

Mediating Role of Faculty Engagement in the Relationship between Communication Strategies and Organizational Commitment: Evidence from Akwa Ibom State University

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ABSTRACT

Effective internal communication is widely recognised as a cornerstone of organizational success; however, many Nigerian universities, including Akwa Ibom State University, continue to grapple with persistent communication inefficiencies. This study investigates the extent to which communication strategies (information flow, adequacy, and feedback) influence faculty engagement and organizational commitment, and explores the mediating role of faculty engagement in this relationship within the context of Akwa Ibom State University. Grounded in the Relationship Management Theory, the study employed a survey research design targeting a stratified random sample of 193 respondents drawn from the university's Obio Akpa Campus. Findings reveal that communication within the university is predominantly top-down, with minimal upward or cross-departmental exchange. Information flow ($\beta = .275, p = .003$) and information adequacy ($\beta = .276, p = .004$) significantly predict faculty engagement, whereas feedback did not ($\beta = -.061, p > .05$). Faculty members demonstrated high emotional and cognitive engagement, but lower physical engagement—likely influenced by workload and systemic support challenges. Organizational commitment was moderate, with substantial ambivalence among staff. Information flow ($r = .23, p < .05$) and information adequacy ($r = .33, p < .01$) were significantly associated with organizational commitment, and faculty engagement was found to partially mediate this relationship ($\beta = .433, p < .001$). The study underscores the critical need for universities to enhance their internal communication frameworks, particularly by decentralising information channels, promoting feedback culture, and fostering supervisor-level communication. Practical recommendations include implementing structured performance appraisals, appointing communication-oriented leaders, and embedding transparent information-sharing practices. These measures are essential for improving faculty engagement, strengthening organizational loyalty, and ultimately enhancing institutional performance.

Keywords: communication strategies, faculty engagement, organizational commitment, higher education, Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State University, relationship management theory

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INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is widely recognized as a cornerstone of organizational success, particularly within educational institutions where the flow of information shapes faculty motivation, collaboration, and institutional commitment (Akarika, Umoren & Ikon, 2021). In the increasingly complex environment of higher education, communication strategies must be carefully designed to engage academic staff meaningfully and foster organizational loyalty. Failures in communication can lead to misunderstandings, reduced morale (Uford, 2017), and ultimately a decline in staff performance and retention (Men & Stacks, 2014; Welch, 2019). Consequently, understanding how communication influences faculty engagement and commitment is essential for universities aiming to sustain quality education and institutional growth.

Communication strategies encompass various mechanisms such as information flow, adequacy, and feedback, which together determine how effectively messages are transmitted and received within an organization (Mfon & Uford, 2024). According to Akarika, Umoren and Okon (2021), this communication strategies constitutes the communication culture of an organization which includes the following: information flow refers to the movement of messages across hierarchical levels and between departments, while information adequacy concerns the completeness and relevance of the information shared (Downs & Adrian, 2012; Atairet & Ndaeyo, 2022). Information feedback involves responses that help clarify and reinforce communication, enabling employees to adjust their behaviours accordingly (Clampitt, 2016). Each of these components plays a distinct role in shaping the psychological and emotional engagement of faculty members, which in turn influences their commitment to the organization (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2023).

Faculty members play an essential role in shaping the effectiveness and sustainability of higher education institutions. As key organizational stakeholders, their engagement, attitudes, and performance directly influence institutional outcomes and external perceptions (Kim & Rhee, 2011; Ruck et al., 2017). In response, universities are increasingly investing in internal communication strategies that enhance staff awareness, commitment, and productivity. These strategies are not just administrative tools but vital mechanisms through which institutions convey values, build trust, and reinforce a shared purpose among academic staff (Rhee & Moon, 2009; Mishra et al., 2014).

At the heart of this process lies organizational communication, especially internal communication, which serves as a bridge between faculty members and university leadership. Research has consistently shown that effective communication improves employee engagement and reinforces organizational commitment (Men, 2014; Holten et al., 2020). Engagement refers to a

state of active involvement and enthusiasm in one's work, while commitment reflects a psychological attachment to the organization's goals and values (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Saks, 2019). Both are central to faculty effectiveness, as disengaged or disaffected staff may underperform, while committed employees often go above and beyond role expectations (Lovakov, 2016; Harrison et al., 2017).

In the context of Nigerian universities, communication challenges are especially pronounced. Many institutions, including Akwa Ibom State University, are characterised by hierarchical communication structures, limited feedback mechanisms, and a general lack of transparency (Eze & Okoye, 2022). These communication gaps can undermine trust, reduce morale, and lead to diminished engagement among faculty members. Moreover, the absence of well-defined communication strategies may prevent academic staff from aligning with institutional goals, thereby reducing their organizational commitment and long-term retention (Udoh & Ukoha, 2021).

