

**LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF
COMMITMENT IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN RIVERS STATE****ORISAH-GODFREY, Lillian Anyanagba, PhD***lillian.orisahgodfrey@ust.edu.ng***Department of Office and Information Management, Faculty of Administration and
Management, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt****ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the relationship between leadership communication strategy and administrative staff commitment in educational institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria. Anchored on Shannon and Weaver's Mathematical Theory of Communication and Bass and Avolio's Full Range Leadership Model, the study adopted a correlational survey research design. The population comprised 312 administrative staff drawn from selected public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Using Taro Yamane's formula, a sample of 238 respondents was determined and selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.84 (Cronbach alpha). Two null hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Linear Regression analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between the study variables. The study concluded that strategic leadership communication is a critical determinant of administrative staff commitment in tertiary educational institutions. It was recommended, among others, that educational administrators should institutionalise transparent, participative, and transformational communication frameworks to enhance staff commitment and institutional effectiveness.

Keywords: Leadership, Communication Strategy, Administrative Staff Commitment, Job Satisfaction, Educational Institutions

INTRODUCTION

The productivity and effectiveness of any educational institution are fundamentally contingent on the commitment of its administrative workforce. Administrative staff constitutes a critical operational backbone in tertiary educational institutions, performing indispensable roles that sustain academic processes, student affairs management, records administration, and institutional governance. Yet, the degree to which these employees demonstrate commitment, that is, their willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the institution, identify with its goals, and remain as members, is deeply shaped by the communication climate within which they operate (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Yukl, 2013). In contemporary educational administration, scholars and practitioners alike have increasingly recognised that the manner in which leaders communicate their expectations, values, and directives significantly moderates employee behaviour and organisational outcomes (Men, 2014; Bambacas & Patrickson, 2008). Rivers State, home to one of the most densely concentrated networks of public tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria's South-South geopolitical zone, presents a compelling empirical context for examining this dynamic. Studies conducted within Nigerian higher education settings have consistently documented challenges of low morale, high turnover intention, and dismal employee engagement among administrative personnel (Nwinyokpugi & Omunakwe, 2019; Zeb-Obipi & Agada, 2018). These challenges invite rigorous scholarly enquiry into the institutional and leadership factors that either mitigate or exacerbate staff disengagement, with leadership communication strategy emerging as a prominent explanatory variable.

Leadership communication strategy refers to the deliberate, goal-oriented approach through which organisational leaders transmit information, inspire action, manage relationships, and coordinate institutional activities in ways that align employee behaviour with strategic objectives (Clampitt & Downs, 1993; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017). Unlike routine or informal communication, strategic

leadership communication is intentional in design, consistent in application, and purposive in outcome. It encompasses various dimensions including the transparency of information disclosure, the degree of participative exchange, the emotional intelligence embedded in message delivery, and the alignment of communication style with the transactional or transformational character of leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). A growing body of evidence from both developed and developing economies affirms that when leaders communicate strategically, employees reciprocate with heightened commitment, increased job satisfaction, reduced turnover intention, and stronger identification with organisational goals (Madlock, 2008; Mikkelsen, York, & Arritola, 2015; Bambacas & Patrickson, 2008). In the Nigerian context, however, evidence-based studies that empirically link specific dimensions of leadership communication strategy to measurable indices of administrative staff commitment in educational institutions remain relatively sparse, notwithstanding the centrality of such knowledge for educational policy and management practice.

Organisational commitment, as a multi-dimensional construct, encompasses affective, normative, and continuance dimensions (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Affective commitment reflects an emotional attachment and identification with the organisation; normative commitment denotes a sense of obligation to remain; while continuance commitment reflects perceived costs of leaving. Several antecedents of these commitment forms have been identified in extant literature, including organisational culture, reward systems, supervisory support, and leadership style. However, communication as a mediating or predictor variable has received growing attention in recent decades (Gillis, 2011; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017). Scholars such as Omah and Ekweozor (2025) and, Alikornwo and Obara (2025) have emphasised the functional role of communication competence and strategy in shaping the attitudinal and behavioural dispositions of employees in Nigerian organisational settings. Job satisfaction, as a measure of commitment, captures the affective response of employees to their work conditions and is strongly linked to how well leaders communicate support, recognition, and institutional expectations (Madlock, 2008). In educational institutions across Rivers State, anecdotal and limited empirical evidence suggests that administrative staff frequently report dissatisfaction arising from poor information flow, exclusion from decision-making communication, and opacity in managerial communication, all pointing to a systemic deficit in strategic leadership communication (Alikornwo & Nwinyokpugi, 2025).

