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# E-HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN RIVERS STATE

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## ABSTRACT

*The study investigates the association between E-human resource management and employee commitment in Public Universities in Rivers State The survey study population comprises 3,441 academic staff from the public universities in Rivers State A sample size of 346 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table. Data analysis was conducted using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between EHRM (automation and efficiency, employee self-service, virtual collaboration and communication) and employee commitment. The study concludes that EHRM correlates with employee commitment of public universities in Rivers State. The study recommends that public universities should implement an integrated technology solution that combines advanced automation for administrative tasks, efficient performance tracking, robust employee self-service platforms with career development tools, and comprehensive virtual collaboration tools. This approach will allow employees to focus on meaningful work, manage their professional growth, and engage in frequent, effective interactions, fostering a stronger emotional attachment, affective commitment, and behavioural commitment to the institution.*

**Keywords:** E-Human Resource Management, Automation and Efficiency, Employee Self-Service, Virtual Collaboration and Communication, Employee Commitment.



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## INTRODUCTION

Employee commitment is an indispensable component of organizational success, permeating various aspects of employee behaviour, organizational culture, and overall performance (Đorđević et al., 2020).It holds a direct sway over organizational performance, service delivery, and the attainment of institutional objectives. However, when synergized with E-Human Resource Management (E-HRM), the significance of employee commitment amplifies further, as it intricately influences the effective implementation and utilization of digital HR systems and technologies. Stackhouse, et al., (2022) highlight the positive association between employee commitment and organizational performance. With committed employees more inclined to exert discretionary effort, there emerges a clear correlation between heightened commitment and elevated levels of performance and productivity within the organizational realm. This correlation not only underscores the criticality of fostering a committed workforce but also accentuates its pivotal role in realizing desired business outcomes.

Employee commitment plays a fundamental role in fostering higher levels of retention and loyalty within the organization (Bag, 2018).Employee commitment is essential for building a strong and thriving organization. It fosters a positive work environment, drives performance, and contributes to long-term success. When employees are deeply committed, they exhibit decreased turnover tendencies and a heightened inclination to remain with the organization, thereby curbing recruitment and training costs typically associated with high turnover rates. This underscores the strategic imperative of nurturing employee commitment as a potent means of talent retention. Furthermore, employee commitment contributes significantly to cultivating a positive organizational culture characterized by trust, cooperation, and mutual respect.

Employee commitment remains a crucial determinant of success for public universities, influencing faculty and staff retention, job satisfaction, and academic performance. Employee commitment encompasses various dimensions, including affective, normative, and behavioural commitment, each reflecting the degree of emotional attachment, moral obligation, and behavioural engagement employees have towards their organization. Understanding and nurturing employee commitment are essential for fostering a positive work environment, advancing academic excellence, and achieving institutional objectives (Lalitha, 2024)

In the contemporary era, the integration of technology into organizational management has become imperative for enhancing efficiency, transparency, and employee engagement. This phenomenon is particularly prominent in human resource management (HRM), where the adoption of electronic or E-Human Resource Management (E-HRM) systems has revolutionized traditional HR practices. Public universities, as key institutions of higher learning, are undergoing significant transformations in administrative processes, driven by advancements in technology.The emergence of E-HRM in public universities represents a transformative shift in HR operations and the cultivation of employee commitment within these academic institutions (Frank, 2021). E-HRM entails the use of digital platforms, software applications, and information systems to automate and streamline HR functions, ranging from recruitment and selection to performance management and employee development. Given the bureaucratic procedures and administrative complexities often associated with public universities, E-HRM offers the potential to overcome operational challenges and enhance organizational effectiveness (Akpan & Akpan, 2022).

