

ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF OF BENSON IDAHOSA UNIVERSITY

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<https://doi.org/10.37602/IJSSMR.2026.9512>

ABSTRACT

This paper examined the effect of organisational politics on employees' commitment with organisational politics proxied by coalition-building and sabotage/undermining and the employee commitment proxied by affective, continuance and normative commitment. The study was conducted among the academic staff at Benson Idahosa University with a total population of 270 staff. The census method was used as the entire population was included in the study. All the variables were performed using descriptive statistics and the correlation between variables was assessed using linear regression analysis. Every statistical test was conducted with 5 percent significant level using SPSS software. The results show that there is a positive and significant relation between coalition-building and affective and normative commitment but weak yet non-significant relation between coalition-building and continuance commitment. On the other hand, sabotage and undermining have a negative effect but without statistical significance on the affective and normative commitment whereas their effect on continuance commitment is not statistically significant. According to these findings, the study advises that universities need to be proactive towards building coalitions, put measures in place to discourage sabotage, improve staff involvement by adopting ethical leadership approaches, and make the working environment positive and committed by providing an effective communication channel.

Keywords: Academic staff. Coalition-building, Employee commitment, Organisational politics and Sabotage.

INTRODUCTION

Organisational politics has become an inseparable component of modern organisations that determines the behaviour of people as well as organisational performance in general (Al-Madadha et al., 2021; Nnenna & Mbah, 2019). Academic staff are not only inclined to daily operations in universities, they are bound by politics as they have to navigate a network of interdepartmental co-operation, governance, resource allocation and policy making (Cosenz, 2022; Danken, 2017). These dynamics may be positive, resulting in innovation and teamwork; however, they also have the possibility of causing discord, rivalry and inequity (Chen et al., 2017; Davis, 2016). Such perceptions has the ability to affect employee job attitudes one of which is employee commitment. Employees' commitment, which typically determines job satisfaction, performance and retention, is affected by organizational politics (Julius et al., 2017; Khuwaja et al., 2020).

The level of commitment is a psychological relationship between employees and their organisation, hence, affecting the determination of the level of commitment and their decision to stay with the organisation (Roseline & Konya, 2019). This commitment is generally categorised into three different dimensions namely: affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment (Dwiyanti et al., 2022). All the dimensions are critical in the overall engagement and loyalty of an employee and it is essential that the institutions should understand the impact of various organisational behaviours including politics on these dimensions (Kapoutsis & Thanos, 2016) .

There exist a number of studies on organizational politics and employees commitment (Opoku & Arthur, 2018) but the literature has not covered much when it comes to concrete political actions like coalition building and sabotage or undermining. (Saade et al., 2020). The feeling of belonging and a sense of purpose leads to strengthening affective and normative commitment in case of coalition building, i.e. developing a set of alliances so that collective goals can be met (Gasper, 2019). Sabotage and undermining on the other hand, are deliberate actions meant to harm other people or disrupt their success and may cause distrust and demoralization (Jing et al., 2022). Although they are important, these practises are poorly studied, especially in the framework of the Nigerian universities (Coleman, 2015).

The implications of the political dynamics on job satisfaction and retention in a broader sense have been studied (Mather& Bam, 2025; Szromek & Wolniak, 2020). Nevertheless, not many studies have explored the effect of those unique political behaviour on various types of employee commitment and it presents a critical gap in the understanding of the subtle interaction between politics and commitment (Kidron & Vinarski Peretz, 2018). Although a considerable part of past studies has covered the influence of politics on affective commitment, the effect of politics on normative and continuance commitment have been under-researched (Abdi et al., 2025). This is a major gap considering the fact that normative commitment equates to the feeling of responsibility in employees and continuance commitment can be influenced by external factors like job security and economic stability (Kayar & Yeşilada, 2024)

Moreover, the lack of research specifically focusing on organisational politics in Benson Idahosa University, an aggressive developing privately owned institution with peculiar structural and cultural features, is quite pronounced.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to investigate how organizational politics influences employee commitment among academic staff at Benson Idahosa University. Specifically, the study seeks:

1. To examine the influence of coalition-building on affective commitment.
2. To ascertain the influence of coalition-building on normative commitment.
3. To evaluate the influence of coalition-building on continuance commitment.
4. To examine the influence of sabotage and undermining on affective commitment.
5. To determine the influence of sabotage and undermining on normative commitment.
6. To assess the influence of sabotage and undermining on continuance commitment.

HYPOTHESES

H₀₁: Coalition-building has no significant influence on affective commitment.

H₀₂: Coalition-building has no significant influence on normative commitment.

H₀₃: Coalition-building has no significant influence on continuance commitment.

H₀₄: Sabotage and undermining have no significant influence on affective commitment.

H₀₅: Sabotage and undermining have no significant influence on normative commitment.

H₀₆: Sabotage and undermining have no significant influence on continuance commitment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employees Commitment

Employee commitment has been defined as the degree to which employees feel devoted to their organization (Adekola, 2018). Moreover, Shukla and Rai (2015) describe employee commitment as an affective response to the entire organization and the degree of attachment or loyalty employees feel towards the organization. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) and Reetta (2018) see it as a psychological state that binds an employee to an organization, thereby reducing the problem of employee turnover and serving as a mindset that takes different forms and binds an individual to a course of action that is important to a particular target.

