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**UNION COMMITMENT AND ACADEMIC STAFF PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study investigated the relationship between union commitment and academic staff performance in Nigerian universities. The study adopted survey design. The population of the study was 1306 academic staff of public higher institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria with 297 determined sample size. Cluster sampling method was used because of the unavailability of comprehensive academic staff list. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Partial Correlation were the statistical tools used in testing the nine hypotheses. The findings revealed that there exist relationship between union commitment and academic staff performance and that with favourable industrial relation climate, union commitment will positively aid the academic staff performance in Nigerian public higher institutions. It was, therefore, recommended that management should help promote cordial/conducive industrial relation climate with routine meetings and/or discussion forum between the trade union and the management so as to improve performance of academic staff of higher institutions of learning

**KEYWORDS:** Industrial Relations Climate; Trade Union, Performance, Loyalty, Ideology, Militancy, Power.

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**INTRODUCTION**

In every organisation, the vital asset is the employees. Dealing with all employees individually might be somehow cumbersome and tedious. For instance, if the management intends to make decisions that will affect the entire workers in the organisation; they may have to meet required representatives of employees. The coming together of staff to press for the collective yearnings of all the employees is known as trade/labour union. Labour union, in most cases act as the pressure group as representatives of employees and sometimes are the communication link between the labour and their employer. Again, labour union can be described as group of individuals representing workers in organisations; in so doing assist in the rights protection of the employees, mostly, the agitation for compensation and workers welfare. Silverman (2004:1) opined that labour union is “an organisation of workers dedicated to protecting employees’ interests plus improving wages and working conditions”. Silverman (2004:1) asserted again that “many classes of workers belong to unions: mechanic, teachers, factory workers, actors, airline pilots, janitors, doctors, writers, etc; they form a bargaining units – a group who will be represented by a union to negotiate with their employer – a union must voluntarily be recognised by their employer.

Nigeria educational sector had experience incessant and avoidable disruption of academic calendars for the past years. This invariably made the populace to start doubting how effective as well as efficacy of the employees in this particular sector. But the issue here is that union commitment can also be referred to as collectivism just like Frege (1998:82) opined that “the concepts of union commitment and collectivism are interchangeably used”. The coming together of employees can be traced far back to the days of the colonial rules in Nigeria to be able to speak with ‘one voice’ against any perceived ill-treatment from their employers. However, Ahiauzu (1999:136) while talking about the genesis and nature of labour union movement in Africa quoted Yesufu (1962) that “craft organisation existed in Africa long before the colonial era and the advent of industrialisation on the continent”.

In Fatunde (2008:1), it was reported that between 1993 and 2008, universities in Nigeria were closed for nearly 36 months owing to various strikes called by only one union in tertiary institutions – Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). He went further that “this was against the interests of tertiary education in Nigeria”. The Minister of Education at that time, Dr. Igwe Aja-Nwachukwu said during an emergency meeting with the vice chancellors of Nigeria’s federal universities that “ASUU’s plan to go on strike is needless and selfish”. Based on the fact that they are presumed not to be considering their primary task over and above other things whenever they are aggrieved. With such statement from Dr. Aja-Nwachukwu and unpredictable institutions academic

environment and the intense business competitive strategy used by private higher institutions of learning, public higher institutions must try to improve on their performance to be in tandem with the great global academic demands else, the educational degeneration will increase in an alarming rate.

Performance, as quoted in Halim & Sefer (2013:429); Salem Al-Oun (2012); Sinclair and Zairi, (1995) can be “quantity and quality explanation of contribution by person/group/organisation towards intended target towards work done”. Tinofirei (2011:15) gave a summarised definition of employee performance as “the successful completion of tasks by a selected individual or individuals, pre-defined acceptable standards while efficiently and effectively utilising available resources within a changing environment”. But Lawler, (1971) as quoted in Ferris & Nethercott (2015:36) while talking about dimensions of employee performance stated that “largely a function of such personalistic characteristics as the motivational level of employee, his job-related skills, and his commitment to the employing organisation”. In Lawler, (1971) as quoted in Ferris & Nethercott (2015:36) description, he emphasised commitment to the employer and not to the union. It must, therefore, be noted that a servant can only serve one master. That is, everything been equal, employee can only perform accordingly if loyal to the employing organisation.

### **Problem Statement**

Organisational commitment is lacking in many Nigeria institutions due to unionisation. Organisational commitment is the employee’s state of being committed to contribute to attainment of organisational goals; however, with the level of union collectivism/commitment among Academic staff of Nigerian public higher institutions, one is really in doubt in knowing if actually trade union loyalty, ideology, militancy and union coercive use of power in anyway improve members’ performance. Nowadays, dual commitment is a common slogan which is the commitment to both the employer/organisation. The issue is how easy is it for employee to be committed to the two social entities and/or structure? The issue of employee performance in terms of how efficient and effective on the job because of being committed to both the employer as well as the trade union will be a serious issue to consider.

In Martin (1981), using Walker and Lawler’s (1979) classification scheme, it was exposed that union members that are protective unions in nature can have dual allegiance but for the aggressive unions, they can only make use of unilateral allegiance. This is against the backdrop of the assertion of Angle and Perry (1986:44) that “the extent of dual commitment expressed by rank-and-file members is related to the ambient relationship between trade union and management within their organisations”. In the words of Angle and Perry (1986:44) “simultaneous commitment to two social systems is problematic to the extent that those systems are not co-operative and many force members/employees to make either-or choices”. The trend among many Nigerian parents/guardians is that their wards/children must attend private higher institutions or better still, travel abroad and any further probe into why such decision, most of their complains are directed towards the unionisation of the academic employee in higher institutions.

