management position in both the print and broadcast industry. But before the Beijing declaration, women were given limited access to management positions in journalism practice and they were restricted to operate as editors, reporters, sports analyst and freelance journalists. Abiola (1986) notes that "many female reporters in the media business were restricted to society reporting in the early periods of journalism practice in Nigeria: they were expected to cover the latest in food or fashion... There were a few women who reported on subjects that were considered the domain of male reporters".

At this juncture, it must be reiterated that this article is not meant to treat the issues of gender equality in isolation as gender equality theory will be used to lay the foundation of how women came to be working in a profession that was seen as the exclusive reserve of men. The tasks of these researchers, therefore, are to

examine the contribution of women to the journalism practice from the hood to the limelight and to show that in no way they are not less committed to the cause of journalism profession and/or media operations in comparison to their male counterparts.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Theory of Gender Equality is adopted for this study. Its adoption is based on the fact that the modern *liberal feminist* and *gender equality* theories are based on the assumption that in order for females to achieve equal status with their male counterparts, all stereotyped social roles for men and women have to be abolished. Agassi (1977) in her postulations notes that "the conventional women's work roles assign to them the major responsibility for unpaid domestic and especially child-care work, and thus handicap them in their occupational roles".

Bergmann (1974) argues that "despite legal rights of women to equality in employment, men use their actual or presumed domestic handicaps in order to perpetuate de-facto discrimination by forcing them into a small number of occupational roles that are segregated according to labor-market types and working-time schedules and that they have lower pay and prestige comparable to men's occupations".

Epstein's (1981) postulation is hinged on the fact that "employed women's inferior income is used as a justification for the perpetuation of their unequal burden of domestic and child-care work and their inferior power within the family". Lorber's (1984) theoretical assumption supports Epstein's view when he says that: "the women's segregated and inferior occupational roles also hinder their acquisition of economic and political power". Reskin and Hartman (1986) postulate that: "it is in the short-term interest of men of all strata to use the unpaid domestic services of women as a yardstick to prevent them from competing with them for the better jobs".

Kanter (1977), Mednick et al (1975) and Reskin (1988) are of the view that "the issue of gender inequality is usually applied to industrialized societies alone, but a generalized version of it has been applied by some anthropologists to preliterate human societies in general". "These anthropologists", according to them, "assert that the more work activities are carried out by both genders indiscriminately, the higher the status of women; the more rigid the segregation of women and men during work activities, the lower the status of women".

"The idea behind the gender equality theory is quite general there are no separate parts, but there are equal functions or roles", says Bacdayan (1977). He reiterates further that "even if women perform central roles in food production, as long as they are excluded from roles that provide access to means of exchange,

they are devoid of prestige and political power... Similarly, as long as women are barred from significant political or ritual roles, there is no genuine gender equality”.

In their own case, the *liberal feminists' theorists* have included in their theses the claim that the abolition of gender segregation of occupational roles is necessary for the achievement of women's equality. On the other hand, the argument of most *gender equality theorists* follows that “for the acquisition of gender equality, all domestic consumption work and all child-care work-as well as the responsibility for their performance-must also be freed of gender stereotyping and must be divided equally between partners and between parents”.

Observably, the theoretical postulations of most of the gender theorists discussed so far are thus linked to the theories of family structure and household. A different high speed modern anthropological non-materialist theory of gender roles is that of Schlegel (1977), who claims that “it is of no importance whether work activities are gender segregated as long as the creation myths and ritual system of the society evaluate and celebrate women's activities as highly as men's”. Based on various arguments generated through the discourse of the aforementioned theorists it can be assumed that the *gender equality theory* is germane to this present study in an appropriate way.

**METHODOLOGY**

An ex-post facto research design was used for this study. It is an appropriate design because the researchers did not manipulate the variables used directly as it is in experimental research, but they used highly structured questionnaires to obtain information from large numbers of respondents presumed to be representative of media practitioners in Nigeria. The study sample was taken from

*Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Benin and The Nigerian Observer Newspaper in Benin-City.* A total number of fifty questionnaires were sent out. They were administered on the respondents using purposive sampling technique so that none of the targeted members on the staff of these two media houses is excluded from participating in the study.