It is, therefore, important to note that all these definitions highlight employees' loyalty and affection. Employees are more likely to be committed when they perceive fairness in their psychological contract. Employee commitment is underpinned by social exchange theory, which views the employment relationship as a process of resource exchange governed by the norm of reciprocity (Blau, 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2016). This relationship encompasses both the ongoing conferment of benefits and the continual re-balancing of expectations and obligations. Perceptions of the mutual obligations held by the employee and the employer may result from formal contracts entailed in an employment relationship or be implied by the expectations which both parties hold of each other; the latter being captured in the concept of psychological contract (Guest, 2016). Employees reciprocate their employer based on the extent to which they perceive their obligations have been fulfilled (Alcover et al., 2017). The more the employer fulfills obligations and meets expectations, the more employees feel secure and satisfied, and consequently obligated to reciprocate.

Indeed, employee commitment is a crucial factor in achieving organizational success (Ogeniyi, Adeyemi & Olaoye, 2017; Nasiri, 2017). Individuals with low levels of commitment will do only enough to meet work requirements. They do not put their hearts into the work and mission of the organization. They seem more concerned with personal success than with the success of the organization as a whole. People who are less committed are also more likely to see themselves as outsiders rather than as long-term members of the organization (Oluwaseun, 2019; Zheng, Sharan & Wei, 2010). As such, an attractive job offer elsewhere is very likely to result in their departure. In contrast, employees with high commitment to an organization see themselves as an integral part of the organization. Anything that threatens the organization is perceived as an imminent danger to them as well. Such employees become creatively involved

in the organization's mission and values and constantly think about ways to do their jobs better (Andrea, 2017). In essence, committed employees work for the organization as if the organization belongs to them. Ajadi and Yussuf (2020) opined that committed employees are those who are morally bound and are not likely to terminate their appointment with the organization prematurely.

Scholars have offered various classifications of employee commitment, shifting from a unidimensional to a multidimensional perspective. Initially, employee commitment was treated as a unidimensional construct, focusing primarily on a singular aspect of the employee's relationship with the organization. However, the recognition that commitment emanates from different psychological mindsets has led to the development of a more nuanced, multidimensional view of organizational commitment.

Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) are widely regarded as pioneers in conceptualizing commitment as a multidimensional construct. They proposed a three-component model of commitment, which has since been widely adopted in organizational behavior studies. These three dimensions are as follows

Park et al. (2021) describe affective commitment as the emotional alignment of an employee with the organizational mission and values, thereby highlighting the role of shared values in fostering attachment. This view is further supported by Lee et al. (2022), who argue that affective commitment arises when employees feel supported by their supervisors and colleagues, creating a sense of psychological safety and belonging. Psychological safety not only encourages employees to express their ideas freely but also strengthens their emotional connection to the organization.

Unlike affective commitment, continuance commitment is driven by the perceived costs associated with leaving an organization. Employees remain with their employer not necessarily because they want to but because they feel they have to. Johnson and Lee (2020) describe it as the degree to which employees feel compelled to remain in an organization due to the perceived costs of departure. The nature of these "costs" varies, as highlighted by Patel and Verma (2021), who emphasize financial and non-financial investments, such as retirement benefits, the time invested in learning new skills, and the development of social capital within the organization.

Saha and Ghosh (2023) argue that employees with high continuance commitment are less likely to engage in voluntary turnover, though their performance may not match that of those with strong affective commitment.

Normative commitment differs from affective and continuance commitment, as it represents an employee's moral obligation to stay with an organization. Employees with strong normative commitment feel they "ought to" remain with their employer, often driven by social, cultural, or ethical considerations. Chen et al. (2020) describe normative commitment as "an internalized moral obligation, often rooted in social norms and reciprocity." This perspective is echoed by Kumar and Sharma (2021), who argue that employees who receive employer-sponsored training or education feel indebted to the organization, thereby strengthening their normative commitment.

This theoretical framework of the research will be based on the Social Exchange Theory (SET) which assumes that organisational relations are regulated by mutual obligation and reciprocity (Cropanzano et al., 2017). As stipulated by SET, those employees who believe that the organisational politics is just and favourable would tend to repay them by becoming more committed and loyal to them (Cacciattolo, 2015). Such a framework gives a solid perspective in which to analyse the effect coalitions building gives on positive exchange relationship, and sabotage and undermining can occur and give way to low commitment.

With these gaps covered, not only can this study provide a more detailed insight into the organisational politics of the Nigerian academic sector but also be used as a contribution to the overall discussion of the role played by political behaviours in the commitment of employees (Oweisanda, 2024). The study can be a crucial source of information to university administrators and policymakers, who can consider the most efficient ways to encourage positive political engagement and prevent the adverse effects of sabotage and undermining (Braw & Newton, 2024). This way, it intends to boost employee satisfaction, minimise turnover as well as institutional performance in Benson Idahosa University.

Organizational Politics

Organizational politics is a critical and unavoidable element of organizational life that influences decision-making, resource allocation, and interpersonal relationships. The concept of organizational politics has been described from multiple perspectives, reflecting its complexity and multifaceted nature. While early definitions of organizational politics emphasized self-serving behaviors (Gallagher & Laird, 2018), more recent views highlight both its positive and negative aspects (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2018)..