Recent scholarship has sought to identify specific communication dimensions that impact engagement and commitment. Walden et al. (2017) proposed three central components: information flow (the direction and clarity of communication), information adequacy (the sufficiency and relevance of content), and information feedback (the reciprocal exchange of evaluative insights). While these elements have been individually explored in relation to organizational commitment, their combined effects—particularly through the lens of faculty engagement as a mediating factor—remain under-examined, especially in African educational contexts (Avotra et al., 2021; Keyton, 2017).

Understanding the role of faculty engagement as a bridge between communication strategies and organizational commitment is vital for institutional development (Akarika, Umoren and Iwok, 2020). Faculty members who feel informed and involved are more likely to experience emotional, cognitive, and behavioural engagement, which in turn reinforces their loyalty and performance (Men & Bowen, 2017; Hee et al., 2019; Kierian, et al., 2023). Yet, current literature often conflates job engagement with faculty engagement or overlooks the contextual nuances of higher education systems in sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, a more targeted inquiry into these dynamics is both timely and necessary for university administrators seeking to enhance staff retention and institutional effectiveness.

This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the influence of communication strategies—specifically information flow, information adequacy, and information feedback—on faculty engagement and organizational commitment at Akwa Ibom State University. By examining whether and how faculty engagement mediates these relationships, the study provides empirical insight into the mechanisms that support faculty commitment. The findings aim to inform internal communication practices

that strengthen academic staff involvement and institutional alignment, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on organizational behaviour in African higher education. Despite the widely recognized importance of internal communication within organizations, several Nigerian universities continue to face persistent communication inefficiencies. These are often characterised by a predominantly top-down flow of information, limited feedback mechanisms, and inadequate interdepartmental exchanges (Udoh & Ukoha, 2021; Eze & Okoye, 2022). Such challenges contribute to faculty disengagement and weak organizational commitment, thereby undermining the ability of universities to maintain high standards in teaching, research, and institutional performance. This situation is further compounded by a scarcity of empirical research that examines both the direct and indirect effects of communication strategies on faculty engagement and organizational commitment, leading to a lack of targeted and context-sensitive interventions. Although existing studies have examined the role of communication strategies in fostering employee engagement, much of this research has focused on Western and Asian contexts. There remains limited application to the Nigerian academic environment, and particularly to Akwa Ibom State University, which operates within distinctive socio-cultural and organizational frameworks. As such, the mediating role of faculty engagement in the relationship between communication strategies and organizational commitment remains largely underexplored in Nigerian higher education. This knowledge gap restricts the ability of university administrators to implement evidence-based communication practices that could improve faculty involvement and institutional loyalty. Accordingly, this study seeks to address the following thesis question: To what extent do communication strategies influence faculty engagement and organizational commitment, and how does faculty engagement mediate this relationship in Akwa Ibom State University?

Research questions

The following questions were raised for this study:

- i. What are the effects of communication strategies on faculty engagement and organizational commitment in Akwa Ibom State University?
- ii. How does faculty engagement influence organizational commitment in Akwa Ibom State University?
- iii. To what extent does faculty engagement mediate the relationship between communication strategies and organizational commitment in Akwa Ibom State University?

Hypotheses

Hypotheses formulated to guide this study include:

H₀₁: Communication strategies do not play a significant role in faculty engagement in Akwa Ibom State University.

H₀₂: Communication strategies do not play a significant role in organizational commitment in Akwa Ibom State University.

H₀₃: Faculty engagement does not mediate the relationship of communication strategies and organizational commitment in Akwa Ibom State University.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication strategies and faculty engagement

The concept of faculty engagement originally derived from broader employee engagement literature and can be traced back to the foundational work of Kahn (1990), who defined engagement as the expression of one's full self through work-related behaviours that promote active involvement and personal investment in one's role. Since then, the construct of work engagement has gained increasing attention across disciplines, particularly for its distinction from related concepts such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction. While organizational commitment involves an emotional attachment to the organization's identity and goals, work engagement is characterized by deep involvement in specific tasks and roles. Vecina et al. (2013) argued that being committed to an organization is not synonymous with being engaged in one's daily work activities. In this study, faculty job engagement is distinguished as a psychological state reflecting an individual's active absorption, enthusiasm, and dedication to their academic responsibilities (cf. Schaufeli et al., 2019).

According to Saks (2019), job engagement comprises cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions that reflect how faculty immerse themselves in their tasks and perceive meaning in their work. It includes three core dimensions: vigour, representing high energy and persistence in job tasks; dedication, reflecting a sense of purpose and enthusiasm; and absorption, a state of focused immersion where time seems to pass quickly (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). This study adopts this tripartite model of engagement to conceptualize how communication strategies influence faculty involvement in their roles. Effective internal communication plays a pivotal role in fostering such engagement. When faculty receive adequate support, information, and opportunities for dialogue, they are more likely to reciprocate through heightened involvement in their academic responsibilities (Saks, 2022). Several studies indicate that access to information and organizational transparency are positively linked to employees' psychological empowerment and engagement levels (Etim & Uford, 2019; Men & Yue, 2019).