### **Objectives of Study**

The main objective of the study is to establish the relationship between trade union commitment and academic employees’ performance in Nigerian public higher institutions of learning. But, the study specific objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the relationship between trade union loyalty and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
2. To examine the relationship between trade union loyalty and task performance of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
3. To determine the relationship between trade union ideology and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
4. To evaluate the relationship between trade union ideology and task performance of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
5. To find out the relationship between of trade union militancy and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
6. To examine the relationship between trade union militancy and task performance of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
7. To find out the relationship between trade union power and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.

8. To ascertain the relationship between trade union power and task performance of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
9. To ascertain the moderating impact of industrial relation climate on union commitment and employee performance among academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.

### Research Questions

The study was guided with the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between trade union loyalty and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions?
2. What is the relationship between trade union loyalty and task performance of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions?
3. What is the relationship between trade union ideology and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions?
4. What is the relationship between trade union ideology and task performance of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions?
5. What is the relationship between trade union militancy and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions?
6. What is the relationship between trade union militancy and task performance of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions?
7. What is the relationship between trade union powers and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions?
8. What is the relationship between trade union powers and task performance of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions?
9. What is the moderating impact of industrial relation climate on union commitment and employee performance among academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions?

### Research Hypotheses

These hypotheses were used in drawing inference and conclusion on this study:

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no relationship between trade union loyalty and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no relationship between trade union loyalty and task performance of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
- H<sub>03</sub>: There is no relationship between union militancy and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
- H<sub>04</sub>: There is no relationship between trade union militancy and task performance of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
- H<sub>05</sub>: There is no relationship between trade union ideology and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
- H<sub>06</sub>: There is no relationship between trade union ideology and task performance of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
- H<sub>07</sub>: There is no relationship between trade union powers and motivation of academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
- H<sub>08</sub>: There is no relationship between trade union powers and task performance academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.
- H<sub>09</sub>: There is no moderating impact of industrial relation climate on union commitment and employee performance among academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.

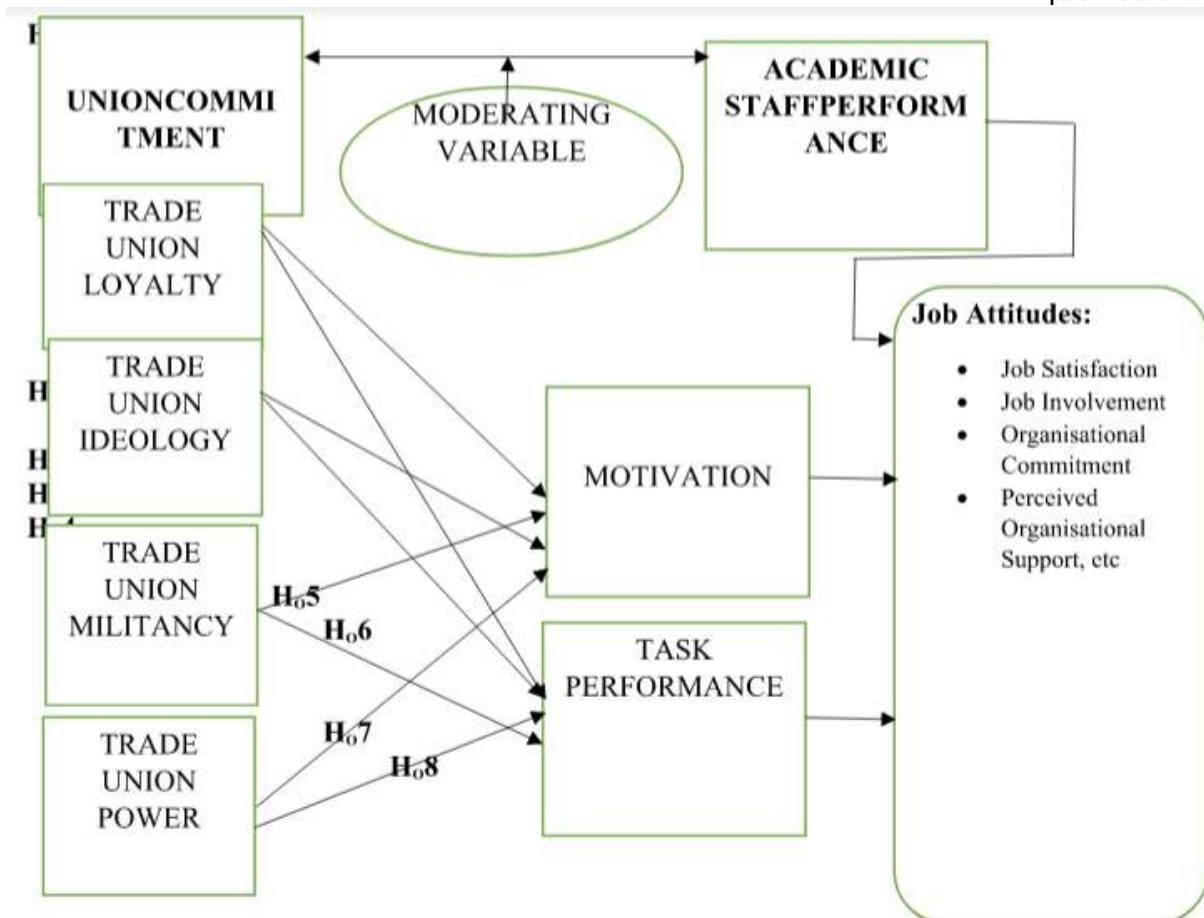


Fig. 1: Conceptual/Operational Framework showing the consequences of the Relationship between Union Commitment and Employee Performance

**Source:** **Dimensions** - Turamaraja, Omar, Halim & Hafidz (2015); MacKenzie, Cook, Forde & Valizade (2015); Angle & Perry (1986)  
**Measures** - Moore & Benbasat (1991)  
**Outcomes** - Robbins & Judge (2005)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Union Commitment and Employee Performance

“Union have countervailing influences on firms” (Bryson, Forth & Laroche, 2008:2). As cited in Bryson, Forth & Laroche (2008:2) “unions will and can reduce firm profitability through successful above-market wages bargaining but on the other hand, the same unions can enhance firm performance through voice efforts which can raise labour productivity and improve managerial decision making (Freeman & Medoff, 1984), or by acting as an agent for the employer in monitoring workers, or in assisting with organisational change (Vroman, 1990)”. The above assertions indicated that unionism in the organisation have double-facet effects on the organisation as well as the employee. Here, we are concern with those effects on employees’ performance though we may infer from the organisation’s performance because without employee performance there would be virtually nothing to talk about in terms of organisational performance. Being a union member, such employee will enjoy from any wages and other condition of service negotiations and at the same time, the union can use voice effects to ensure effective and efficient performance of duties as at when due.