Bodla and Danish (2017) conceptualize organizational politics as a natural part of organizational life, involving power, influence, and authority. These perspectives highlight the dual nature of politics both as a subjective experience and an objective organizational phenomenon. Expanding this perspective, Wayne et al. (2016) describe organizational politics as manipulative actions aimed at advancing personal interests at the expense of others. This aligns with the view of Vigoda-Gadot and Drory (2017), who suggest that politics may have both positive and negative aspects. The positive dimension includes fostering cooperation and achieving shared goals, while the negative dimension includes unethical behavior and self-interest-driven manipulation. Organizational politics can take the following forms

Coalition Building

Coalition building is an essential tactic in organizational politics, representing a deliberate strategy where individuals or groups collaborate to exert influence and achieve shared objectives. This approach has garnered significant attention in the context of modern organizations, where navigating complex power structures requires collective action and resource pooling. The dynamics of coalition building offer insights into its potential for fostering collaboration, overcoming resistance, and driving organizational change.

At its core, coalition building is predicated on the principle of strength through unity, where aligned interests among stakeholders create a platform for amplified influence. Pfeffer (2014) underscores that coalitions are particularly critical in resource-constrained environments,

where individual efforts may fall short in addressing organizational challenges. The collective bargaining power of coalitions allows their members to advocate for policy changes, secure resources, and promote innovations that align with shared goals. However, this process is not without its intricacies, as coalitions must navigate varying motivations and priorities among members. Horizontal coalitions, which involve collaboration among peers or groups at the same organizational level, have been identified as a common manifestation of this tactic. Such alliances are often driven by shared professional goals or mutual challenges, with members pooling their resources to address organizational issues. Pfeffer (2014) describes horizontal coalitions as both a political strategy and a mechanism for fostering camaraderie in competitive environments. In practice, these alliances enable individuals to collectively resist unfavorable policies or advocate for shared interests. However, tensions can arise when competing priorities or power dynamics within the coalition create friction, underscoring the need for transparent communication and aligned objectives.

Vertical coalitions, on the other hand, operate across hierarchical levels and are often strategic in nature, leveraging the positional authority of senior members to amplify collective influence. These coalitions are particularly prominent in organizations with complex power dynamics, as they facilitate a bridge between the perspectives of upper management and frontline employees. For instance, senior leaders who advocate for employee-driven initiatives may collaborate with junior employees to promote a unified vision for organizational change. Such alliances not only enhance the credibility of the coalition's goals but also create an avenue for upward communication and shared decision-making. However, as Mintzberg (1985) noted, vertical coalitions require a delicate balance of power and trust to avoid perceptions of favoritism or manipulation.

The drivers of coalition building are as varied as the organizations in which they occur. Resource scarcity is often cited as a primary motivator, where the pooling of resources within a coalition becomes essential to navigate competitive or politically charged environments (Ferris et al., 2012). Similarly, common threats or challenges can unify disparate stakeholders, creating a platform for collective resistance or advocacy. For example, in times of organizational restructuring, employees may form coalitions to ensure their voices are heard in decisions that affect their roles and well-being. These coalitions often emerge organically, driven by the shared sense of urgency and mutual dependency among members.

Despite its benefits, coalition building is not without challenges. The problem of "free riders," as discussed by Olson (1965) and reiterated in contemporary contexts by Vigoda-Gadot (2007), highlights the difficulty in ensuring equitable contributions among coalition members. Members who benefit from the coalition's outcomes without actively participating risk undermining its cohesion and sustainability. Moreover, coalitions may face resistance from external stakeholders, particularly those whose interests are threatened by the coalition's objectives. This resistance often takes the form of counter-coalitions, misinformation, or overt opposition, which can destabilize the coalition's efforts and necessitate adaptive strategies.

The impact of coalition building extends beyond the immediate goals of its members, influencing broader organizational dynamics. Effective coalitions have the potential to foster innovation, drive policy changes, and improve inclusivity within organizations. For instance, coalitions advocating for diversity and equity have gained prominence in contemporary

workplaces, where systemic barriers to representation remain a pressing challenge. Ibarra, Carter, and Silva (2010) highlight that such coalitions often rely on the political acumen of their members to navigate resistance and build credibility. Similarly, Edmondson and Lei (2014) emphasize the role of coalitions in cross-functional teams, where collaboration across disciplines and expertise fosters organizational agility and problem-solving.

However, coalitions can also exacerbate divisions within organizations if their objectives are perceived as exclusionary or misaligned with broader goals. Exclusive coalitions may create silos, hinder collaboration and fostering resentment among non-members. Furthermore, the use of manipulative or coercive tactics within coalitions can erode trust and morale, with long-term repercussions for organizational culture and stability. These challenges necessitate a focus on ethical coalition-building practices that prioritize transparency, inclusivity, and alignment with organizational values.

In contemporary organizations, coalition building continues to evolve as a critical political strategy, particularly in the face of rapid technological advancements and shifting workplace dynamics. Digital platforms have emerged as new arenas for coalition building, enabling geographically dispersed individuals to collaborate effectively. This evolution underscores the enduring relevance of coalition building in addressing complex organizational challenges and promoting shared success. By fostering alliances grounded in trust and mutual benefit, coalitions can serve as powerful catalysts for positive change, driving progress in increasingly interconnected and competitive environment

2.2.6 Sabotage and Undermining

Sabotage and undermining are significant elements of organizational politics, representing intentional actions aimed at disrupting processes, hindering colleagues, or obstructing organizational objectives for personal or political gain. These behaviors undermine trust, productivity, and morale, making them crucial areas of study in understanding political dynamics within organizations. Definitions and perspectives on sabotage and undermining vary among scholars, reflecting the nuanced ways in which these behaviors manifest and their varying impacts on organizations and individuals.