Ruck and Welch (2012) highlighted that fostering engagement requires clear communication of employees'

roles, alignment with organizational values, and consistent feedback. In academic settings, this involves evaluating key communication elements such as information flow, information adequacy, and feedback mechanisms all of which help faculty understand institutional goals, feel supported, and connect their work to broader objectives (Rhee & Moon, 2009; Men & Bowen, 2017). Information flow refers to the smooth transmission of ideas and updates across horizontal and vertical communication channels. A high-quality flow ensures faculty are informed about institutional developments, departmental expectations, and opportunities for collaboration (Rawlins, 2008). Information adequacy relates to the extent to which faculty perceive that they receive the right amount of timely and relevant information to perform their duties effectively and make informed decisions (Robertson, 2005; Welch, 2012). Feedback, both formal and informal, provides two-way interaction between faculty and university leadership, enhancing a sense of inclusion and responsiveness. Feedback mechanisms help reinforce faculty identity within the institution and validate their contributions (Men & Yue, 2019).

Research shows that when faculty perceive communication as transparent and supportive, they are more likely to experience higher levels of job engagement, manifested in their passion for teaching, research productivity, and willingness to contribute to institutional development (Lesener et al., 2019; Breevaart & Bakker, 2018). Consequently, the present study examines how these three communication components predict faculty engagement in the university context. Based on the reviewed literature, this present study hypothesised that information flow, information adequacy and feedback positively influences faculty engagement.

Communication strategies, faculty engagement, and organizational commitment

While organizational commitment focuses on an individual's emotional bond and allegiance to their institution, engagement is more aligned with the intensity and quality of work-related involvement. Research highlights that effective communication and institutional support significantly influence how faculty members experience engagement at work (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Institutions that actively communicate clear goals and provide relevant job-related resources can foster higher levels of faculty engagement. Recent evidence suggests that when faculty members are kept well-informed about their roles and receive regular performance-related feedback, their perception of organizational support improves, leading to stronger interpersonal connections within the institution (Zhang et al., 2021; LePine et al., 2022). These relational dynamics build the groundwork for organizational commitment, defined as an employee's enduring intention to remain with the organization and maintain a positive disposition

towards it (Ng & Feldman, 2023). Faculty members who feel supported are more likely to invest discretionary effort into their duties, reinforcing their loyalty to the institution. Workplace experiences that align with faculty values and address their professional needs are key predictors of long-term commitment (Almeida et al., 2020). For instance, younger faculty members often express a need for transparent communication regarding institutional direction and career progression opportunities. Studies have shown that when organizations maintain open communication, especially concerning goals and achievements, faculty are less likely to seek employment elsewhere, increasing their organizational loyalty (Singh & Bakker, 2022). Institutions must consider these communication preferences to enhance the engagement of early-career academics. Moreover, robust engagement in daily tasks and job satisfaction has been linked to greater organizational commitment among both academic and administrative staff (Wang & Ma, 2021). The job engagement model proposed by Tomietto et al. (2019) emphasises the role of communication and organizational support as critical drivers of work engagement. Given the unique needs of early-career faculty, clear, two-way communication can significantly influence their sense of belonging and dedication to the institution.

Theoretical underpinning

This study is underpinned by the Relationship Management Theory as developed by Ledingham (2003). This theory, rooted in the field of public relations, posits that successful organizational outcomes are often contingent upon the quality of relationships between the organization and its key stakeholders. At its core, the theory suggests that relationships are dynamic, co-constructed outcomes of continuous interaction, communication, and mutual influence between organizations and their publics (Men, 2014). The theory integrates societal, cultural, and communicative elements that shape relationships over time and places emphasis on strategic communication practices as essential tools for maintaining and strengthening these interactions (Zerfass et al., 2018).

Within the context of higher education, the theory offers a relevant framework for understanding the interactions between faculty members and university management. It suggests that when universities adopt communication strategies that are faculty-centric—characterised by transparency, mutual respect, and responsiveness—faculty perceptions of trust and credibility within the institution are likely to increase (Zerfass et al., 2018). These strategies foster an internal organizational environment that encourages cooperation and participatory dialogue, leading to stronger faculty–organization ties. Prior studies have also shown that such relational qualities are positively associated with transformational leadership, which further enhances faculty engagement and organizational commitment (Men,