In Kashefi et al (2013:503) it was submitted that “researches have indicated that commitment has a positive relationship with some outcomes as job satisfaction presence, social organisational behaviour and job performance (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1997) and a negative relationship with tendency to quit job”.

In Abolade (2012:21) it was opined that “organisational efficiency is determined by various factors but the main determinant of organisational efficiency is the human resources. The job performance of the personnel determines the efficiency of the organisation. Efficiency itself is the capacity of human resource to turn out output with minimal wastage for the overall performance of the organisation”. Rose & Wolley (1992) in Abolade (2012:21) “opined that high levels of unionisation encourage productivity”. Rose (2001) again in Abolade (2012:21) “explains that discouraging union involvement and representation is inappropriate as this would not hinder organisation’s positive performance...”. Though, Abolade (2012:27) concluded in the same study “that unionisation does not determine organisation efficiency, that non-unionised workers in any establishment could aid organisation efficiency”. By implication Abolade (2012) submission was indicating that union commitment by employees cannot aid employee performances and subsequently, the organisation performance/efficiency unlike employees that are not committed to the union and the non-unionised.

### ***Trade Union Loyalty and Motivation***

There are three main components of motivation as espoused by Kettley (1995) and they are “(1) the satisfaction that is obtained from what you do (the job or group itself); (2) enjoying the people you are working (or having association) with (the work group); (3) trusting the people you work for (and/or loyal to).

Collins (2013:46) concluded that labour union loyalty “should not be as destructive instead, it should be seen as a boost to the worker with intentions of motivating him, to putting the best towards, enhancing organisational productivity ...”. Collins (2013:46) continued with the notion that “labour unionism (and subsequent, trade union loyalty) has also been ascertained as an avenue through which workers general welfare and condition of service is improved” and consequently, employee morale boosted.

It must be noted that motivation is of two elements – intrinsic and extrinsic. Ryan & Deci (2000) developed the popular theory of motivation and suggests two separate potential motivators: Intrinsic and extrinsic. This was confirmed in Makki & Abid (2007) when they opined that “motivation can be divided into two different concepts known as intrinsic (internal) motivation and extrinsic (external) motivation”.

According to Muogbo (2013) who quoted McCormick & Tofflin (2007) said that “motivation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic”. Muogbo (2013) went further to explain that intrinsic motivation stems from motivations that are inherent in the job itself and which the individual enjoy as a result of successfully completing the task or attaining his goals”. This stem from creative thinking on how best to carry out a task better and easier. Intrinsic, therefore, is within “an individual employee which indicates that such employee loyalty to the trade union must have added or subtracted affection and satisfaction before an employee can be motivated intrinsically” according to Muogbo (2013). This goes to show that such trade union loyalty must not jeopardise the employee existence or the ‘psychological motivation elements’ within the organisation in anyway.

Again, the issue of trade union loyalty involve things or attributes that cannot be seen as well. In other words, Lepper (1973) quoted in Makki & Abid (2017) said “intrinsic motivation represents a motivation to indulge in an activity purely for the reason of the activity itself”. Loyalty to trade union is an activity purely for the reason of the activity as well – being loyal to the trade union just like intrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, Muogbo (2013) quoting McCormick & Tiffilin (2007) said that “things like pay, condition of work, contract of service security and so on that are external to job task form extrinsic motivation”. According to Ajila (1997) cited in Muogbo (2013) ‘an intrinsically motivated employee will be committed to his work to the extent to which the job inherently contain task that are rewarding to such employee while those that are extrinsically motivated will only be committed to the extent that the employee can gain or receive external rewards for the job”. Also, Pintrich & Schinnk (1996) as quoted in Makki & Abid (2017) opined that “extrinsic motivation reveals a reason to participate in an action as a means to an end rather than an end itself”.

### ***Trade Union Loyalty and Task Performance***

Sonnentag & ‘Frese, 2002:7 opined that “task performance refers to an individual’s proficiency with which he or she perform activities which contribute to the organisation’s technical core”. With adequate loyalty to trade union and understanding that the trade union is a “partner in progress that complement management’s efforts towards organisational productivity and efficiency” (Collins, 2013:45), employee will be able to use individual’s proficiency to contribute to the organisation’s ‘technical core’.

### ***Trade Union Ideology and Motivation***

Rose, Kumar & Ramasamy (2010) in & Kaur (2012:3) submitted that “the analysis of the survey shown that non-union employees did not *view* their unions favourably and perhaps, it occur to employees that the unions protection of the issues relating to workplace and employeemay not be possible”. What this assertion indicates was that with wrong ideology, workers morale may be affected be it a unionised or non-unionised members.

Based on earlier discussion on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and loyalty, trade union ideology is perceived and that will affect the internal motivation before (if at all) affecting the external motivation. Union ideology will create impetus for the internal motivation assuming union ideology is deem satisfactory to the employee and such may assuming such is maintained at a normal level affect the external motivation and vice versa (Muogbo, 2013; Makki & Abid, 2017).