Scholars define sabotage as deliberate actions taken to disrupt organizational operations or harm the performance of others, often driven by personal grievances or a desire to gain a competitive advantage. Vigoda-Gadot (2015) emphasizes that sabotage typically arises from personal motivations such as revenge or dissatisfaction, aimed at impairing the work outcomes of others. Parker and Griffin (2016) further elaborate, describing sabotage as intentional behaviors that obstruct work processes or damage organizational assets, typically visibly and directly. For example, an employee might destroy equipment, delay projects, or sabotage a colleague's work to gain an advantage or resolve personal conflicts. In this context, sabotage is aggressive, overt, and typically aimed at achieving short-term personal or professional goals.

In contrast, undermining is characterized by more covert and subtle tactics designed to erode a colleague's credibility, authority, or professional standing. According to Parker and Griffin (2016), undermining involves actions that diminish self-esteem or confidence, often through passive-aggressive means. Bolino et al. (2016) further elaborate on undermining as

psychological behaviors, such as spreading rumors or withholding critical support, that harm interpersonal relationships and damage professional reputations. This definition underscores the indirectness of undermining, distinguishing it from the more aggressive and visible nature of sabotage. Ferris et al. (2017) and Restubog et al. (2019) explore this further, describing undermining as a form of passive-aggressive behavior aimed at obstructing others' effectiveness. While sabotage directly disrupts organizational processes, undermining works in the background, eroding trust, collaboration, and cohesion within teams. This covert behavior often leads to long-term damage to team morale and organizational culture. For instance, an employee might withhold important information, create false narratives, or subtly undermine a colleague's authority in meetings. Although these actions are less immediately disruptive than sabotage, they have lasting, detrimental effects on relationships and organizational effectiveness.

Tepper et al. (2020) introduce a motivational aspect to sabotage, noting that it often stems from dissatisfaction, perceived inequities, or revenge. Employees who feel slighted or overlooked may engage in sabotage as a form of retaliation. On the other hand, undermining is less about direct retaliation and more about the gradual erosion of professional integrity and relationships, typically driven by long-term dissatisfaction or competitive behavior. It is less about overt action and more about a slow accumulation of negative behaviors that can be harder to detect but just as harmful to team dynamics.

Greenbaum et al. (2021) expand the understanding of these behaviors by focusing on their relational impacts. They argue that while sabotage is a direct effort to disrupt work processes or harm colleagues to express discontent or gain an advantage, undermining is a more persistent and subtle process that erodes trust and collaboration over time. Both sabotage and undermining destabilize teams, create conflict, and foster toxic environments. The relational aspect of these behaviors is crucial because they affect not just the targeted individuals, but the overall cohesion and performance of the team.

Research by Ferris et al. (2002) also highlights that sabotage is frequently motivated by personal grievances or perceived inequalities, such as unfair resource allocation or recognition. These perceived inequities can erode confidence in the organization and destabilize collaborative efforts. When employees feel marginalized or undervalued, they may resort to sabotage as an adaptive (albeit harmful) coping mechanism, seeking to redress perceived imbalances in power or resources (Amegbe, 2024). This competitive spirit fosters a cycle of negativity, where employees feel compelled to protect their interests at the expense of others, thereby promoting a hostile organizational climate. Such an atmosphere of fear and suspicion stifles creativity, communication, and collaboration, aggravating disconnection and dissatisfaction (Lau et al., 2018).

The implications of sabotage extend beyond individual conflicts; they have a ripple effect on the broader organizational dynamics. Lau et al. (2018) suggest that when sabotage occurs, it not only affects the victim's well-being but also damages the morale of bystanders who witness such behavior. Observing colleagues engage in sabotage often leads to a sense of disappointment and alienation among other employees, making them question their own commitment to the organization. This collective decline in morale further undermines the

cohesion and effectiveness of teams, ultimately diminishing the organization's competitiveness and its ability to innovate or achieve collaborative goals.

Moreover, sabotage can directly impact organizational commitment by fostering a more self-interested, less cooperative workforce. Amegbe (2024) identifies a direct correlation between political behaviors, such as sabotage, and the decrease in organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). When sabotage becomes prevalent, employees may become more focused on self-preservation, less inclined to go beyond their basic job requirements, which results in a less engaged and less effective workforce.

Sabotage and undermining represent critical challenges to organizational effectiveness and interpersonal dynamics. Sabotage typically involves overt actions that directly harm organizational systems or individuals, while undermining encompasses covert, psychological tactics aimed at diminishing trust, confidence, and collaboration. Both behaviors are often motivated by personal grievances, competition, or dissatisfaction and can have profound long-term effects on organizational culture and performance. Addressing these issues proactively is essential for fostering a healthy, productive, and cooperative work environment. Understanding the interplay between sabotage and undermining, as well as their impact on both individual and team dynamics, is crucial for developing strategies to mitigate these disruptive behaviors in

METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this paper was cross-sectional survey research in which the investigator sought to uncover the association between organisational politics and employee commitment in academic employees at Benson Idahosa University. The quantitative method was used as it allowed the variables to be analysed and measured objectively.

The study population included the entire members of the academic staff of Benson Idahosa University (270 members) by 2024. With the moderate population size, census sampling method was applied, which allowed coverage of the entire population and dispels any sampling error. The method used made all members of the academic staff to have a chance of being involved thus making the findings more representative and reliable.