While numerous studies have delved into the realm of E-HRM (Aladwan *et al.*, 2023; Nyathi & Kekwaletswe, 2024; Olawale, et al., 2024, Khashman & Al-Ryalat, 2015) a noticeable gap in empirical research persists regarding its correlation with employee commitment in public universities situated in Rivers State. Despite the wealth of literature exploring various facets of electronic human resource management (E-HRM), including its impact on organizational performance, employee satisfaction, and technological adoption, the specific context of public universities in Rivers State remains relatively unexplored. This dearth of empirical inquiry underscores a critical gap in knowledge that this study seeks to address. By focusing on the intersection of E-HRM practices and employee commitment within the unique setting of public universities in Rivers State, this research endeavours to fill this gap and contribute to a deeper understanding of how digital HR systems influence workforce engagement and dedication in academic institutions

**STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS**

In the realm of e-Human Resource Management (e-HRM), several critical challenges impede the cultivation of employee commitment. One significant issue revolves around the potential loss of personal connection between employees and the organization. Traditional HR practices often rely on face-to-face interactions to nurture relationships and foster commitment. However, the transition to virtual or remote settings in e-HRM may lead to employees feeling disconnected from the organizational culture, ultimately resulting in diminished levels of commitment (Haque, 2023).Moreover, communication barriers pose a significant hurdle in e-HRM environments. Effective communication is paramount for building employee commitment, yet obstacles such as message misinterpretation, delayed responses, and reliance on asynchronous communication channels can thwart the development of trust and mutual understanding between employees and management (Asuelimen & Omohimi, 2019). Such barriers contribute to feelings of isolation and disengagement among employees, exacerbating the challenge of fostering commitment.

Furthermore, the adoption of e-HRM systems and digital platforms introduces technological challenges that often undermine employee commitment. Issues such as system downtime, usability problems, and inadequate training often lead to frustration and dissatisfaction among employees, ultimately diminishing commitment to the organization's goals and objectives (Khashman & Al-Ryalat, 2015). Additionally, the blurring of work-life boundaries facilitated by remote work arrangements in e-HRM presents a notable concern. Without clear delineation between work hours and personal time, employees often experience burnout, stress, and fatigue, which can significantly impact their motivation and dedication to their roles (Asuelimen & Omohimi, 2019).

Accountability and recognition are essential factors influencing employee commitment in e-HRM, but in virtual work environments, managers often encounter challenges in monitoring employee performance and providing timely feedback and recognition. The lack of visibility into employees' contributions and achievements often undermine the sense of value and recognition within the organization, ultimately diminishing commitment over time (Farhan, et al., 2021). Addressing these problems necessitates the implementation of proactive strategies to enhance communication, foster a sense of belonging, and promote work-life balance in e-HRM practices and understanding and addressing the unique challenges associated with e-HRM, organizations can cultivate a culture of commitment and engagement among employees.

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study examines the relationship between E-Human resource management and employee commitment of public universities in Rivers State. Specifically, it examines the connection between:

1. Automation and efficiency and affective commitment of public universities in Rivers State.
2. Automation and efficiency and behavioural commitment of public universities in Rivers State.
3. Employee self-service and affective commitment of public universities in Rivers State.
4. Employee self-service and behavioural commitment of public universities in Rivers State.
5. Virtual collaboration and communication and affective commitment of public universities in Rivers State.
6. Virtual collaboration and communication and behavioural commitment of public universities in Rivers State.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between automation and efficiency and affective commitment of public universities in Rivers State?
2. What is the connection between automation and efficiency and behavioural commitment of public universities in Rivers State?
3. What is the association between employee self-service and affective commitment of public universities in Rivers State?
4. What is the bond between employee self-service and behavioural commitment of Public universities in Rivers State?
5. What is the association between virtual collaboration and communication and affective commitment of public universities in Rivers State?
6. What is the bond between virtual collaboration and communication and behavioural commitment of Public universities in Rivers State?

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

$Ho_1$: There is no significant relationship between automation and efficiency and affective commitment of public universities in Rivers State.

$Ho_2$: There is no significant relationship between the automation and efficiency and behavioural commitment of public universities in Rivers State.

$Ho_3$: There is no significant relationship between employee self-service and affective commitment of public universities in Rivers State.

$Ho_4$: There is no significant relationship between employee self-service and behavioural commitment of public universities in Rivers State.

$Ho_5$: There is no significant relationship between virtual collaboration and communication and affective commitment of public universities in Rivers State.

$Ho_6$: There is no significant relationship between virtual collaboration and communication and behavioural commitment of public universities in Rivers State.

## SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Social Exchange Theory, proposed by Peter Blau, elucidates the interplay between e-Human Resource Management (e-HRM) practices and employee commitment in public universities.