Notwithstanding the rich body of theoretical and empirical scholarship on leadership communication and employee outcomes globally; there exist substantial contextual and methodological gaps in the literature as it pertains to Rivers State's educational sector. Specifically, the extant Nigerian studies have tended to focus on communication satisfaction in general, without disaggregating the specific strategic dimensions of leadership communication and their differential effects on the distinct measures of administrative staff commitment. Furthermore, the preponderance of available studies has concentrated on teaching staff and academic departments, largely neglecting the unique experiences of administrative personnel whose occupational roles are structurally distinct from their academic counterparts (Zeb-Obipi & Agada, 2018; Nwinyokpugi & Omunakwe, 2019). This study, therefore, addresses these identified gaps by examining the relationship between leadership communication strategy and administrative staff commitment, with job satisfaction and organisational loyalty as the twin measures of the criterion variable. The investigation is positioned within the context of Rivers State's public tertiary educational institutions, where the imperatives of institutional governance and staff welfare converge to make leadership communication a matter of both academic and policy urgency.

Statement of the Problem

Public tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State have been characterised by persistent administrative inefficiencies, low staff morale, and systemic disengagement among non-teaching personnel. Institutional records, labour disputes, and limited empirical studies suggest that administrative staff in these institutions frequently experience communication-related challenges that undermine their commitment to institutional goals. These challenges include inadequate

information sharing by leaders, exclusion from key institutional decisions, inconsistency in directive communication, and a leadership orientation that is predominantly directive rather than participative or transformational (Alikornwo & Nwinyokpugi, 2025). Such communication deficits breed uncertainty, erode trust, and progressively diminish staff commitment, with adverse consequences for institutional performance. While the theoretical association between leadership communication strategy and employee commitment has received extensive scholarly attention in Western and Asian contexts (Men, 2014; Madlock, 2008; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017), empirical investigations specifically targeting administrative staff commitment within the educational institutional context in Rivers State remain limited and fragmented. Available studies have tended to approach either leadership style or communication in isolation, without integrating the strategic dimension of leadership communication as a composite, purposive construct directed at eliciting commitment (Omah & Ekweozor, 2025). This research gap constitutes both a scholarly and practical problem. From a scholarly standpoint, it represents an incomplete theoretical articulation of how leadership communication operates as a strategic tool in shaping staff behaviour in Nigerian educational institutions. From a practical standpoint, it implies that educational administrators in Rivers State lack evidence-based communication frameworks for managing and enhancing staff commitment. The current study, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap by empirically examining the relationship between leadership communication strategy and administrative staff commitment in educational institutions in Rivers State, using job satisfaction and organisational loyalty as the measures of staff commitment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership Communication Strategy

Leadership communication strategy is conceptualised as the systematic, intentional, and goal-directed use of communication by organisational leaders to influence follower attitudes, motivate action, build relationships, and achieve institutional objectives (Clampitt & Downs, 1993; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017). The 'strategy' element of this construct distinguishes it from routine or reactive communication, underscoring its deliberate, purposive, and often pre-planned character. According to Mayfield and Mayfield (2017), strategic leadership communication serves at least three functional purposes: meaning-making (helping employees interpret organisational realities), motivating language (inspiring performance and commitment), and affective language (signalling care, respect, and emotional connection). These functions render leadership communication a potent managerial tool capable of shaping the cognitive and affective orientations of employees in profound and lasting ways.