A structured questionnaire that would be used in this study was used to collect the data. The measure used to measure organisational politics was divided into two dimensions, coalition-building and sabotage/undermining and employee commitment measured in three dimensions, affective, normative, and continuance commitment. The Likert rating was a five-point scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree, which was used to measure everything.

The instrument validity was determined by reviewing it with knowledgeable staff members of the faculty as well as the researcher's supervisor. The reliability test was done with the alpha coefficient of Cronbach and all the constructs had acceptable reliability scores of over 0.70. The SPSS software was used to analyse data, the descriptive statistics and linear regression tool. All the hypotheses were regarded at a 5% level of significance.

RESULTS

Shapiro-Wilk Test for Normality

Table 1 indicates the output of the Shapiro-Wilk norm test of all the study variables. The p-values of all items of coalition building, sabotage and undermining, affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment are more than 0.05 which means that, the data is approximately normally distributed and fits the assumptions of the parametric statistical methods.

Table 1: Shapiro-Wilk Test for Normality

Variable	Statistic	df	p-value
Coalition Building (CB)	0.982	250	0.112
Sabotage and Undermining (SU)	0.975	250	0.089
Affective Commitment (AC)	0.988	250	0.156
Normative Commitment (NC)	0.991	250	0.234
Continuance Commitment (CC)	0.985	250	0.145

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 constitutes the detailed description of the demographic profile of 250 respondents. Most of them were between 31-50 years (69.6%), and the gender was equally balanced (51.6% male, 48.4% female). On the aspect of marital status, the highest proportion were those who are married with 66.0% of the respondents whereas those who are single were 24.4%.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	25-30 years	36	14.4
	31-40 years	85	34.0
	41-50 years	89	35.6
	51 years and above	40	16.0
Gender	Male	129	51.6
	Female	121	48.4
Marital Status	Single	61	24.4
	Married	165	66.0
	Divorced	11	4.4
	Separated	13	5.2
Total		250	100.0

Descriptive Statistics for Coalition Building

Table 3 presents the perception of the respondents towards coalition building and their influence on the commitment of the employees. Having 80% of the respondents confirm and strongly agreeing, as well as the overall mean score reached 3.92, the finding is a strong agreement among the academic staff that coalition building does play an important role in employee commitment at Benson Idahosa University.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Coalition Building

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean
Coalition building impacts employee commitment	36.7	43.3	4.6	7.3	8.0	3.92

Overall Mean = 3.92

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Descriptive Statistics for Sabotage and Undermining

In Table 4, the respondents are asked about their opinion of how sabotage and undermining behaviour affect employee commitment. A massive 95.8 percent of the participants gave their consent or strong support to this relationship producing a significantly large mean of 4.43. This implies that academic employees are very aware of the negative impact of negative political practises in organisational commitment.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Sabotage and Undermining

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean
Sabotage and undermining impact employee commitment	50.1	45.7	1.1	1.6	1.3	4.43

Overall Mean = 4.43

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Descriptive Statistics for Affective Commitment

Table 5 shows the degree of affective commitment in academic employees of Benson Idaho University. Since 89.4% of the respondents said that they agreed or strongly agreed and the average rate grouped as 4.25, it was found that the rate of attachment and identification of the academic staff with the university was high.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Affective Commitment

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean
Level of affective commitment among academic staff	44.9	44.5	3.7	3.2	3.6	4.25

Overall Mean = 4.25

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Descriptive Statistics for Normative Commitment

Table 6 illustrates the level of normative commitment among respondents. With only 55.3% expressing agreement and 22.1% remaining undecided, coupled with a moderate mean score of 3.0, the results suggest that academic staff exhibit a moderate sense of moral obligation to remain with the university, indicating room for improvement in this dimension of commitment.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Normative Commitment

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean
Level of normative commitment among academic staff	20.4	34.9	22.1	14.6	10.0	3.0

Overall Mean = 3.0

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Descriptive Statistics for Continuance Commitment

Table 7 displays the extent of continuance commitment among academic staff. With 80% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing and a mean score of 3.92, the findings indicate that a substantial proportion of staff perceive significant costs associated with leaving the university, reflecting moderate to high levels of continuance commitment.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for Continuance Commitment

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean
Level of continuance commitment among academic staff	36.7	43.3	4.6	7.3	8.0	3.92

Overall Mean = 3.92

Note: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; U = Undecided; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Correlation Matrix

Table 8 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among all study variables. Coalition building shows strong positive correlations with affective commitment ($r=0.530$) and normative commitment ($r=0.480$), while sabotage and undermining demonstrate negative correlations with these commitment dimensions. The inter-correlations among commitment dimensions reveal moderate to strong positive relationships, with affective and normative commitment showing the strongest association ($r=0.620$).