It suggests that employees assess the fairness of e-HRM systems and reciprocate commitment based on the support received.If e-HRM systems provide equal access to resources, opportunities, and rewards, employees are more likely to perceive the organization as fair and exhibit higher levels of commitment (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Likewise, if e-HRM platforms facilitate efficient communication, training, and development opportunities, employees may feel a sense of obligation to reciprocate by demonstrating higher levels of commitment to the university (Eisenberger et al., 2014).

Social exchange theory also emphasizes the role of trust in shaping social exchanges and relationship quality. In public universities using e-HRM, trust in the reliability and effectiveness of digital HR systems is crucial for fostering employee commitment. When employees trust that e-HRM practices align with their interests and contribute to their professional growth and well-being, they are more likely to invest their time and effort in advancing the university's mission and goals (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

## E-HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

E-Human Resource Management (E-HRM) revolutionized traditional HR practices through the integration of digital technologies. This transformation offers numerous benefits, including enhanced efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility in HR processes. With the advent of E-HRM, tasks such as recruitment, onboarding, performance management, and employee training can be streamlined and automated, leading to significant time and cost savings for organizations (Thathsara & Sutha, 2021). Moreover, E-HRM facilitates data-driven decision-making by providing HR professionals with real-time access to comprehensive employee data and analytics, enabling them to identify trends, forecast workforce needs, and develop strategic HR initiatives more effectively.

Furthermore, E-HRM promotes employee engagement and empowerment by providing self-service tools and online platforms for employees to manage their own HR-related tasks and access relevant information anytime, anywhere (Blom, et al, 2019).). This empowerment fosters a culture of transparency and accountability within the organization while reducing administrative burdens on HR personnel. Additionally, E-HRM systems facilitate communication and collaboration among employees and HR professionals, enabling seamless interactions and feedback loops that contribute to a more agile and responsive HR function (Imran, et al., 2021).

### Automation and Efficiency

Automation and efficiency are intertwined concepts that have become increasingly significant in today's rapidly evolving business landscape. Automation refers to the use of technology to perform tasks with minimal human intervention(IBM, 2024), while efficiency pertains to achieving maximum output with minimal resources (Handoyo, Set al., 2023). Together, automation and efficiency play a crucial role in enhancing productivity, streamlining processes, and driving organizational success.

Automation not only improves efficiency but also enables organizations to reallocate human resources to more value-added tasks (Mohamedet al., 2022). By automating repetitive and mundane processes, employees can focus on higher-level activities that require creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. This shift not only enhances employee job satisfaction but also drives innovation and organizational growth (Institute of Data, 2023).). Automation and efficiency are indispensable elements in today's business environment. Organizations that leverage automation technologies to enhance efficiency stand to gain a

competitive advantage, improve customer satisfaction, and drive innovation. As technology continues to advance, the strategic adoption of automation will become increasingly essential for organizations striving to thrive in a rapidly changing marketplace.

**Employee Self-Service**

Employee Self-Service (ESS) refers to a digital HR management system that empowers employees to independently handle various administrative tasks and access relevant information related to their employment (Margatama, 2017). Through ESS platforms, employees can perform a wide range of activities, including updating personal information, viewing pay stubs, managing benefits enrolment, requesting time off, and accessing training materials, among others (Indeed Editorial team, 2023). This approach not only streamlines HR processes but also enhances employee autonomy, efficiency, and satisfaction by providing convenient and accessible services. Employee Self-Service represents a valuable tool for modern HR management, offering numerous benefits for both employees and organizations. As technology continues to evolve, ESS systems are likely to become increasingly prevalent in the workplace, driving greater efficiency, employee empowerment, and organizational effectiveness. ESS has been shown to contribute to cost savings and resource optimization for organizations (Jang, et al. 2022). By automating routine HR tasks and reducing the need for manual intervention, ESS systems help minimize administrative overhead and free up HR personnel to focus on strategic initiatives (Paychex, 2023). This enables organizations to operate more efficiently and effectively, ultimately contributing to their overall competitiveness and success).