The dimensions of leadership communication strategy have been variously conceptualised across the literature. Men (2014) identified transparency, authenticity, and two-way symmetry as central dimensions of excellent leadership communication, all of which are associated with positive employee outcomes. Bambacas and Patrickson (2008) demonstrated that active listening, clarity of expression, and empathetic communication are key behaviours of leaders whose communication fosters employee commitment. From a Nigerian educational perspective, Omah and Ekweozor (2025) highlighted that leaders' communication frequency, channel choice, and feedback receptiveness are critical in shaping administrative staff's perceptions of organisational support. Similarly, Alikornwo and Nwinyokpugi (2025) found that the content and tone of leadership communication significantly influenced the organisational identity and work engagement of non-teaching personnel in polytechnic institutions in Rivers State. These studies collectively suggest that leadership communication strategy is not a monolithic construct but a multi-dimensional one whose constituent elements differentially affect employee behaviour.

Transformational Leadership Communication Style

Transformational leadership communication style refers to the communicative behaviour of leaders who inspire, motivate, and intellectually stimulate followers through visionary messaging,

individualised consideration, and ideological articulation (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders communicate in ways that elevate followers' aspirations, connect individual roles to a larger institutional narrative, and build shared purpose. The communication of transformational leaders is characterised by inspirational rhetoric, emotionally resonant messaging, active listening, and consistent feedback that affirms follower capability and worth. Numerous studies have linked transformational communication to enhanced employee commitment, organisational citizenship behaviours, and reduced turnover intention (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). In educational settings specifically, Nguni, Slegers, and Denessen (2006) found that transformational leadership communication significantly predicted teacher commitment and job satisfaction in Tanzanian schools. In the Nigerian context, transformational communication approaches have been identified as critical for addressing administrative staff disengagement in public tertiary institutions (Alikornwo & Nwinyokpugi, 2025). The mechanism through which transformational communication generates commitment is explained by Shamir, House, and Arthur's (1993) self-concept theory of charismatic leadership, which posits that transformational leaders' communication works by aligning followers' self-concept with organisational identity. When leaders articulate a compelling vision that resonates with employees' values and aspirations, followers internalise institutional goals as personal goals, thereby generating deep affective commitment. Furthermore, Yukl (2013) argues that the individualised consideration dimension of transformational communication, wherein leaders tailor messages to the unique developmental needs and concerns of each follower, is particularly powerful in eliciting commitment and loyalty.

Transactional Leadership Communication Style

Transactional leadership communication style is characterised by a contingency-reward framework wherein leaders communicate clear expectations, establish performance standards, and negotiate compliance through reward and punishment mechanisms (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Transactional leaders communicate in a directive and task-focused manner, emphasising role clarity, performance monitoring, and corrective feedback. While transactional communication is generally associated with maintaining the status quo rather than inspiring change, it nonetheless performs an important stabilising function in organisations, particularly in contexts where clarity of roles and consistency of feedback are paramount (Avolio, 1999). In educational administrative contexts, where procedural compliance and role-specific performance are critical, transactional communication may foster continuance and normative commitment by ensuring that employees understand what is expected of them and that performance norms are consistently applied (Mikkelsen et al., 2015).

However, the limitations of purely transactional communication in generating deep organisational commitment have been noted. Bass (1999) argued that while transactional communication may produce satisfactory levels of performance by meeting contractual obligations, it rarely generates the emotional attachment or intrinsic motivation associated with transformational communication. Consistent with this argument, Gillis (2011) found that transactional communication in public sector organisations was positively but modestly associated with employee commitment, compared to the stronger associations observed with transformational communication approaches. This differential effectiveness of transactional versus transformational communication strategies underscores the importance of blending communication approaches in educational administration.

Transparent and Participative Communication Strategies

Transparent communication involves the proactive, timely, and accurate disclosure of organisational information by leaders to employees, including information about institutional decisions, performance outcomes, challenges, and strategic directions (Men, 2014; Rawlins, 2008). Transparency in leadership communication signals institutional integrity, reduces informational asymmetry, and fosters a climate of trust that is conducive to commitment and loyalty. Research by Men and Stacks (2013) demonstrated that transparent internal communication was a significant

predictor of employee engagement and organisational identification, mediated by organisational trust. In the Nigerian public educational sector, opacity in administrative communication has been identified as a major source of staff disengagement and distrust, making transparent communication a critical strategic need (Alikornwo & Nwinyokpugi, 2025).