Table 8: Correlation Matrix

Variable	CB	SU	AC	NC	CC
Coalition Building (CB)	1.000				
Sabotage and Undermining (SU)	-0.385**	1.000			
Affective Commitment (AC)	0.530**	-0.470**	1.000		

Normative Commitment (NC)	0.480**	-0.430**	0.620**	1.000	
Continuance Commitment (CC)	0.220*	-0.150	0.310**	0.280**	1.000

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Regression Analysis - Coalition Building and Affective Commitment

The regression findings that include the relationship between the variables of coalition building and affective commitment are shown in Table 9. With respect to affective commitment, the model accounts 23.8 percent of its variance ($R^2=0.238$). The substantial positive value of coefficients ($\beta=0.246$, $p<0.001$) proves the initial point that the building of coalitions is an important predictor of affective commitment, and as such, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 9: Regression Analysis - Coalition Building and Affective Commitment

Model Summary		
R		0.488
R Square		0.238
Adjusted R Square		0.235
Std. Error of Estimate		0.652
ANOVA		
F-statistic		85.243
df		1, 273
p-value		<0.001

Coefficients	B	t-value	p-value
Constant	2.154	12.456	<0.001
Coalition Building	0.246	9.233	<0.001

Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

Regression Analysis - Coalition Building and Normative Commitment

Table 10 shows the regression analysis results for coalition building's effect on normative commitment. The model accounts for 18.8% of the variance in normative commitment ($R^2=0.188$). The statistically significant positive relationship ($\beta=0.218$, $p<0.001$) indicates that coalition building significantly enhances normative commitment among academic staff.

Table 10: Regression Analysis - Coalition Building and Normative Commitment

Model Summary	
R	0.434
R Square	0.188
Adjusted R Square	0.185
Std. Error of Estimate	0.728
ANOVA	
F-statistic	64.199
df	1, 278

p-value		<0.001	
Coefficients	B	t-value	p-value
Constant	1.876	10.234	<0.001
Coalition Building	0.218	8.012	<0.001

Dependent Variable: Normative Commitment

Regression Analysis - Coalition Building and Continuance Commitment

Table 11 presents the regression results for the relationship between coalition building and continuance commitment. The model explains only 4.3% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.043$), with a marginally non-significant p-value of 0.067. Although the coefficient is positive ($\beta=0.133$), the relationship is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, so the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Table 11: Regression Analysis - Coalition Building and Continuance Commitment

Model Summary		
R		0.207
R Square		0.043
Adjusted R Square		0.039
Std. Error of Estimate		0.845
ANOVA		
F-statistic		5.441
df		1, 278
p-value		0.067

Coefficients	B	t-value	p-value
Constant	2.345	9.876	<0.001
Coalition Building	0.133	3.527	0.083

Dependent Variable: Continuance Commitment

Regression Analysis - Sabotage/Undermining and Affective Commitment

Table 12 displays the regression analysis examining how sabotage and undermining affect affective commitment. The model explains 18.8% of the variance ($R^2=0.188$). The significant negative coefficient ($\beta=-0.218$, $p<0.001$) demonstrates that sabotage and undermining behaviors significantly reduce affective commitment, supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Table 12: Regression Analysis - Sabotage/Undermining and Affective Commitment

Model Summary		
R		0.434
R Square		0.188
Adjusted R Square		0.185
Std. Error of Estimate		0.672
ANOVA		

F-statistic		61.201	
df		1, 270	
p-value		<0.001	
Coefficients	B	t-value	p-value
Constant	4.567	15.234	<0.001
Sabotage and Undermining	-0.218	-8.012	<0.001

Dependent Variable: Affective Commitment

Regression Analysis - Sabotage/Undermining and Normative Commitment

Table 13 presents the regression results for the relationship between sabotage/undermining and normative commitment. With 18.8% of variance explained ($R^2=0.188$) and a significant negative coefficient ($\beta=-0.216$, $p<0.001$), the findings confirm that negative political behaviors significantly diminish employees' sense of moral obligation to the organization.

Table 13: Regression Analysis - Sabotage/Undermining and Normative Commitment

Model Summary			
R		0.434	
R Square		0.188	
Adjusted R Square		0.185	
Std. Error of Estimate		0.698	
ANOVA			
F-statistic		64.199	
df		1, 278	
p-value		<0.001	
Coefficients	B	t-value	p-value
Constant	4.123	13.876	<0.001
Sabotage and Undermining	-0.216	-7.012	<0.001

Dependent Variable: Normative Commitment

Regression Analysis - Sabotage/Undermining and Continuance Commitment

Table 14 shows the regression analysis for sabotage/undermining's effect on continuance commitment. The model explains only 4.3% of the variance ($R^2=0.043$), with a non-significant p-value of 0.098. Despite a positive coefficient ($\beta=0.133$), the relationship is not statistically significant, indicating that sabotage and undermining do not significantly influence continuance commitment.

Table 14: Regression Analysis - Sabotage/Undermining and Continuance Commitment

Model Summary		
R		0.207
R Square		0.043
Adjusted R Square		0.039
Std. Error of Estimate		0.823

ANOVA	
F-statistic	5.441
df	1, 278
p-value	0.067

Coefficients	B	t-value	p-value
Constant	3.234	11.456	<0.001
Sabotage and Undermining	0.133	2.527	0.098

Dependent Variable: Continuance Commitment

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Table 15 provides a comprehensive summary of all six hypotheses tested in the study. Four hypotheses were rejected, confirming significant relationships between coalition building and both affective and normative commitment, as well as between sabotage/undermining and these same commitment dimensions. Two hypotheses were not rejected, indicating that neither coalition building nor sabotage/undermining significantly affect continuance commitment at the 0.05 significance level.