### ***Trade Union Ideology and Task Performance***

Syverson (2011) in Ratna & Kaur (2012:4) “examined the determinants of productivity and pointed out that labour and trade unions are also major factors influencing productivity in an organisation”. Without proper ideology, no trade union can ever influence employee performance at any level. So for any trade union to have influenced productivity which is due to collective effort of employees’ task performance. Again, Schnabel (1991) in Ratna & Kaur (2012:4) also submitted that “trade unions influence on productivity was the net effect of conflicting forces which could increase or decrease productivity”.

### ***Trade Union Militancy and Motivation***

If truly trade union militancy is what MacKenzie, Cook, Forde & Valizade (2015) said it is, then trade union militancy can only boost the morale of employees where the employer is typically a pure capitalist. Again, the trade union militancy can be like a double facet thing such that it is not only meant for the management alone but also the erring members of the trade union may be faced with the militancy. In this sense, according to Dauda (2010) as cited in Abolade (2012:21) the “union may be recognised and also be used by management to stimulate creativity and innovation among its members” and as such the morale of the workforce may be affected either positively or negatively.

Shaikan (2004) also submitted in the same direction of Dauda (2010) as quoted in Abolade (2012:21) “that unions are associated with higher productivity, lower employee turnover, improved workplace communication and a better trained workforce”. All these are the necessary tools to boost the workers morale through the use of the trade union militancy on the employer and members of the trade union.

Salary is said to be one of the extrinsic motivational tools and trade union basically is to negotiate for a better deals like welfare package including salary and other emoluments (Abolade, 2012; MacKenzie, Cook, Forde & Valizade, 2015). The increasing costs will make the trade union to be adamant on issue between them and their employers and as such, increase the level of an average employee’s level of extrinsic motivation compared to intrinsic motivation as presently being observed between ASUU and the Federal Government of Nigeria.

### ***Trade union Militancy and Task Performance***

If union commitment is synonymous with collectivism and conversely, “a weak trade union without any reasonable instrumentality is an evidence of individualism” (Frege, 1998:82). Then, as earlier said that the trade union militancy can be used for the employees as well. This goes to show that collectivism in almost everything within the organisation can easily be achieved judging from the submission of Shaiken (2004) and Dauda (2010) as revealed in Abolade (2012:21).

Again, it must be noted that task performance was said to be individual proficiency used in carrying out duties/task/responsibility assigned to him/her as a contribution to the ‘technical core’ of the organisation (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). Achieving task performance should be a little easier where trade union can achieve collectivism through the use of trade union militancy. Also, considering the submission of Ratna & Kaur (2012:2) while discussing the importance of trade unions, part of the importance highlighted by Ratna & Kaur (2012:2) were “inculcating discipline among the workforce and helping in social adjustment” through the use of trade union militancy in order to achieve task performance by employees.

### ***Trade Union Power and Motivation***

Workers morale (motivation) should be the capacity of the workforce to have and maintain certain trust and/or belief in certain thing. The question now is, how are those powers residing in trade union used to boost those trust and/or belief in the group? The common saying is that “a sound mind can only exist in a sound body”.

In Abolade (2012:20), Ash & Seago (2004) “find out that heart attack mortality among patients in hospitals with unionised registered nurses are 5% to 9% lower than in non-unionised hospitals”. It is only when an employee is motivated that he/she may have a sound health and avoid or not falling sick to the point of heart attack which is said to be silent killer on its own. Mostly, workers morale has much impact on the state of their health and mostly, heart related diseases. But knowing the strength and power residing in their trade union most time, they feel more relax.

Trade union power affect both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation simultaneously. DeCharms (1968) as quoted in Makki & Abid (2017) said that “realising the power of the trade union, the employees are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated while Amabile (1976), Grolnicj& Ryan (1987) asserted that “employees perform at relatively high levels” if motivated intrinsically.

### ***Trade Union Power and Task Performance***

“The presence of labour unions had statistically and economically significant positive effects on firm productivity. Union’s effects on wages were also positive” (Morikawa (2010) in Ratna & Kaur (2012:3). Mefford (1986) also in Ratna & Kaur (2013:3) said “a net positive effect on productivity remained even when these channels of union influence were controlled”.

Talking about trade union power and the resultant effect on the task performance of employees, ASUU was described as “the people tribune, a critical watchdog for the society striving to contain the excess of the ruling class”. (Jega, 1994:6 in Nasir, 2015:20). Definitely, this was an accolade for union members – ASUU then and this singular comment hinged on union power is enough to spur members’ readiness to accomplish any task given to them at that point in time.

### ***Relationship between Union Commitment, Employee Performance and Industrial Relation Climate***

Union commitment can have either a positive or negative effect on the employee performance. Considering all the dimensions of union commitment considered in this study – trade union loyalty, trade union militancy, trade union ideology and trade union power; they can all be use to improve on the employee performance positively depending on the kind of industrial relation climate. It must be emphasised that industrial relation climate in the context of this study relates strictly to the management-union relationship within the organisation. It is either the relationship is of ‘cat and rat’ relationship which will make the two parties to be suspecting themselves and hamper reasonable discussion and easy resolution of conflict between the two parties or it is of mutual where the two parties work hand-in-hand for the progress of the organisation and better welfare packages for the employees.

Definitely, negative industrial relationship will hamper the productivity and performance of the employees. But where the relationship is mutual and cordial; that is, a situation where the two parties sees each other as ‘one happy family’; there will be no hiding place for any indolent employee within the organisation. In such situation, management of the entire resources will be made easier with adequate communication between the trade union and management on one side and between employees and management on the other side.

Angle & Perry (1986:34) argued that “there is substantial evidence that various union-management interfaces differ systematically with respect to how compatible or incompatible the perceived orientations of the two parties are”. The implication of this assertion is that the union-management relationship or rather the industrial relation climate depends largely on the orientations of the union represented by the union executives and the employer represented by the management of the organisation. Whatsoever is the orientation of the organisation management dictate their perception about the essence of the trade union. For instance, the management might have the orientation of classical theorists that felt conflict is not good and should not be seen in an organisation, so do not give room for it at all. In the same vein, whatsoever is the orientation of trade union executive about the organisation management; whether as a capitalist to the core or those that see workers as tools or management that consider human resource as an essential resource that must be integrated into the system and

care about their welfare and so on. To a very large extent, the orientation and perception of the two parties about one another determine the kind of industrial relation climate that will exist within the organisation.