Participative communication strategy, on the other hand, involves the extent to which leaders actively solicit employee input, involve staff in decision-making communication processes, and demonstrate receptiveness to upward communication (Goldhaber, 1993; Clampitt & Downs, 1993). Participative communication is associated with employee empowerment, increased sense of ownership, and organisational identification. Studies by Mayfield and Mayfield (2017) and Kim (2018) established that participative communication practices by leaders generated significant increases in job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and knowledge-sharing behaviour.

Administrative Staff Commitment

Organisational commitment, as it pertains to administrative staff in educational institutions, refers to the psychological bond between the employee and the institution, manifesting as a desire to maintain membership (affective commitment), a sense of obligation to the institution (normative commitment), and an awareness of the costs of leaving (continuance commitment) (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Allen & Meyer, 1990). In educational settings, administrative staff commitment is particularly significant because non-teaching employees manage the logistical, financial, records, and student services functions without which academic delivery would be impaired. Studies by Tella, Ayeni, and Popoola (2007) in Nigerian university libraries, and by Okeke and Maina (2017) in secondary school systems, have documented the strong association between leadership-related variables and administrative staff commitment in educational contexts. In the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, similar patterns have been observed, with researchers noting that administrative staff commitment is mediated by perceptions of institutional justice, managerial support, and communication quality (Nwinyokpugi & Omunakwe, 2019; Zeb-Obipi & Agada, 2018).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is broadly defined as an individual's positive or pleasurable emotional state arising from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences (Locke, 1976). As a measure of commitment, job satisfaction reflects the degree to which employees find their work rewarding, meaningful, and aligned with their expectations. Within the context of administrative staff in educational institutions, job satisfaction has been linked to supervisory support, equitable reward systems, role clarity, and communication quality (Madlock, 2008; Ololube, 2006). Madlock's (2008) landmark study in the United States demonstrated a statistically significant positive relationship between supervisors' communication competence and employee job satisfaction, with communication competence accounting for a substantial proportion of the variance in satisfaction scores. In Nigeria, Chidi (2020) found that leadership communication style was a significant predictor of job satisfaction among civil servants, with transformational communication associated with higher satisfaction levels than transactional approaches. The finding resonates with Alikornwo and Nwinyokpugi (2025), who reported that participative communication practices by educational administrators were positively correlated with job satisfaction scores among administrative staff in Rivers State institutions.

The theoretical link between leadership communication strategy and job satisfaction can be partially explained through Role Clarity Theory, which posits that employees' satisfaction is enhanced when leadership communication reduces role ambiguity and provides clear performance expectations (Kahn et al., 1964). When leaders communicate strategic goals, performance standards, and feedback clearly and consistently, employees develop a sharper understanding of their roles, which mitigates job-related stress and enhances satisfaction. Furthermore, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959) suggests that managerial communication functions as both a hygiene factor (when it prevents dissatisfaction through adequate information flow) and a motivator (when it recognises, appreciates, and encourages employee performance). These dual functions make leadership

communication a particularly powerful antecedent of job satisfaction among administrative staff, whose work is often routine and susceptible to motivational decline (Ololube, 2006; Nwinyokpugi & Omunakwe, 2019).

Organisational Loyalty

Organisational loyalty, often conceptualised as the attitudinal and behavioural disposition of employees to remain with, defend, and actively support their employing organisation, represents a critical index of affective and normative commitment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Porter et al., 1974). In educational institutional contexts, administrative staff loyalty manifests as willingness to perform extra-role behaviours, resistance to job alternatives, identification with institutional values, and proactive contribution to institutional goals. Scholars have linked organisational loyalty to perceived organisational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986), leader-member exchange quality (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), and communication transparency (Men, 2014). In the Nigerian context, Ikoromasoma, Tamunomiebi and Didia (2023) established that communicative leader behaviour was a significant predictor of administrative staff loyalty in institutions, noting that leaders who communicated institutional vision and employee value fostered stronger bonds of loyalty than those who relied on authority-based directive communication.