2014). Applying this theoretical lens to the present study, internal communication is examined through three key dimensions: information flow, information adequacy, and feedback (Walden et al., 2017). Information flow relates to the accessibility and timeliness of communication across various levels; information adequacy reflects how well communication addresses both personal and institutional matters; and feedback represents the degree to which faculty members can respond to and influence communication processes. These dimensions serve as predictors of the overall quality of relationship management within the institution. In this study, faculty engagement is conceptualised as a relational outcome—a product of strategically managed communication processes that nurture emotional and cognitive connection to the university.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design involving a population of 388 pensionable academic staff at Akwa Ibom State University, as reported by Usoro and Edeminam (2023). Using the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Sample Size Calculator, a sample size of 193 was determined based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Lecturers from the Obio Akpa Campus were selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from. The reliability of the constructs was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding values of 0.882 for information adequacy, 0.572 for Information Feedback, 0.857 for information flow, and 0.904 for organizational commitment. The structured questionnaire comprised items adapted from Rhee and Moon (2009), with responses measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data analysis and presentation

Out of the 193 questionnaires administered, 125 were returned over a period of two weeks. After data screening, 12 questionnaires were excluded due to incompleteness or inconsistent answers, resulting in 113 usable responses. This yielded a usable response rate of 58.5%, which is acceptable for the statistical techniques applied in this study. Participants were informed that there were no right or wrong answers and were encouraged to respond honestly, with adequate time provided to complete the questionnaire. The structured questionnaire comprised items adapted from previously validated instruments, with responses measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The constructs included Information Flow (4 items) adopted from Rhee and Moon (2009) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.857; Information Adequacy (9 items) also from Rhee and Moon (2009) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.882; Information Feedback (5 items) from Rosen et al. (2006) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.572; Faculty Engagement (9 items)

from Schaufeli et al. (2006) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.906; and Organizational Commitment (5 items) from Gallicano et al. (2012) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.904. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26. Descriptive statistics summarised the demographic characteristics of respondents. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of relationships among the variables. Multiple regression analysis was applied to test the direct and mediating effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables, following the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach to mediation.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the 113 academic staff respondents. The gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 55.8% male and 44.2% female participants. The majority of respondents were aged between 31 and 40 years (36.3%) and most respondents held a Master's degree (44.2%), while PhD holders accounted for 28.3%. This reflects a well-qualified academic staff. Regarding years of experience, 36.3% of respondents had more than six years' experience, closely followed by 34.5% with 4 to 6 years. Less experienced staff with under three years accounted for just under 30%, suggesting a good balance between junior and senior academics.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Academic Staff Respondents at Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus.

Options	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	63	55.8
Female	50	44.2
Total	113	100
Age		
20–30 years	34	30.1
31–40 years	41	36.3
41–50 years	12	10.6
Above 50 years	26	23.0
Total	113	100
Level of Education		
Bachelor's Degree	31	27.4
Master's Degree	50	44.2
Ph.D.	32	28.3
Total	113	100
Years of Experience		
Less than 1 year	9	8.0
1–3 years	24	21.2
4–6 years	39	34.5
More than 6 years	41	36.3
Total	113	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 2 reveals that a majority of respondents perceive a relatively strong downward flow of information within the organization, with 61% (SA + A) agreeing that information flows openly from the top to lower levels. This indicates a healthy top-down communication channel. However, perceptions are less favourable regarding upward information flow; only 32.7% agreed or strongly agreed

Table 2: Responses on perceptions of organizational information flow.

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total	Mean
Information flows openly from the top downward	19 (16.8%)	50 (44.2%)	19 (16.8%)	22 (19.5%)	3 (2.7%)	113	3.53
Information flows openly to the top of the organization	6 (5.3%)	31 (27.4%)	40 (35.4%)	29 (25.7%)	7 (6.2%)	113	2.99
Information flows openly between departments	9 (8.0%)	47 (41.6%)	25 (22.1%)	23 (20.4%)	9 (8.0%)	113	3.12
Information flows openly across the whole organization	12 (10.6%)	33 (29.2%)	32 (28.3%)	27 (23.9%)	9 (8.0%)	113	3.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

Table 3: Perceptions of Information Adequacy

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total	Mean
I receive adequate information on how I am being judged by the organization.	6(5.3%)	9(8.0%)	24(21.2%)	55(48.7%)	19(16.8%)	113	2.29
I receive adequate job performance information from the organization.	3(2.7%)	19(16.8%)	45(39.8%)	39(34.5%)	7(6.2%)	113	2.55
I receive adequate information about employee welfare.	3(2.7%)	13(11.5%)	40(35.4%)	44(38.9%)	13(11.5%)	113	2.42
I receive adequate information about our progress in our job.	3(2.7%)	21(18.6%)	59(52.2%)	17(15.0%)	13(11.5%)	113	2.64
I receive adequate information about the goals of the organization.	3(2.7%)	27(23.9%)	58(51.3%)	19(16.8%)	6(5.3%)	113	2.87
I receive adequate information about changes within the organization.	–	40(35.4%)	50(44.2%)	13(11.5%)	10(8.8%)	113	3.00
I receive adequate information about organizational policies.	–	34(30.1%)	53(46.9%)	10(8.8%)	16(14.2%)	113	2.94
I receive adequate information about the organization's accomplishments.	6(5.3%)	27(23.9%)	32(28.3%)	32(28.3%)	16(14.2%)	113	2.65
I receive adequate information about the organization's profits and standing.	6(5.3%)	7(6.2%)	28(24.8%)	42(37.2%)	30(26.5%)	113	2.17

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4: Perceptions of information feedback among academic staff.