Again, to a very large extent, the industrial relation climate will have much influence on how employees are committed to their in-house trade union as well as the management. For instance, if the relationship is mutual and conflicts are deliberated on, resolution made and agreement adhered to accordingly by both parties. The employees will not have point doubting any of the two parties and the employees can easily hold allegiance to the two parties – union and organisation. To buttress this let us see the assertion of Shaver (1975) as quoted in Angle & Perry (1986:35) that “as labour and management interact in a given setting over time, each develops a somewhat stable frame of reference regarding the orientations of the other party; in effect, this frame of reference describes where the fundamental relationship lies along a co-operation-conflict continuum. Within such frames of reference the parties engage in sense making behaviours interpreting the meaning of otherwise ambiguous events and making attributions regarding the intentions, motivations and beliefs that underlie the other party’s actions”. Again, Rosen (1954) as quoted in the same Angle & Perry (1986:35) said “that dual allegiance is most likely under circumstances in which no intense role conflict is activated”. Though Dean (1954:536) as related in Angle & Perry (1986:36) disagree somehow with Rosen (1954) that dual loyalty can still happen/occur where industrial relation climate is antagonistic.

But not minding the state of industrial relation climate on the double commitment of the employee, the concern now is whether with hostile or mutual industrial relation climate, there will be room for improvement of the employee performance or not.

Nevertheless, the assumption is that if the industrial relation climate is hostile, the employee will either be loyal to the trade union or the management depending on the personality of the employee and they are bound not to enjoy the environment. This will lead to job dissatisfaction and low performance of employee; not forgetting that job satisfaction leads to better performance. In the same vein, if the industrial relation climate is friendly and mutual such that conflict are resolved amicably and on time, the employee might be loyal and committed to the two parties; have a boost of morale (motivation), complete task duly, timely and accurately which in turn amount to employee performance being maximised.

But one should note that it takes two to tangle and not to forget that the two parties need mutual freedom, mutual survival and independence, that is, the trade union and management according to Whyte (1949:13) as quoted in Angle & Berry (1986:46) that “two social systems made up of highly interdependent parts ... one is mutually dependent upon the other”.

#### ***Consequences of Industrial Relations Climate on Union Commitment and Employee Performance***

This scenario can be likened to the relationship climate existing in a household of a married couple with children. Whatever relationship climate between the couple will go a long way to reflect on the attitudes, actions and reactions of the children to things around them. Back to the organisation setting, the industrial relation climate existing between the trade union and the organisation management will affect the attitudes, actions and reactions of the employee while at work and even, outside the work.

Therefore, the industrial relation climate will be the determining factor between the union commitment and employee performance. The essential outcome of whether the relationship is cordial or hostile will be *job attitudes* from employee that can boost or reduce the employee union commitment and employee performance. Job attitudes deals with the positive and/or negative feeling about the environment of the work place (Robins & Judge, 2013). “Most of the research in Organisational Behaviour has looked at three attitudes: job satisfaction, job involvement and, organisational commitment” (Robins & Judge, 2013:108).

*Job Satisfaction* – Locke (1976:139) as quoted in Hammer & Avgar (2005:245) defined job satisfaction “as a pleasurable or emotional state” of an employee on the job. The satisfaction could be physically or psychologically based on the assessment of one’s job. Robins & Judge (2013:109) “when people speak of employee attitudes, they usually mean job satisfaction, which describes a positive feeling about a job, resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics.

The significance of this is that the industrial relation climate dictate the level of commitment to trade union and employee performance, such that if it is perceived to be conducive, the employee will have a positive feeling



about his/her job and the output (performance) may be high and vice versa. Happy and joyous employees will most likely be a greater achiever of task.

*Job Involvement* – “The degree to which a person identifies with a job, actively participates in it, and considers performance important to self-worth” (Robins & Judge, 2013:110). It is said to be more of psychological attachment to one’s job and feeling or considering performance rate as a self-worth (p.109). This is more of involving the employee in decision making on issues relating to their job and in this instance, the trade union can play a key role. In conclusion, it was said that employees with “high levels of job involvement and ... are positively related to organisational citizenship and job performance” (p.109).

*Organisational Commitment* – This is very similar to union commitment; it is commitment to a social body, where the former is commitment to organisation and the latter is commitment to union. Organisational commitment had been described by many scholars in different form. Kashefi et al (2013:502) said that “organisational commitment is defined as individual’s positive or negative attitudes towards the whole organisation in which they are working”. Robins & Judges (2013:109-110) said that “in organisational commitment, an employee identifies with a particular organisation and its goals and wishes to remain a member”. There is always the “strong tendency to remain in an organisation, having tendency towards ample efforts for organisation and accepting organisation’s objectives and values” Kashefi, et al, (2013:502).

The above description is obtainable depending on the industrial relation climate existing within an organisation between the trade union and management vis-à-vis the union commitment and employee performance. Meyer, Allen & Smith (1997) as cited in Kashefi et al (2013:503) concluded that the resultant effect of organisational commitment is “job satisfaction, social organisational behaviour and job performance”.

## METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was adopted. The rationale for adopting the research design was to determine, expose and show how union commitment and academic staff performance in Nigerian public higher institutions relates.

The academic staff of public higher institutions in Nigeria formed the research population but for certain constrains, it was restricted to Rivers State and even, within Rivers State it was those public higher institutions within Port Harcourt metropolis that was examined. Therefore, the public higher institutions studied were Rivers State Government owned universities- Ignatius Ajuru University of Education with 447 academic staff, Rivers State University with 578 academic staff and a Rivers State owned Polytechnic- Port Harcourt Polytechnic with 287 academic staff. Institutions chosen were necessitated due to convenience, proximity, location accessibility and willingness by the institutions to participate in the study.