The significance of leadership communication in building organisational loyalty can also be understood through Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which posits that when leaders invest in communicative behaviours that signal respect, inclusion, and value for employees, workers reciprocate through heightened loyalty and commitment. This reciprocity norm implies that strategic communication is not merely an informational transaction but a relational investment that accumulates social capital over time. Zeb-Obipi and Agada (2018) affirmed this social exchange dynamic in a study of public sector employees in Rivers State, finding that relational communication by supervisors generated reciprocal loyalty behaviours among staff. These findings underscore the theoretical and empirical warrant for positioning organisational loyalty as a key outcome measure in the study of leadership communication strategy.

Theoretical Framework

Shannon and Weaver's Mathematical Theory of Communication

Shannon and Weaver's (1949) Mathematical Theory of Communication, also known as the Information Theory, provides a foundational framework for understanding the technical and semantic dimensions of communication in organisational settings. The model conceptualises communication as a process involving a source, an encoder, a channel, a decoder, a receiver, and feedback, with noise as a potential distorting element at any stage of the process. Applied to leadership communication in educational institutions, the theory foregrounds the importance of message clarity, channel selection, noise reduction, and feedback adequacy as determinants of effective communication outcomes. When leaders in educational institutions fail to encode messages clearly, select appropriate communication channels, or attend to feedback signals from administrative staff, the resulting communication noise can generate misunderstandings, role ambiguity, and reduced commitment (Shannon & Weaver, 1949; Goldhaber, 1993). The theory is particularly relevant to the current study because it highlights the technical requirements of effective leadership communication, providing a basis for evaluating the quality of communication strategy in educational institutions.

The relevance of Shannon and Weaver's framework extends beyond its technical focus to encompass the semantic and effectiveness levels of communication identified in subsequent developments of the model. At the semantic level, effective leadership communication requires not merely transmission of information but shared meaning between sender and receiver, a condition that is met when leaders communicate with cultural sensitivity, contextual awareness, and linguistic clarity. At the effectiveness level, communication succeeds when it produces the desired behavioural or attitudinal outcomes, such as increased staff commitment, enhanced job satisfaction, and

organisational loyalty. This effectiveness orientation aligns closely with the concept of strategic leadership communication, positioning Shannon and Weaver's model as a useful analytical lens for the present investigation.

Bass and Avolio's Full Range Leadership Model

Bass and Avolio's (1994) Full Range Leadership Model provides the second theoretical pillar of this study. The model posits that leadership behaviour exists on a continuum ranging from laissez-faire (non-leadership) at one end, through transactional leadership, to transformational leadership at the other. Each position on this continuum is associated with distinct communication patterns and corresponding follower outcomes. Transformational leadership, characterised by idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration, generates communication that builds vision, enhances follower self-efficacy, and fosters deep psychological attachment to the organisation (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transactional leadership, defined by contingent reward and management by exception (active and passive), produces communication that is performance-contingent, feedback-oriented, and primarily focused on compliance. The full range model is directly relevant to the current study's focus on communication strategy because it maps specific communication behaviours onto leadership archetypes, enabling a nuanced analysis of how different leadership communication approaches affect staff commitment outcomes.