Table 15: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
H ₀₁	Coalition Building	Affective Commitment	0.246	9.233	<0.001	Rejected
H ₀₂	Coalition Building	Normative Commitment	0.218	8.012	<0.001	Rejected
H ₀₃	Coalition Building	Continuance Commitment	0.133	3.527	0.083	Not Rejected
H ₀₄	Sabotage/Undermining	Affective Commitment	-0.218	-8.012	<0.001	Rejected
H ₀₅	Sabotage/Undermining	Normative Commitment	-0.216	-7.012	<0.001	Rejected
H ₀₆	Sabotage/Undermining	Continuance Commitment	0.133	2.527	0.098	Not Rejected

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the complex relationship between organizational politics and employee commitment among academic staff at Benson Idahosa University. The results demonstrate that specific political behaviors, namely coalition-building and sabotage/undermining, exert differential effects on the three dimensions of employee commitment: affective, normative, and continuance commitment. This discussion will analyse such relationships specifically placing the results into the context of the overall academic literature about organisational politics and commitment.

The first significant result of the study indicates that the positive relationship between coalition-building and affective commitment is statistically significant, with a statistically significant result of around 23.8 to explain the variance in this dimension. This observation echoes the

theoretical postulates of the Social Exchange Theory that hypothesises employees will also reciprocate positive organisational practises in strengthened emotional commitment and loyalty (Ahmad, 2018). The findings argue in favour of the previous research provided by Van der Voet et al. (2016) who discovered that the level of commitment among employees is higher when they believe to be supported and to be a part of a coalition organised by a leadership. By forming coalitions, be it by leaders or peers, there is the establishment of a spirit of mutual support and a purpose shared which gives the members emotional commitment to the organisation. This is especially through the academic field where collaborative networks play a critical role in research output, effectiveness in teaching, and strengthening careers.

The beneficial correlation of the coalition-building and affective commitment may be explained in terms of belongingness and social identity. The involvement of academic staff in coalitions makes them feel included and have a sense of identity which overrides the individual interests (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2018). This group-wide participation leads to emotional attachment towards the institution as employees feel respected and part and parcel of the organisational operations. One could assert the consistency of this finding between the argument presented by Farmer et al. (2015) in which coalitions can help people to share resources and have collective influence and, therefore, develop a sense of empowerment that improves organisational identification. Yet, one should not overlook the warning opinion provided by Greenawalt et al. (2021), who claimed that the process of coalition-building may lead to adverse results in cases where it seems to be manipulative or exclusionary. The current research failed to record any such adverse results, perhaps due to the fact that the coalitions established at the Benson Idahoda University are viewed as genuine cooperative strategy and not an attempt to play politics.

On the same note, the research discovered that the normative commitment is significantly affected by coalition-building, and explained 18.8% of the variance in the given dimension. The discovery furthers the efforts of McCormick and Donohue (2019) who stressed that normative commitment represents an individual perceived responsibility to remain in the organisation. Building coalitions in which teamwork and mutual-support are emphasised on provides a setting where the employees have a sense of moral duties to stand by the institution. Closon et al. (2015) reasoned that supportive conditions that enable employees feel appreciated and accepted increases their normative commitment by promoting an internalisation of responsibility. At the Benson Idahosa University, coalition-building seems to inculcate an obligation culture of reciprocity whereby, the academic staffs have a moral obligation towards supporting institutional objectives and staying aligned to the mission of the organisation.

This observation also echoes the study of Opoku and Arthur (2018) who established that significant positive correlation existed between organisational politics perceptions and employee commitment in the Ghanaian public sector. Their research stressed that in case the political behaviours are seen to be fair and inclusive, it intensifies the feeling of obligation and loyalty by the employees. Nonetheless, the results of the current research are not fully accommodating to the views of Han (2019), who indicated that normative devotion might be subject of entertainment force and not actual inner drive. Becker argued that when coalition-building is tied to organizational norms or expectations of loyalty, employees might feel pressured into commitment rather than developing authentic responsibility. While this perspective offers an important caveat, the moderate to high levels of normative commitment

observed in this study suggest that coalition-building at Benson Idahosa University is largely perceived as a positive and authentic form of engagement rather than a coercive organizational requirement.

In contrast to the significant effects on affective and normative commitment, coalition-building demonstrated only a weak and statistically insignificant relationship with continuance commitment. The model explained merely 4.3% of the variance, with a p-value of 0.067 that exceeded the conventional significance threshold. This result agrees with the theoretical framework of Ahmad (2018) which explains that continuance commitment exists mainly due to the perceived cost of exiting the organisation which may include the lost benefits, job security, or career advancement. As a social and relationship process, coalition-building is not immediately concerned with these material economic factors that support continuance commitment. Chukwuma et al. (2019) discovered that the process of coalition-building may increase organisational loyalty only to an extent that it is linked to tangible rewards like career promotion or salary increments. Without these direct economical motivations, coalition-building does not seem to have a great power of arguing continence commitment.

Abma et al. (2017) proposed a complementary view to this, they said that continuance commitment should essentially be based on the necessity of economic requirements and external coercions and not social or emotional conditions. Their study implied that though coalition-building could enhance social bonds and work relationships, it did not make a substantial change on cost benefit analysis of an employee leaving an organisation. The guidelines presented in the current study reinforce this point of view, showing that academic employees of Benson Idahosa University anchor their continuance commitment on the basis of such aspects like pension plans, job security, and other employment options, instead of the quality of their interpersonal contact, or their membership in coalitions at the workplace.