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	Mean
My supervisor is usually available when I want performance information.	24(21.2%)	46 (40.7%)	28(24.8%)	9(8.0%)	6(5.3%)	113	4.00
My supervisor is too busy to give me feedback (Reverse scored).	6(5.3%)	9(8.0%)	29(25.7%)	53(46.9%)	16(14.2%)	113	2.20
I have little contact with my supervisor (Reverse scored).	0(0.0%)	9(8.0%)	52(46.0%)	42(37.2%)	10(8.8%)	113	2.40
I interact with my supervisor on a daily basis.	22(19.5%)	50(44.2%)	25(22.1%)	16(14.2%)	0(0.0%)	113	4.00
I only receive performance feedback during formal performance reviews (Reverse scored).	9(8.0%)	32(28.3%)	59(52.2%)	10(8.8%)	3(2.7%)	113	3.30

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

that information flows openly to the top, while a notable 31.9% disagreed, and 35.4% remained neutral—suggesting a possible communication gap between lower-level staff and top management. Similarly, 49.6% of respondents agreed that information flows openly between departments, though 22.1% remained neutral and 28.4% disagreed, indicating that interdepartmental communication could benefit from improvement. Finally, only 39.8% agreed that information flows openly throughout the entire organization, with a relatively high 28.3% maintaining a neutral stance, suggesting limited confidence in the overall transparency of organizational communication.

Table 3 reveals significant gaps in perceived information adequacy among academic staff, with the majority of respondents indicating insufficient communication, particularly regarding performance evaluation, welfare, and organizational standing. Over 65% disagreed or strongly disagreed with receiving clear feedback on how they are judged, and 67% expressed similar dissatisfaction with information on organizational profits and performance. High neutral responses exceeding 50% in areas like job progress and organizational goals suggest uncertainty or inconsistency in internal communication. These insights highlight a critical need for more transparent, consistent, and structured communication practices to improve employee clarity, trust, and engagement.

Table 4 reveal generally positive perceptions regarding

supervisor accessibility and feedback among academic staff. A majority (62%) agree or strongly agree that their supervisors are usually available when performance information is needed, highlighting good accessibility. Conversely, most respondents (61%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that supervisors are too busy to provide feedback, indicating supervisors are seen as engaged. Most staff also disagree with having little contact with their supervisors (46%), and a substantial proportion (64%) report daily interaction with their supervisors. However, feedback appears to be more formalised, as around 36% agree or strongly agree they receive performance feedback only during formal reviews, while the majority remain neutral or disagree. Overall, the findings suggest an open, supportive supervisory relationship with room for improving informal feedback mechanisms.

Table 5 reveals a generally positive level of work engagement among respondents. A significant proportion report feeling enthusiastic (74.4%) and proud (78.7%) of their work, with high mean scores of 4.00 in both cases, indicating strong emotional investment. Similarly, 77.9% agree that their job inspires them ($M = 4.05$), the highest rated item, reflecting intrinsic motivation. Positive responses are also seen in feelings of vigour and immersion, with mean scores of 3.69 and 3.68 respectively. However, responses to statements such as “I feel bursting with energy” ($M = 3.47$), “When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work” ($M = 3.30$), and “I get

Table 5: Academic staff work engagement levels

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	Mean
At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	12 (10.6%)	41(36.3%)	22(19.5%)	34(30.1%)	4 (3.5%)	113	3.47
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	18 (15.9%)	44(38.9%)	25(22.1%)	22(19.5%)	4 (3.5%)	113	3.69
I am enthusiastic about my job.	21 (18.6%)	63(55.8%)	22(19.5%)	7 (6.2%)	0 (0.0%)	113	4.00
My job inspires me.	25 (22.1%)	63(55.8%)	19(16.8%)	6 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	113	4.05
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	15 (13.3%)	45(39.8%)	19(16.8%)	18(15.9%)	16(14.2%)	113	3.30
I feel happy when I am working intensely.	16 (14.2%)	45(39.8%)	43(38.1%)	9 (8.0%)	0 (0.0%)	113	3.61
I am proud of the work that I do.	24 (21.2%)	65(57.5%)	20(17.7%)	4 (3.5%)	0 (0.0%)	113	4.00
I am immersed in my work.	22 (19.5%)	41(36.3%)	25(22.1%)	22(19.5%)	3 (2.7%)	113	3.68
I get carried away when I am working.	12 (10.6%)	35(31.0%)	35(31.0%)	28(24.8%)	3 (2.7%)	113	3.28