**Table 1: Total Population of Academic Staff in Public Institutions in Port Harcourt**

S/NO	DESCRIPTION	PUBLIC OWNERSHIP	ACADEMIC STAFF POPULATION
1.	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education	State	442
2.	Rivers State University, Port Harcourt	State	578
3.	Port Harcourt Polytechnic, Port Harcourt	State	287
	<b>Total</b>		<b>1307</b>

**Source: Survey Data via Institutions Registry (2017)**

Cluster sampling method was used due to unavailability of practical sampling frame for individual elements of the study population. Cluster sampling basically involves groupings or aggregations of the units sampled. This was done considering the academic faculty in each institutions studied. In each faculty, highest of five and minimum of two academic departments formed part of the cluster sample. To reduce sampling error, particularly, on generalisation, a relative large size of sample was considered. Therefore, the Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample size determination table was used.

Table I, revealed total population of 1307 academic staff from the three public higher institutions were considered which will gave 297 as the sample size. Percentage of each institution population against 1307 was done to have 33.82% for Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, 44.22% for Rivers State University and 21.96% for Port Harcourt polytechnic, which now determined the number of questionnaire administered in each institutions. It then mean, 100 copies of questionnaire were administered in Ignatius Ajuru University of

Education, 131 administered in Rivers State University and 66 administered in Port Harcourt Polytechnic to equate 297 questionnaires administered. About 53 copies were added to cater for retrieval problem.

*Table 2: Sample Size of Respondents determination*

S/NO	NAME OF INSTITUTIONS	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION	
1.	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education	442	33.82%	100
2.	Rivers State University, Port Harcourt	578	44.22%	131
3.	Port Harcourt Polytechnic, Port Harcourt	287	21.96%	66
<i>Total</i>		<b>1306</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>297</b>

*Source: Survey Data (2017)*

Primary and secondary sources were the data sources. Research instrument was validated using face and content validity which can be described as the application of face value considering past experience/knowledge by the researcher, the supervisor and other related experts. While content validity ensure actual description of the supposed content. Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS was used to measure the instrument reliability. Also, considering the rule of thumb of Cronbach's Alpha, only the study items with 0.7 alpha value and above make up the items.

### Methods of Data Analysis

Statistical technique used in analysing the generated data with appropriate statistical tools.

**Inferential Analysis:** After testing of hypotheses, certain facts were inferred from the results of the hypotheses. Therefore, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis and Partial Correlation were adopted to test the study hypotheses.

## RESULT

This is testing of hypotheses from which certain decisions were inferred:

### Hypotheses Testing

#### Hypothesis One (Ho1) Testing

**Ho1:** There is no relationship between trade union loyalty and motivation of academic staff in public higher institutions of learning in Rivers State.

*Table 3 Relationship between Trade Union loyalty and Motivation*

	Trade Union loyalty	Motivation
Trade Union loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.509**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	297
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.509**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	297

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Coefficient of Correlation ( $r^2$ ) = 0.26

*Source: SPSS Output, (2017)*

Trade Union loyalty and Motivation: The result of the data analysis shows low relationship. The  $r = 0.509$  and  $r^2 = 0.26$ , showing a positive correlation between the variables. The findings reveal a low relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Hypothesis Two (H<sub>02</sub>) Testing**

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no relationship between trade union loyalty and task performance of academic staff in public higher institutions of learning in Rivers State.

**Table 4 Relationship between Trade Union Loyalty and Task Performance**

		Trade Union Loyalty	Task Performance
Trade Union Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	1	.635**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	297	297
Task Performance	Pearson Correlation	.635**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	297	297

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Coefficient of Correlation ( $r^2$ ) = 0.40

Source: SPSS Output, (2017)

Trade Union Loyalty and task performance: The result of the data analysis shows medium relationship. The  $r = 0.635$  and  $r^2 = 0.40$ , showing a medium positive correlation between the variables. The findings reveal a medium relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Hypothesis Three (H<sub>03</sub>) Testing**

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no relationship between trade union militancy and motivation of academic staff in public higher institutions of learning in Rivers State.

**Table 5 Relationship between Trade Union Ideology and Motivation**

		Trade Union Ideology	Motivation
Trade Union Ideology	Pearson Correlation	1	.678**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	N	297	297
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.678**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	297	297

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Coefficient of Correlation ( $r^2$ ) = 0.46

Source: SPSS Output, (2017)

Trade Union Ideology and Motivation: The result of the data analysis shows medium relationship. The  $r = 0.678$  and  $r^2 = 0.46$ , showing a positive medium correlation between the variables. The findings reveal a medium relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Hypothesis Four (Ho4) Testing**

**Ho4:** There is no relationship between trade union militancy and task performance of academic staff in public higher institutions of learning in Rivers State.

**Table 6 Relationship between Trade Union Ideology and Task Performance**

		Trade Union Ideology	Task Performance
Trade Union Ideology	Pearson Correlation	1	.336**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	297	297
Task Performance	Pearson Correlation	.336**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	297	297

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Coefficient of Correlation ( $r^2$ ) = 0.11

Source: SPSS Output, (2017)

Trade Union Ideology and task performance: The result of the data analysis shows low relationship. The  $r = 0.336$  and  $r^2 = 0.11$ , showing a positive low correlation between the variables. The findings reveal low relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Hypothesis Five (Ho5) Testing**

**Ho5:** There is no relationship between trade union ideology and motivation of academic staff in public higher institutions of learning in Rivers State.