**Virtual Collaboration and Communication**

In today's digital age, virtual collaboration and communication have become integral components of organizational success. With advancements in technology and the increasing prevalence of remote work, teams are often distributed across different locations, necessitating effective virtual collaboration strategies. The adoption of digital tools and technologies plays a crucial role in facilitating virtual collaboration. Platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack enable real-time communication, file sharing, and project management, enhancing team connectivity and productivity (Elliott, 2020). Additionally, virtual whiteboards and collaborative document editing tools allow for seamless collaboration on projects, irrespective of geographical distances (Prabhaa, et al., 2024).

Although managing team dynamics in virtual environments presents unique challenges, including issues related to trust, communication norms, and social cohesion., fostering a sense of psychological safety and promoting open communication channels are essential for building trust and mitigating the impact of physical distance on team dynamics (Zaharie, 2021). Furthermore, establishing regular virtual team-building activities and informal interactions can help strengthen interpersonal relationships and enhance team cohesion (Aquino, Jet al., 2022).

To optimize virtual collaboration and communication, organizations should prioritize clear communication, goal alignment, and establishing norms and expectations for virtual interactions (Newman, 2020). Leveraging video conferencing for face-to-face interactions, setting regular check-in meetings, and utilizing asynchronous communication channels can facilitate efficient information exchange and decision-making (Lakhan & Verma, 2023). Moreover, providing training and resources on virtual collaboration tools and techniques can empower employees to navigate virtual work environments effectively.

## EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT

Employee commitment is a cornerstone of organizational success, influencing productivity, retention, and performance. Employee commitment has far-reaching implications for organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and performance. Research has consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between employee commitment and job satisfaction, as committed employees tend to experience greater levels of fulfilment and engagement in their roles (Mahmood-Aziz, et al., 2021)). Moreover, higher levels of employee commitment have been associated with reduced turnover intentions, as committed employees are less likely to seek opportunities elsewhere (Opolot, et al., 2023). Additionally, organizations with highly committed employees tend to achieve better performance outcomes, including higher productivity, customer satisfaction, and financial performance (Mansor, et al., 2023).

Understanding the drivers and consequences of employee commitment has significant implications for organizational practice. By fostering a positive organizational culture, investing in leadership development, and designing jobs that promote autonomy and meaningfulness, organizations can enhance employee commitment and create a more engaged workforce (Radu, 2023). Moreover, recognizing the link between employee commitment and organizational outcomes can help organizations prioritize efforts to improve employee engagement and retention, ultimately contributing to long-term success.

### Affective Commitment

Affective commitment, as defined by Meyer and Allen (1991), encompasses an employee's emotional attachment and allegiance to their organization. It reflects a deep-seated desire to remain with the organization due to genuine care and loyalty, driven by a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values. Employees with high levels of affective commitment demonstrate greater job satisfaction, lower turnover intentions, and a willingness to go beyond their job requirements (Meyer & Allen, 1991;Khan et al., 2021). Factors such as positive organizational culture, supportive leadership, and meaningful work contribute significantly to the cultivation of affective commitment among employees (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Hadi & Tentama, 2020). Recognizing and nurturing affective commitment is essential for organizations aiming to foster a dedicated and engaged workforce, which ultimately enhances performance and retention.

### Behavioural commitment

Behavioural commitment, as conceptualized by Meyer and Allen (1991), represents an employee's commitment to the organization demonstrated through observable behaviours and actions. It entails active involvement in organizational goals and activities, such as going the extra mile, participating in initiatives, and contributing proactively to team efforts. Employees with high levels of behavioural commitment exhibit initiative, responsibility, and dedication towards achieving organizational objectives (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Valeau, et al., 2016.). Factors such as job autonomy, recognition, and opportunities for skill development play pivotal roles in fostering behavioural commitment among employees (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Nasution *et* al., 2021). Recognizing and nurturing behavioural commitment is crucial for organizations aiming to cultivate an engaged and proactive workforce, ultimately leading to enhanced performance and organizational success.

## EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Aladwan *et al.*, (2023) investigate how electronic human resource management (E-HRM) practices affect employee commitment within five-star hotels in Jordan. The research involved a sample of employees from several hotels, yielding 385 collected surveys, with 373 being valid for analysis. Through multi-regression analysis, the study tested several hypotheses, ultimately finding that E-HRM practices significantly influence employee commitment in Jordan's five-star hotel sector.