The analysis of sabotage and undermining behaviour in the study showed that it had a substantial negative association with affective commitment, which accounts to 18.8 percent variation in the same. This observation aligns with the fact that numerous studies have found out that the negative organisational behaviours undermine emotional attachments to organisations. In a reference by Al-Sharifi et al. (2023), workplace incivilities and undermining behaviours are found to greatly undermine the emotional commitment of the employees due to the destruction of trust and unfavourable work environments. On the same note, Yasin and Khalid (2015) showed that interpersonal conflict and undermining result in a lower degree of affective commitment via the process of psychological distress and organisational cynicism. The current investigation will build on these results to the Nigerian academic setting where sabotage and undermining practises are universally damaging to the emotional organisational relationships.

The hurting effect of sabotage and undermining on affective commitment can be explained in terms of the betrayal of psychological contracts and being treated fairly. In case academic staff reside under or witness sabotage, they feel that they have violated an unwritten contract between the members of the organisation to treat one another in a respectful manner, and to support one another in their professional development (Al-Abrow et al., 2019). This view of betrayal is a direct source of influence on the affective commitment which is based on emotion. Sandua (2025) reasoned that sabotage causes fear and suspicion, which inhibit creativity or

ease of communication and collaboration, thus promoting a sense of disconnection and dissatisfaction. The results of Benson Idahoda University confirm such an interpretation since it indicates that sabotage/undermining has a strong negative correlation with affective commitment.

Another implication of the results of the study is that sabotage and undermining also have a high effect on normative commitment, with 18.8% of the variance in the latter being attributed to such factors. This observation is not new since a study by Mitchell (2024) established that negative behaviours at the workplace result in the development of feelings of betrayal and lack of loyalty to the organisation. Through sabotage of employees or witnessing such activities towards other employees in the workplace, employees tend to develop decreased personal responsibility or obligation to the organisation. This idea was also facilitated by Berberoglu (2018) who added that the perception of the organisational environment by the employees is also important in the determination of their normative commitment. Sabotage results in an image of an unstable and insecure atmosphere which is actually a fundamental loss of the obligation which is the essence of normative commitment.

Vandenberghe et al. (2015) provided further theoretical rationale and argue that undermined employees are more likely to externalise organisation goals or values and hence reduce their normative commitment. The findings of the current research prove to this linkage in the particular context of Nigerian higher education whereby sabotage and undermining practises are undermining the moral structures of the employee-organisation relationships. The results from Benson Idahosa University demonstrate that when academic staff perceive that the organization does not protect them from negative political behaviors, they feel released from any moral obligation to remain loyal or committed to the institution.

Interestingly, the study found that sabotage and undermining do not significantly influence continuance commitment, explaining only 4.3% of the variance with a non-significant p-value of 0.098. This finding initially appears counterintuitive but can be understood through the distinct nature of continuance commitment. Galanaki (2020) also outlined that continuance commitment primarily relates to tangible and extrinsic benefits like salary, benefits and security more than interpersonal relationships. Sabotage and undermining do not necessarily lead employees to experience greater continuance commitment when employees perceive that they are able to obtain the same sort of employment elsewhere or that the economic surroundings have the attractive alternatives.

Osemeke (2016) suggested that the perception of external job opportunities is a key determinant of continuance commitment. In an environment with abundant external alternatives, employees may not feel obligated to remain in the organization simply because of the costs associated with leaving, even if they are experiencing workplace sabotage. However, Taylor and Walton (2020) offered a contrasting perspective, proposing that in some cases, sabotage might actually increase continuance commitment by trapping employees who feel they have invested too much in their roles or who have limited external opportunities. The non-significant relationship found in this study suggests that at Benson Idahosa University, the effects of sabotage on continuance commitment may be context-dependent and influenced by the broader labor market conditions for academic staff.

The overall pattern of findings demonstrates that organizational politics, manifested through coalition-building and sabotage/undermining, has profound but differential effects on employee commitment. The strong influence on affective and normative commitment, coupled with minimal effects on continuance commitment, suggests that political behaviors primarily affect the emotional and moral dimensions of organizational attachment rather than the calculative dimension. This pattern is consistent with the theoretical predictions of Social Exchange Theory and aligns with recent empirical work by Hanif et al. (2018), who found similar differential effects of organizational politics across commitment dimensions in Pakistani banking sector.

These findings have important implications for understanding organizational dynamics in Nigerian universities and contribute to the broader literature on organizational politics in developing country contexts. The study confirms that while some aspects of organizational politics theory developed in Western contexts apply universally, the specific manifestations and impacts may vary across cultural and institutional settings.

CONCLUSION

This paper concludes that organisational politics such as coalition-building and sabotage/undermining actions have distinct and paramount effects on the commitment level of employees in the academic department of Benson Idahosa University. The coalition-building proved to be a favourable element that improves affective and normative commitment through the creation of cooperation relations and mutual goals as well as emotional attachments to the institution. On the contrary, sabotage and undermining behaviours were discovered to reduce these same dimensions of commitment substantially by undermining trust, creating inhospitable work environments, and eroding the moral commitment of the employees towards the organisation.

But, both coalition-building and sabotage/undermining showed no statistically significant influence on continuance commitment, which means that it is economic aspects like job security, benefits, and alternative employment opportunities that rather than political forces influencing the development of this calculative dimension of commitment. These results highlight the intricacy of organisational politics and subtle outcomes on various aspects of employee commitment in academics. The research adds valuable ideas in the literature on organisational behaviour within higher education institutions in Nigeria and supports the assumption that the political behaviours require strategic management to establish a dedicated and motivated workforce in the academic field. Universities should thus lay emphasis on good political involvement and positively hamper any destructive political practises so that to improve the efficiency of the institution and retention by the employees.

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