The Full Range Leadership Model has been extensively applied in educational management research, with numerous studies validating its relevance across diverse institutional and cultural contexts (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Nguni et al., 2006; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). The model's integrative character, which allows for simultaneous consideration of transformational and transactional communication dimensions, renders it particularly well-suited to the research design adopted in the current study, wherein both communication styles are examined as independent predictors of administrative staff commitment outcomes.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory, originally articulated by Blau (1964) and extended by Emerson (1976), posits that social behaviour is governed by a reciprocity norm, wherein individuals respond to perceived benefits and investments from others with equivalent or greater returns in the form of loyalty, commitment, effort, and goodwill. In the context of leadership communication, the theory implies that when leaders communicate in ways that demonstrate respect, inclusion, transparency, and individualised consideration, employees perceive these communicative acts as organisational investments and reciprocate with heightened commitment, loyalty, and extra-role behaviour. Eisenberger et al. (1986) applied this logic to develop Perceived Organisational Support theory, which demonstrated that employees who felt valued and supported by the organisation, partly through managerial communication, showed significantly higher commitment and reduced turnover intention. Social Exchange Theory is particularly relevant to the present study because it provides a micro-level explanation for the mechanism through which leadership communication strategy translates into administrative staff commitment in educational institutions.

Empirical support for Social Exchange Theory's applicability to leadership communication and commitment in educational settings has been provided by several studies. Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, a derivative of Social Exchange Theory, demonstrated that high-quality leader-member exchange relationships, characterised by open communication, mutual trust, and reciprocal respect, were associated with higher levels of employee commitment, job satisfaction, and performance.

Empirical Review

The empirical landscape on leadership communication strategy and organisational commitment is broad, spanning multiple disciplines, methodological traditions, and geographical contexts. Bambacas and Patrickson (2008) conducted a qualitative inquiry in Australian organisations and

established that active listening, clarity of expression, and empathetic communication by leaders were significantly associated with employee organisational commitment. The authors concluded that communication competence, as expressed through specific interpersonal skills, was a critical antecedent of commitment behaviours. In a related study, Madlock (2008) administered a quantitative survey to 220 employees across multiple industries in the United States and found a statistically significant positive relationship between supervisory communication competence and both job satisfaction and commitment, with communication competence accounting for 17% of the variance in job satisfaction. These foundational studies from developed economies established the empirical benchmark against which subsequent investigations have been measured.

More recent international scholarship has deepened the empirical foundation. Men (2014) examined the relationship between executive leadership communication style, employee-organisation relationships, and employee outcomes in the United States, finding that authentic and transparent communication by senior leaders was significantly associated with employee engagement, commitment, and organisational identification. The study highlighted the importance of communication symmetry and openness as strategic assets in human resource management. Mayfield and Mayfield (2017) contributed a comprehensive review of motivating language theory, demonstrating across multiple studies that leaders who employed direction-giving, empathetic, and meaning-making language generated significantly higher levels of employee job satisfaction, commitment, and performance. Kim (2018) extended this line of inquiry by examining participative communication and its effects on employee job satisfaction and organisational commitment in South Korean firms, finding strong positive effects particularly for participative communication dimensions. In the African context, Nguni et al. (2006) conducted a landmark study in Tanzanian secondary schools, employing structural equation modelling to examine the effects of transformational and transactional leadership on teacher commitment and job satisfaction. The results confirmed that transformational leadership behaviours, including visionary and inspirational communication, were the strongest predictors of affective commitment and job satisfaction, even after controlling for school size, teacher experience, and gender. Tella et al. (2007) surveyed library staff in Nigerian universities and established that motivation and work commitment were significantly influenced by the communication quality of supervisors, with findings indicating that transparent, supportive communication was associated with higher commitment indices. These early Nigerian studies set the stage for more targeted investigations of the educational administrative context.

Within the specific context of Rivers State, Nigeria, a number of scholars have generated empirical evidence pertinent to the present study. Nwinyokpugi and Omunakwe (2019) investigated the relationship between interpersonal relationship at work; Enhancing organizational productivity of deposit money banks in Rivers State, finding a significant positive relationship between communication openness, feedback quality, and employee work commitment. The study recommended that public sector managers should prioritise transparent and participative communication as strategic tools for managing employee behaviour.

Ikoromasoma et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between communication and employee engagement of electricity and gas companies in Nigeria. The study found that communicative leader behaviour, including directive clarity, motivational messaging, and emotional expressiveness, had a significant positive effect on staff loyalty, absorption and dedication.