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 6: Perceptions of Organizational Commitment

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total	Mean
I have a long-lasting bond with the organization I work for.	9(8.0%)	49 (43.4%)	38 (33.6%)	13 (11.5%)	4 (3.5%)	113	3.41
Compared to other potential employers, I value my relationship with my current organization more.	3(2.7%)	52 (46.0%)	35 (31.0%)	13 (11.5%)	10 (8.8%)	113	3.23
I would prefer to continue working with this organization.	9(8.0%)	46 (40.7%)	38 (33.6%)	16 (14.2%)	4 (3.5%)	113	3.35
I feel that my organization is committed to a long-term relationship with me.	15(13.3%)	37 (32.7%)	47 (41.6%)	11 (9.7%)	3 (2.7%)	113	3.44
I believe the organization wants to maintain its relationship with me.	15(13.3%)	36 (31.9%)	48 (42.5%)	10 (8.8%)	4 (3.5%)	113	3.43

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Table 7: Pearson correlations among information flow, information adequacy, information feedback, and faculty engagement (N = 113).

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Information Flow (IF)	—	-.20*	.03	.22*
2. Information Adequacy (IA)	-.20*	—	.15	.21*
3. Information Feedback (IFB)	.03	.15	—	-.01
4. Faculty Engagement (FE)	.22*	.21*	-.01	—

Source: Fieldwork, 2025. Note. $p < .05$ (two-tailed).

carried away when working" ($M = 3.28$) suggest moderate energy levels and flow, leaning towards neutrality. This indicates that while emotional and motivational engagement is strong, physical energy and spontaneous absorption in work are areas with room for improvement.

Table 6 shows respondents' perceptions of their relationship with their organization. It shows predominantly neutral attitudes, with a consistent presence of moderate agreement. For instance, 43.4% agreed they have a long-lasting bond with their organization, while 33.6% were neutral, and 11.5% disagreed, yielding a mean of 3.41. Similarly, 46.0% agreed they value their current organization more than potential employers, but a notable 31.0% remained neutral and 20.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, resulting in a mean of 3.23. Across all five statements, the neutral responses ranged from 31.0% to 42.5%, indicating significant uncertainty or lack of strong sentiment among participants. Statements about the organization's commitment to a long-term relationship (mean = 3.44, with 32.7% agree and 13.3% strongly agree) and the belief that the organization wants to maintain its relationship with employees (mean = 3.43) also reflect this trend. These results suggest that while there is some degree of perceived organizational commitment, a considerable portion of employees are

undecided, highlighting an opportunity for organizations to foster stronger relational engagement and reinforce mutual long-term commitment.

Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Communication strategies do not play a significant role in faculty engagement in Akwa Ibom State University.

Table 7 displays the Pearson correlation coefficients among Information Flow (IF), Information Adequacy (IA), Information Feedback (IFB), and Faculty Engagement (FE) based on data from 113 academic staff. Information Flow is positively and significantly correlated with Faculty Engagement ($r = .22$, $p < .05$), indicating that more open communication is associated with higher engagement. Similarly, Information Adequacy is positively correlated with Faculty Engagement ($r = .21$, $p < .05$), suggesting that receiving sufficient information enhances engagement levels. However, Information Flow and Information Adequacy exhibit a small but significant negative correlation ($r = -.20$, $p < .05$), possibly reflecting perceptions that information may flow but not always be adequate. No significant relationships were found between

Information Feedback and the other variables. Since two aspects of communication strategies, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and it can be concluded that communication strategies play a significant role in faculty engagement at the university.

Hypothesis Two: Communication strategies do not play a significant role in organizational commitment in Akwa Ibom State University.

Table 8 shows Pearson correlation coefficients among Information Flow (IF), Information Adequacy (IA), Information Feedback (IFB), and Organizational Commitment (OC) for 113 academic staff. Organizational Commitment is positively and significantly correlated with both Information Flow ($r = .23$, $p < .05$) and Information Adequacy ($r = .33$, $p < .01$), indicating that better communication and sufficient information relate to stronger organizational commitment. Information Flow and Information Adequacy show a small but significant negative correlation ($r = -.20$, $p < .05$). Information Feedback did not significantly correlate with Organizational Commitment or the other communication variables, suggesting it may influence organizational commitment differently or less directly. Since two aspects of communication strategies, specifically the openness of information flow and the adequacy of information provided, are positively associated with faculty engagement, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, and it can be concluded that communication strategies play a significant role in organizational commitment at the university.