**Table 7 Relationship between Trade Union Militancy and Motivation**

		Trade Union Militancy	Motivation
Trade Union Militancy	Pearson Correlation	1	.639**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	297	297
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.639**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	297	297

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Coefficient of Correlation ( $r^2$ ) = 0.41

Source: SPSS Output, (2017)

Trade Union Militancy and Motivation: The result of the data analysis shows medium relationship. The  $r = 0.639$  and  $r^2 = 0.41$ , showing a positive medium correlation between the variables. The findings reveal medium relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Hypothesis Six (H<sub>o6</sub>) Testing**

**H<sub>o6</sub>:** There is no relationship between trade union ideology and task performance of academic staff in public higher institutions of learning in Rivers State.

**Table 8 Relationship between Trade Union Militancy and Task Performance**

		Trade Union Militancy	Task Performance
Trade Union Militancy	Pearson Correlation	1	.262**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	297	297
Task Performance	Pearson Correlation	.262**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	297	297

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Coefficient of Correlation ( $r^2$ ) = 0.07

Source: SPSS Output, (2017)

Trade Union Militancy and task performance: The result of the data analysis shows low relationship. The  $r = 0.262$  and  $r^2 = 0.07$ , showing a positive low correlation between the variables. The findings reveal a low relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Hypothesis Seven (H<sub>o7</sub>) Testing**

**H<sub>o7</sub>:** There is no relationship between trade union powers and motivation of academic staff in public higher institutions of learning in Rivers State.

**Table 9 Relationship between Trade Union power and Motivation**

		Trade Union Loyalty	Motivation
Trade Union Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	1	.371**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	297	297
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.371**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	297	297

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Coefficient of Correlation ( $r^2$ ) = 0.14

Source: SPSS Output, (2017)

Trade Union power and Motivation: The result of the data analysis shows low relationship. The  $r = 0.371$  and  $r^2 = 0.14$ , showing a positive low correlation between the variables. The findings reveal a low relationship between the variables. Hence, the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

**Hypothesis Eight (H<sub>08</sub>) Testing**

**H<sub>08</sub>:** There is no relationship between trade union powers and task performance of academic staff in public higher institutions of learning in Rivers State.

*Table 10 Relationship between Trade Union Power and Task Performance*

		Trade Union Power	Task Performance
Trade Union Power	Pearson Correlation	1	.046
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	297	297
Task Performance	Pearson Correlation	.046	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	297	297

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)  
Coefficient of Correlation (r<sup>2</sup>) = 0.002

Source: SPSS Output, (2017)

Trade Union Power and task performance: The result of the data analysis shows no correlation. The r = 0.046 and r<sup>2</sup> = 0.002, showing no correlation between the variables. The findings show no relationship between the variables. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is hereby rejected and null hypothesis accepted.

**Multivariate Data Analyses Using Partial Correlation**

The multivariate analysis seeks to examine the moderating role of industrial relations climate on the relationship between union commitment and academic staff performance.

**Hypothesis Nine (H<sub>09</sub>) Testing**

**H<sub>09</sub>:** There is no moderating impact of industrial relation climate on union commitment and employee performance among academic staff in Rivers State public higher institutions.

*Table 11: Test for Hypothesis Nine (9)*

Control Variables			Union Commitment	Academic staff performance	Industrial relations climate
	Union Commitment	Correlation	1.000	.663	.890
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		Df	0	295	295
-none <sup>a</sup>	Academic staff performance	Correlation	.663	1.000	.908
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		Df	295	0	295
	Industrial relations climate	Correlation	.890	.908	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		Df	295	295	0
Industrial relations climate	Union Commitment	Correlation	1.000	.858	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		Df	0	294	
	Academic staff performance	Correlation	.858	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	
		Df	294	0	

a. Cells contain zero-order (Partial correlations)

SPSS output, Version 20 – Survey Data, 2017

Partial correlation output in Table 11 indicates that there is high partial correlation between union commitment and academic staff performance while controlling for industrial relations climate which is statistically significant ( $r(294) = .858$ ,  $n = 297$ ,  $p = .000$ ); the zero-order correlation examined the effect of industrial relations climate on the relationship between union commitment and academic staff performance, on the other hand, when industrial relations' climate was not controlled, the result reported statistically significant strong positive correlation between the variables ( $r(295) = .663$ ,  $n = 297$ ,  $p = .000$ ) implying that industrial relations climate significantly moderates the relationship between the variables; thus we reject the null hypothesis (**H<sub>09</sub>**) to state that industrial relations climate significantly moderates the relationship between union commitment and academic staff performance within public higher institutions in Rivers State (**H<sub>19</sub>**).

## DISCUSSION OF FINDING

This section focus on the discussion of hypotheses findings, that is, the outcome of the data analysed and presented in tables on the correlation of union commitment with academic staff performance and likewise, the level of significant of the moderating effect of Industrial Relation Climate on the relationship between the two variables.

### *Trade Union Loyalty and Motivation of Academic Staff*

The analysis of the variables shows low relationship in the sense that  $r = 0.509$ . From the analysis,  $r^2 = 25\%$ , which indicates that for an element of trade union loyalty, there is 25 percent increase in the level of motivation of academic staff in the public higher institutions. This implies low relationship between union loyalty and motivation of academic staff but it must be noted that this level of motivation is not too encouraging considering the value of time, financial and other resources being invested in the trade union activities by many of the academic staff. This means that academic staff motivation increases when there is trade union loyalty. This finding is in agreement with that of Collins (2013) which stated that labour unionism and subsequent, trade union loyalty, has been ascertained as an avenue through which workers general welfare and condition of service is improved and consequently, employee morale boosted.

### *Trade Union Loyalty and Task Performance of Academic Staff*

The result of this analysis shows that there exist medium relationship between trade union loyalty and task performance. This is evidence, given that  $r = 0.635$  and  $r^2$  is 40%. The analysis revealed that there is 40% level of relationship between trade union loyalty and task performance of academic staff in public higher institutions. This signify that for every increase in the level of trade union loyalty, there is a corresponding 40% increase in the level of task performance of public higher institutions in Rivers State. This means there is medium relationship between trade union loyalty and task performance of academic staff. This findings concur with that of Collins (2013) whose assertion pointed out that trade union is a partner in progress that complement management efforts towards organizational productivity and efficiency.