International meta-analytic evidence further strengthens the empirical foundation of this study. Mikkelsen et al. (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of studies examining the relationship between supervisor communication behaviour and employee outcomes, synthesising data from 40 primary studies. The results indicated consistent significant positive effects of quality supervisor communication on job satisfaction (weighted mean $r = 0.59$) and organisational commitment (weighted mean $r = 0.44$), with communication openness and responsiveness identified as the most influential communication dimensions. Lowe et al. (1996) meta-analysed studies on transformational leadership and unit effectiveness, confirming that transformational leadership communication behaviours were robust predictors of subordinate satisfaction and commitment across cultural and

organisational contexts. These meta-analytic findings provide strong generalisable support for the theoretical propositions of the current study.

Collectively, the empirical evidence reviewed above establishes a compelling case for the relationship between leadership communication strategy and administrative staff commitment, with specific support for both job satisfaction and organisational loyalty as outcome measures. The reviewed studies demonstrate that transformational communication, transparent communication, and participative communication are among the most potent communication strategies for generating positive commitment outcomes. The paucity of studies specifically targeting administrative staff in Rivers State educational institutions, as distinct from teachers and academic staff, represents the primary gap that the current investigation seeks to address.

Hypotheses

Based on the reviewed theoretical and empirical literature, the following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the investigation:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between leadership communication style and job satisfaction in educational institutions in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between leadership communication style and organisational loyalty in educational institutions in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlational survey research design, which is appropriate for investigating the nature and magnitude of relationships between variables without manipulating the research environment (Creswell, 2014; Kerlinger, 1973). The population of the study comprised 312 administrative staff drawn from four public tertiary educational institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria, namely Rivers State University, Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rivers State College of Health Science and Management Technology, and Ken Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic. These institutions were purposively selected on the basis of their status as State government-owned tertiary establishments with substantial administrative staff complements and established organisational structures amenable to the study's objectives. Using Taro Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula [$n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$], a sample of 238 respondents was derived from the population of 312, adopting a 0.05 margin of error. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation of staff across the selected institutions and across functional administrative departments. The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire organised into three sections: Section A solicited demographic information; Section B assessed leadership communication strategy using a 20-item scale adapted from Mayfield and Mayfield's (2017) Motivating Language Scale and Men's (2014) Leadership Communication Scale; and Section C measured administrative staff commitment using a 15-item scale adapted from Meyer and Allen's (1997) Organisational Commitment Questionnaire, with modifications to capture job satisfaction and organisational loyalty as the two criterion measures. The instrument was validated through content and construct validity procedures involving expert review and factor analysis, which confirmed the adequacy of item coverage and factor loadings above 0.60 for all retained items. Reliability was established through Cronbach alpha analysis, yielding a coefficient of 0.84, which exceeded the 0.70 threshold recommended by Nunnally (1978). Two hundred and thirty-eight (238) questionnaires were administered, and 235 were retrieved and found usable, yielding a response rate of 98.7%. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were employed to summarise data on the study variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test Hypothesis 1. Multiple Linear Regression analysis was employed to test Hypothesis 2. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1**Table 1: Pearson Correlation between Leadership Communication Style and Job Satisfaction (N = 238)**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	p-value	Decision
Leadership Communication Style	238	3.71	0.64			
Job Satisfaction	238	3.58	0.59	0.673**	0.000	Significant

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Table 1 presents the results of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis for Hypothesis 1. The results indicate that transformational leadership communication style had a significant positive correlation with administrative staff job satisfaction ($r = 0.673$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). The relationship was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Accordingly, the null hypothesis, is hereby rejected. This finding affirms that leadership communication styles positively and significantly relate to job satisfaction among administrative staff.