Table 8: Pearson correlations among Information Flow (IF), Information Adequacy (IA), Information Feedback (IFB), and Organizational Commitment (OC) (N = 113).

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Information Flow (IF)	—	-.20*	.03	.23*
2. Information Adequacy (IA)	-.20*	—	.15	.33**
3. Information Feedback (IFB)	.03	.15	—	-.03
4. Organizational Commitment (OC)	.23*	.33**	-.03	—

Source: Fieldwork, 2025. Note. $p < .05$, $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Hypothesis Three: Faculty engagement does not mediate the relationship of communication strategies and organizational commitment in Akwa Ibom State University.

Table 9 presents the results of a mediation analysis using Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure to assess whether faculty engagement mediates the relationship between communication strategies and organizational commitment. In Step 1, Information Flow ($\beta = .309$, $p = .001$) and Information Adequacy ($\beta = .407$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted Organizational Commitment (OC), while Information Feedback was not a significant predictor ($\beta = -.103$, $p = .238$). In Step 2, the same independent variables significantly predicted Faculty Engagement (FE), with IF ($\beta = .275$, $p = .003$) and IA ($\beta = .276$, $p = .004$) again emerging as significant, while IFB remained non-

Table 9: Multiple Regression Analysis for the Mediation Role of Faculty Engagement in the Relationship between Communication Strategies and Organizational Commitment (N = 113)

Model	Predictor	B	SE	B	T	p
Step 1	(Constant)	1.621	0.575	—	2.819	.006
	IF	0.290	0.082	.309	3.547	.001
	IA	0.493	0.107	.407	4.617	.000
	IFB	-0.149	0.126	-.103	-1.186	.238
Step 2	(Constant)	2.575	0.416	—	6.195	.000
	IF	0.177	0.059	.275	2.991	.003
	IA	0.229	0.077	.276	2.968	.004
	IFB	-0.061	0.091	-.061	-0.668	.505
Step 3	(Constant)	-0.006	0.598	—	-0.010	.992
	IF	0.178	0.076	.190	2.347	.021
	IA	0.348	0.099	.288	3.511	.001
	IFB	-0.111	0.113	-.076	-0.984	.327
	FE	0.632	0.118	.433	5.334	.000

Source: Fieldwork, 2025. Note. IF = Information Flow; IA = Information Adequacy; IFB = Information Feedback; FE = Faculty Engagement; OC = Organizational Commitment. FE is entered as a mediator in Step 3. All coefficients are based on standard multiple regression analyses. $p < .05$ (two-tailed).

significant. In Step 3, when Faculty Engagement was added as a mediator in predicting OC, it became a strong and significant predictor ($\beta = .433$, $p < .001$). The direct effects of IF and IA on OC were reduced (to $\beta = .190$ and $\beta = .288$, respectively), though they remained statistically significant, suggesting partial mediation. This indicates that faculty engagement explains a significant portion of the relationship between communication strategies and organizational commitment, but not all of it.

DISCUSSION

Lecturers at Akwa Ibom State University perceive communication as mainly top-down and limited, with 61% agreeing information flows openly downward but only 33% feeling it flows effectively upward. Cross-departmental and organization-wide communication were also viewed as inadequate. Over 65% disagreed that they receive sufficient feedback on performance or financial information. Supervisor communication was more positively rated, with about 62% reporting access to supervisors for performance-related information, though feedback was often limited to formal reviews. Information Flow ($r = .22$, $p < .05$) and Information Adequacy ($r = .21$, $p < .05$) significantly predicted faculty engagement, while feedback did not ($r = -.01$, $p > .05$). These findings suggest that the university's communication strategies are skewed towards hierarchical, downward communication, limiting opportunities for upward feedback and cross-departmental collaboration. The relatively positive supervisor-level communication indicates that localised channels may partially mitigate broader institutional communication challenges.

However, the lack of effective upward and lateral communication could undermine collaboration, stifle feedback, and weaken institutional transparency. Moreover, the ineffectiveness of feedback systems highlights a missed opportunity to support performance improvement and professional development. These observations align with Tourish and Robson (2006), who

argue that overly centralised communication structures hinder employee voice and limit engagement. Similarly, Men (2014) found that top-down communication, when not complemented by upward and lateral channels, often fails to support employee commitment. The positive view of supervisor-level interactions supports Welch's (2012) assertion that direct, interpersonal communication with line managers can help sustain engagement in environments with limited formal communication. The insignificance of feedback echoes Eisenberger et al.'s (2002) findings that infrequent or formalised feedback weakens perceptions of organizational support.