The instrument used was the questionnaire. It comprised of three sections: A, B and C. Section A was designed to obtain information on *Demographic Variables*. Section B is a Likert Scale that contained ten items developed to measure *Gender Factor and Work Attitude* while section C is also a Likert Scale with ten items developed to measure *Work Commitment* of journalists in the two media organizations: *NTA Benin and The Nigerian Observer Benin.* Out of the total number of fifty questionnaires distributed only forty-seven were validly completed and returned.

The returned numbers of questionnaires formed the sample size needed. The questionnaires were subjected to inferential statistics analysis that involved making generalizations about the **whole population of Nigerian journalists** based on information obtained from the sample. The inferential statistical tool used is Analysis of Variance. The data were later collated and the textual messages analyzed.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

In the study three hypotheses were tested and the results have been analyzed below. The first hypothesis, which states that **Gender of Nigerian Journalists will have direct influence on the level of their Work Commitment**, was tested using Analysis of Variance method and the result is presented in table 1 below:

**TABLE 1**

Descriptive table showing **Influence of Gender on Work Commitment among the Journalists in NTA, Benin and The Nigerian Observer, Benin** is presented below:

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Interval Lower Bound	Confidence for Mean Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Male	28	3.71	1.013	.191	3.32	4.11	1	5
Female	19	3.16	1.119	.257	2.62	3.70	2	5
Total	47	3.49	1.081	.158	3.17	3.81	1	5

ANOVA table showing **influence of gender on work commitment among the journalists** is presented below:

Respondents Age	Between Groups	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Within Groups	21.985	42	.523		
	Total	28.979	46			
Job Status	Between Groups	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Within Groups	13.285	42	.316		
	Total	16.851	46			

The result has revealed that gender age and job status are not having significant influence on work commitment of the journalists. This is explained using between groups mean value of 3.566 and within groups' mean value of 13.285 that have a significant level of <0.05;  $f(4,42)=2.818$  with mean value of strongly agree ( $X=3.00$ ), agree ( $X=2.30$ ), undecided ( $X=2.00$ ), disagree ( $X=2.26$ ) and strongly disagree ( $X=3.00$ ). The hypothesis tested with 0.05

significant level is accepted since the tested significant level is <0.05.

The second hypothesis, which states that **there will be an interacting influence between gender, job status and behavioural attitudes of Nigerian journalists**, was tested using One-Way Analysis of Variance. The result is presented in table 2 below:

**TABLE 2**

Descriptive table showing **interactive influence between gender, job status and behavioural attitude on work commitment of the journalists in NTA Benin and The Nigerian Observer Benin** is presented below:

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Interval Lower Bound	Confidence for Mean Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Male	28	2.00	.471	.089	1.82	2.18	1	3
Female	19	1.79	.535	.123	1.53	2.05	1	3
Total	47	1.91	.503	.073	1.77	2.06	1	3

ANOVA table showing **interactive influence between gender, job status and behavioural attitude on work commitment of the journalists** is below:

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.502	1	.502	2.023	.162
Within Groups	11.158	45	.248		
Total	11.660	46			

The result in table 2 above shows that the respondents within the two groups were found not to be significantly different in their attitude to work commitment  $F(1, 45)=2.023$ ;  $P>0.5$ . This means that male journalists ( $X=2.00$ ) are not more committed to work than their female counterparts ( $X=1.79$ ).