Hypothesis 2**Table 2: Multiple Regression of Leadership Communication Strategies on Organisational Loyalty (N = 238)**

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	R	R2	Adj. R2
(Constant)	0.621	0.183		3.393	0.001			
Leadership Communication Strategies	0.412	0.074	0.389	5.568	0.000	0.721	0.520	0.515

F = 127.340, p = .000

Dependent Variable: Organisational Loyalty; Predictors: Leadership Communication Strategies

Table 2 presents the results of the Multiple Linear Regression analysis for Hypothesis 2. The model summary reveals a multiple correlation coefficient of $R = 0.721$, indicating a strong positive relationship between the predictor variable and organisational loyalty. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.520$) indicates that the predictor variable accounts for 52.0% of the variance in administrative staff organisational loyalty, while the adjusted R^2 of 0.515 confirms the model's stability across the sample. The ANOVA result ($F = 127.340$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis, is hereby rejected. This finding affirms that leadership communication strategies are significant predictors of staff loyalty in educational institutions in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that leadership communication style has a significant positive relationship with administrative staff job satisfaction ($r = 0.673$, $p < 0.05$) is consistent with a substantial body of international and Nigerian scholarship. The result aligns with Nguni et al. (2006), who found that transformational leadership behaviours significantly predicted teacher job satisfaction in Tanzanian schools, and with Madlock (2008), whose study established a significant positive relationship between supervisory communication competence and employee satisfaction in United States organisations. The strong correlation coefficient ($r = 0.673$) suggests that administrative staff in Rivers State educational institutions are highly responsive to visionary, inspirational, and individually considerate communication from their leaders, responding with enhanced job satisfaction that reflects the motivational potency of transformational communication.

The finding that leadership communication strategies jointly predict organisational loyalty ($R^2 = 0.520$, $F = 127.340$, $p < 0.05$) is among the most significant outcomes of this investigation. The

relatively high proportion of explained variance (52%) indicates that strategic communication transparency and participativeness are powerful determinants of staff loyalty in Rivers State educational institutions. This result is consistent with Men (2014), who demonstrated that transparent internal communication by leaders was a significant predictor of employee organisational identification, and with Mayfield and Mayfield (2017), who found that motivating language dimensions including direction-giving and meaning-making predicted employee commitment. These findings collectively affirm the theoretical propositions of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), wherein leadership communication investments in transparency and participation generate reciprocal loyalty commitments from administrative staff.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has investigated the relationship between leadership communication strategy and administrative staff commitment in educational institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria. Drawing on Shannon and Weaver's Mathematical Theory of Communication, Bass and Avolio's Full Range Leadership Model, and Social Exchange Theory, and grounded in a robust empirical tradition spanning both global and Nigerian contexts, the study established that leadership communication strategy is a significant and potent predictor of administrative staff commitment. These findings confirm the theoretical position that strategic leadership communication is not merely an administrative mechanism but a transformative institutional resource capable of cultivating deep psychological bonds between administrative staff and their employing institutions.

The practical and policy implications of these findings are considerable. The persistent challenges of staff disengagement, low morale, and high turnover intention that have characterised public educational institutions in Rivers State can be substantially addressed through deliberate and strategic leadership communication interventions. The findings affirm that administrative leaders who communicate with vision, transparency, inclusiveness, and individual consideration generate the motivational and relational conditions necessary for enduring staff commitment. These insights call for a fundamental reorientation of leadership communication practice in Rivers State's educational institutions, away from predominantly directive, authority-centred models toward more participative, transparent, and transformationally oriented communication frameworks.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Educational administrators in Rivers State tertiary institutions should deliberately adopt transformational communication approaches, including inspirational messaging, individualised feedback, and vision articulation, as core elements of their leadership communication strategy, given the strong association of this communication style with administrative staff job satisfaction.
2. Institutional management training programmes for heads of departments, deans, and registrars should incorporate structured modules on transparent and participative communication, equipping leaders with the skills needed to proactively share institutional information, actively solicit staff input, and respond to upward communication in ways that build trust and loyalty.
3. Rivers State tertiary educational institutions should conduct periodic communication climate audits to assess the quality of leadership communication across departments, identifying gaps in transparency, participation, and feedback adequacy that may be undermining staff commitment.
4. Professional associations and regulatory bodies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and the Rivers State Ministry of Education should incorporate leadership communication standards into institutional accreditation frameworks, incentivising institutions to develop and implement strategic communication policies.

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