Following this, lecturers at Akwa Ibom State University show high emotional and mental engagement, with over 74% enthusiastic about their job, nearly 79% proud, and 78% feeling inspired. Cognitive engagement is strong, as reflected in immersion and happiness at work. However, physical engagement is lower, with less than half feeling energetic or fully absorbed in tasks. Information Flow ($\beta = .275, p = .003$) and Information Adequacy ($\beta = .276, p = .004$) significantly predicted engagement, while Feedback was not significant ($\beta = -.061, p > .05$), suggesting emotional and cognitive connection despite physical fatigue or disengagement. This discrepancy likely reflects external pressures such as workload intensity, administrative demands, and limited institutional support for wellbeing.

Nevertheless, the stronger scores on emotional and cognitive dimensions indicate intrinsic motivation and professional identity as driving forces, while lower physical engagement suggests the presence of environmental or systemic constraints that inhibit sustained energy and flow. These findings are consistent with Schaufeli and Bakker's (2003) model, which describes work engagement as comprising emotional, cognitive, and physical components, often affected differently by workplace conditions. Bakker and Demerouti (2008) also emphasized the importance of job resources—such as communication and managerial support—in promoting engagement across all dimensions. The predictive role of Information Flow and Adequacy supports this model, while the lack of significant impact from Feedback mirrors earlier findings from Saks (2006), who noted that informal, ongoing feedback is often necessary to affect deeper levels of engagement.

In addition to this, academic staff at Akwa Ibom State University report moderate organizational commitment, with around 43% agreeing they have a long-term bond with the institution and 46% valuing their relationship with the university over other employers. However, a substantial proportion (33.6%–42.5%) remained neutral on key commitment indicators. About 46% believed the university is committed to a long-term relationship with staff. Information Flow ($r = .23, p < .05$) and Information Adequacy ($r = .33, p < .01$) were significantly related to organizational commitment. Faculty Engagement partially mediated this relationship ($\beta = .433, p < .001$). This suggests that while there is a core group of committed

staff, many lecturers remain uncertain or ambivalent about their long-term relationship with the university. This may reflect inconsistencies in how commitment is demonstrated across departments or a lack of clear communication and policies signaling long-term investment in staff. The high proportion of neutral responses indicates potential trust issues or a lack of visible commitment from leadership, which may reduce staff motivation and retention over time. These findings align with Meyer and Allen's (1991) model, which ties organizational commitment to perceived support and alignment of values. The strong influence of Information Flow and Adequacy supports prior studies that link communication quality with commitment levels. The mediating role of engagement reinforces Eisenberger et al.'s (2001) assertion that engaged employees are more likely to reciprocate organizational support with loyalty. However, the non-significance of Feedback again highlights the weak performance of the university's feedback mechanisms, echoing concerns raised in earlier research about the importance of informal and developmental feedback in fostering commitment.

CONCLUSION

The cultivation of organizational commitment among academic personnel is a critical objective for higher education institutions seeking to deliver quality education and maintain institutional excellence. This study examined the impact of communication strategies, namely information flow, information adequacy, and information feedback, on organizational commitment, with faculty engagement posited as a mediating factor within the context of Akwa Ibom State University. Findings demonstrated that both information flow and information adequacy exert significant direct effects on faculty engagement and organizational commitment, whereas information feedback did not exhibit a significant influence. Faculty engagement was found to partially mediate the relationships between communication strategies and organizational commitment, underscoring its fundamental role in fostering staff loyalty and organizational alignment. These results highlight the necessity for universities to develop transparent, bidirectional communication channels and supportive organizational climates to enhance faculty engagement, thereby strengthening organizational commitment and contributing to institutional success.

RECOMMENDATIONS/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study carry important implications for the administration of higher education institutions. The evidence indicates that communication strategies, specifically information flow and information adequacy, are pivotal determinants of organizational commitment and faculty engagement.

Consequently, institutional management should prioritise the enhancement of these communication mechanisms by fostering an environment that encourages transparency, openness, and interdepartmental collaboration. To achieve this, adopting a decentralised communication framework could facilitate more effective two-way and lateral information exchange. Furthermore, appointing and training supportive leaders who actively promote information sharing and accessibility at all levels, particularly between supervisors and academic staff, is imperative. Regular and systematic performance appraisals, ideally on a quarterly basis, should be institutionalised to monitor faculty engagement and provide timely, constructive feedback. Such practices are likely to bolster motivation, reinforce commitment, and improve overall organizational efficacy.

Limitations and suggestion for further study

While this study provides valuable insights, its scope is limited to academic staff within a single university, which constrains the generalisability of the results. Future research should consider a broader sample encompassing multiple academic disciplines and universities across diverse geographical and cultural contexts to ascertain the consistency and variability of the observed relationships. Additionally, increasing the sample size and employing mixed-method research designs would enhance the depth and robustness of findings, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between communication strategies, faculty engagement, and organizational commitment. Future investigations might also explore the mediating or moderating roles of variables such as faculty motivation, perceived organizational support, and leadership styles to further elucidate the mechanisms influencing commitment within academic settings.

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