The third hypothesis, which states that **there will be an interactive influence between gender, loyalty and turnover intention of Nigerian journalists on their work commitment**, was tested using One-Way Analysis of Variance. The result is presented (table 3)

**TABLE 3**

Descriptive table showing **interactive influence between gender, loyalty and turnover intention on work commitment of the journalists** is presented below:

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Interval Lower Bound	Confidence for Mean Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Male	28	2.75	1.110	.210	2.32	3.18	1	5
Female	19	3.00	1.054	.242	2.49	3.51	2	5
Total	47	2.85	1.083	.158	2.53	3.17	1	5

ANOVA table showing **interactive influence between gender, loyalty and turnover intention on work commitment of the journalists** is presented below:

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.707	1	.707	.598	.443
Within Groups	53.250	45	1.183		
Total	53.957	46			

The result in table 3 above shows that the number of male and female journalists' loyalty and turnover intention did not significantly influence their work commitment  $F(1, 45)=.598$ ;  $P>0.5$ . This implies that the rate of loyalty and turnover intention among the male journalists ( $X=2.75$ ) is not greater than that of their female counterparts ( $X=3.00$ ).

their female counterparts. This result is opposite to Rosenberg's (1983) postulation that gender factor influences individual perception and response to their work milieu. This presupposes the fact that the theoretical positions on the extent at which men and women can behave or perform on a task is no longer a general rule.

**FINDINGS AND SUMMARY**

The study has established the fact that male journalists are not more committed to their job than

The result is not also in line with the assumptions of Elebute and Melody (2017:23) that "the time frame for women's career growth in media business is,

however, coincided with the childbearing years for most women”, and it is worthy of mention at this juncture that previous researches by notable scholars in this field of human endeavour have indicated that there are unique difficulties in managing creative business in the media and parenthood for both men and women.

The above claims are evidently different from our current finding that male journalists are not more committed than their female counterparts. There seems to be a similar level of zeal for work between the male and female journalists in the two media houses that were sampled: *NTA* and *The Nigerian Observer* in Benin, Edo State Nigeria, probably because they did not face some of the task barriers that have made male workers to be more committed than their female counterparts in most other business organizations in Nigeria.

It can be assumed that the overcoming of task barriers, observed among journalists that were studied by these researchers, could be as a result of acquired skills and innate abilities, which earn them similar treatment from the management of their organizations. Since the journalists have been able to display similar work attitude they have been able to earn similar incentives/rewards that of course foster high level of work commitment.

The study equally established the fact that long serving journalists are not more committed to their job more than new recruits. This finding has not been able to uphold the section C of the Likert Scale used by these researchers in which an item responded to by the respondents states that: *My age as a journalist will influence my work commitment*. The study also revealed that the gender and job status of journalists have no relationship with their work commitment. This result is in contrast to the second hypothesis in this study which states that: *Gender, job status and behavioural attitudes will have a strong influence on the journalists work commitment*. Also the study revealed that there is no interactive influence between gender and journalists’ attitudes towards work commitment. This is also in contrast to the third hypothesis, which states that: *There will be an interactive influence between gender, loyalty and turnover intention of Nigerian journalists on work commitment*. The researchers have also discovered that there is no interactive influence between gender, loyalty and turn-over intention of Nigerian journalists working in the two media organizations that were studied.

It is apposite to state that this study is not based on any ideological context as it was generated to shed more light on the capabilities of both sexes to work at equal pace as journalists. The journalism profession has evolved over myriads of centuries from the

traditional form of gathering information to reach limited number of people to a more flexible method of gathering and disseminating news to a large, heterogeneous and anonymous audience simultaneously. This is an effort that deserves praise and approval in this study. The summation of our discovery in this present study is that journalism practice in Nigeria is not gender specific as practicing journalists are either active male gender or female gender, and most of the *sepen* practitioners have had the ample opportunity and freedom to work from their comfort zone; hence *anapropos* level of work commitment is required

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusion is that a number of personal characteristics recognized as significant in the theoretical and empirical literature of organizational behaviour that have influenced work commitment are not applicable to the work situation of Nigerian journalists investigated under this present study. More so, the greater influence of workers’ demographic characteristics on work commitment as is in other business organizations are not found to be serious indicators of work commitment among the journalists investigated in the two media houses. The study also concludes that the uniqueness of work commitment of journalists in these two media houses is not a function of their demographic attributes or their gender.

It is recommended that media house owners in Nigeria should make it duty bound to fully maximize the journalists’ work commitment through training and re-training locally and internationally. This will have a significant implication for the management in designing job, promoting staff and increasing the motivational elements that can discern high level of work commitment among journalists in Nigeria.

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