### *Trade Union Ideology and Motivation of Academic Staff*

The result of this analysis shows that there is high positive relationship between the variables with  $r = 0.678$ . This shows a strong correlation between the variables. However, the coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) shows that  $r^2 = 0.46$ . This implies that trade union ideology has up to 46% influence on motivation of academic staff. With new/better trade union ideology, there will be consequential increase of 46% in the academic staff motivation above the normal level. This findings is in line with that of Makki and Abid (2017) which stipulated that trade union ideology will create impetus for the internal motivation if the trade union ideology is deem satisfactory to the employee and such may if it is maintain at a normal level affect the external motivation.

### *Trade Union Ideology and Task Performance of Academic Staff*

From the result of the correlation between trade union ideology and task performance, there is an evidence of low positive relationship between the variables with  $r = 0.336$ . The  $r^2$  is 11% indicating that though the relationship exist and it is positive but very low. This implies that a low positive correlation exist between the variables. Trade union ideology influence task performance of academic staff of public higher institutions at the rate of 11%. This further denote that, increasing trade union ideology will in turn lead to low increase in task performance of academic staff. This finding is in line with the Ratna and Kaur (2012) which submitted that the influence of trade unions on productivity was the net effect of conflicting forces which could lead to higher productivity.

***Trade Union Militancy and Motivation of Academic Staff***

The analysis revealed that there is 41% ( $r^2 = 0.41$ ) level of medium positive relationship between trade union militancy and motivation of academic staff in public higher institutions. The result was indicating 41% increase in the motivating level of academic staff with a trade union militancy. The analysis of the bivariate relationship between trade union militancy and motivation reveals medium positive relationship. This implies that motivation of academic staff can be up even when there is trade union militancy. This findings align with the words of Dauda (2010) cited in Abolade (2012) which maintained that union may be recognized and also used by management to stimulate creativity and innovation among its members and as such the moral of the workforce may be affected positively.

***Trade Union Militancy and Task Performance of Academic Staff***

The analysis of this variable shows that there is low positive relationship between trade union militancy and task performance. However, the correlation was low. With  $r = 0.262$  and the coefficient of determination show that  $r^2 = 0.07$  (7%). This analysis is indicating that trade union militancy can only influence an additional 7% increase in the task performance of academic staff in public higher institutions. This implies that trade union militancy has a positive but very low influence on task performance of academic staff in the public higher institutions in Rivers State. The assertion of Ratna and Kaur (2012) that inculcating discipline among the workforce and helping in social adjustment through the use of trade union militancy can help achieve task performance by employees cannot be fully sustained.

***Trade Union Power and Motivation of Academic Staff***

Based on the result of the analysis, there is an evidence of low relationship between trade union power and motivation with  $r = 0.371$ . The coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 0.137$ ) reveals that trade union power can contribute up to 14% to the motivation of academic staff in the workplace. This findings is in agreement with that of DeCharms (1968) cited in Makki and Abid (2017) which noted that realizing the power of the trade union, the employees are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated.

***Trade Union Power and Task Performance of Academic Staff***

The result of this analysis shows that there is no relationship between trade union power and task performance. With  $r = 0.046$  and  $r^2 = 0.002$  (0.2%). This implies almost zero relationship exist between the variables, that is, there exist no relationship but the changes or the influence of trade union power on the task performance of academic staff of public higher institutions is almost unnoticeable. This indicate that if the trade union should make use of any of her power like warning strike within the system, there will be almost insignificant positive impact on the task performance of the academic staff of public higher institutions in Rivers State. This finding is in agreement with that of Mefford (1986) which stated that a net positive effect on productivity remained even when these channels of union influence were controlled.

***Moderating Influence of Industrial Relation Climate on the Relationship between Union Commitment and Academic Staff Performance***

Based on the multivariate analysis of Hypothesis Nine, the result reveals that industrial relation climate influences the strength of the relationship between union commitment and academic staff performance by 74% correlation of coefficient. This further implies that a harmonious and conducive industrial climate will help improve and accounted for 74% of academic staff performance in the organisation. This study align with the assertion of Kersley et al (2006) which stated that industrial relation climate is a subset of the organizational climate and refers to the atmosphere, norms attitude and behaviour reflecting and underpinning how workers, unions and managers interact collectively with each other in the workplace, which in turn affects workplace outcomes.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations based on the study findings:

1. There should be more involvement in activities that can enhance academic staff loyalty in the union to improve motivational and task performance level of the academic staff of public higher institutions.
2. The ideologies pursued by the trade union must be dynamic, relevant and in tune with the aspirations of the academic staff of public higher institutions for the purpose of increasing the level of motivation and task performance.
3. The aggressiveness of the trade union need to be timely and appropriate in order to boast the academic staff of public higher institutions level of motivation and such should not be against the management



alone, it should as well be used against the erring academic staff to achieve task performance in the public higher institutions.

4. Management should reduce frowning at the use of power of trade union so as to enhance the academic staff level of motivation in the government owned higher institutions.
5. In order to have high level of task performance, management should empower the trade union to exercise its power in sanctioning erring academic staff as well.
6. The management of public higher institutions should stop seeing academic staff with dual commitment as antagonist and/or indolent but help promote cordial/conducive industrial relation climate with adequate trade union recognition, routine meetings and/or discussion forum between the trade union and management so as to have maximum performance from the academic staff of higher institutions.

### CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study contributed to knowledge with its empirical evidence that dual commitment of academic staff in public higher institutions was not responsible for the drift of students to private higher institutions as claimed by the populace. Therefore, the problems of the public higher educational sector should be viewed based on the agitations of the academic trade unions and should not be seen as emanating from the academic trade unions.

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