Khashman & Al-Ryalat, (2015) investigated the influence of electronic human resource management (E-HRM) practices on operational performance within Jordan's telecommunications sector, specifically focusing on three cellular companies: Zain, Orange, and Umniah. The study concentrated on key E-HRM practices such as e-recruitment, e-selection, e-training, e-performance appraisal, e-communications, and e-compensation, and examined their impact on operational performance metrics including time, cost, service quality, and flexibility. The research targeted all supervisory employees within the three companies, totalling 329 individuals. A stratified random sample of 178 male and female employees was selected for the study. Using a descriptive analytical method, data were collected via a questionnaire and analysed with SPSS software, employing both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive impact of E-HRM dimensions on the operational performance metrics.

Farhan, et al. (2021 explore the mediating role of innovation and the moderating role of organizational climate in the relationship between electronic human resource management (e-HRM) and employee productivity. Conducted in the context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), this research highlights the importance of innovation for enhancing employee productivity. A structured questionnaire survey was administered to 58 employees in various organizations across the UAE, followed by statistical analysis to explore the interrelationships among the variables. The findings indicated that e-HRM positively influences employee productivity, with organizational climate serving as a moderator.

Thathsara & Sutha. (2021) examine the impact of electronic human resource management (E-HRM) on organizational performance, focusing on the mediating role of organizational agility. Using a convenience sampling method, they distributed questionnaires to gather primary data from 40 financial institutions in Sri Lanka. The data were analysed through Pearson correlation, regression analysis, descriptive statistics, Baron and Kenny's mediator analysis method, and the Sobel test. The results revealed that E-HRM practices significantly and positively influence organizational performance, with organizational agility acting as a mediator in this relationship.

## METHODOLOGY

This research employed a cross-sectional survey and a quasi-commitment in public universities located in Rivers State. The study population of 3,441 academic staff from the public universities in Rivers State The public institution covered are University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. A sample size of 346 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table. Utilizing a structured questionnaire, participants rated items on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Data analysis was conducted using Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient to evaluate the proposed hypotheses and provide insights for future research directions.

## RESULT

346 questionnaires were distributed, but only 314 (90.8%) copies were returned and constitute the valid questionnaire. The hypotheses test is undertaken at a 95% confidence interval. Hypothesis are rejected when P < 0.05 and accepted when P > 0.05.

**Table 1: Automation and Efficiency and Employee Commitment**

**Correlations**

| | | | Automation and Efficiency | Affective Commitment | Behavioural Commitment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Automation and Efficiency | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .643** | .727** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 | .000 |
| | | N | 314 | 314 | 314 |
| | Affective Commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .643** | 1.000 | .608** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . | .000 |
| | | N | 314 | 314 | 314 |
| | Behavioural Commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .727** | .608** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | . |
| | | N | 314 | 314 | 314 |

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

### Automation and Efficiency and Affective Commitment

The result of the data analysis reveals that at a significant level p < 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), rho = 0.643**. This means that there is a significant association betweenautomation and efficiency and affective commitment. Therefore, the null hypothesis ($Ho_1$) is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis ($Ha_1$) is accepted. This proposes that automation and efficiency and affective commitment have a significantstrong positive relationship.

**Automation and Efficiency and Behavioural Commitment:** The result of the data analysis reveals that at a significant level p < 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05), rho = 0. 727**. This means that there is a significant connection between automation and efficiency and behavioural commitment. The null hypothesis, $Ho_2$, is rejected and the alternate accepted. This suggests that there is a strong positive relationship between automation and efficiency and behavioural commitment.

**Table 2: Employee Self-Service and Employee Commitment**

**Correlations**

| | | | Employee Self-Service | Affective Commitment | Behavioural Commitment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Employee Self-Service | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .541** | .581** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 | .000 |
| | | N | 314 | 314 | 314 |
| | Affective Commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .541** | 1.000 | .608** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . | .000 |
| | | N | 314 | 314 | 314 |
| | Behavioural Commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .581** | .608** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | . |
| | | N | 314 | 314 | 314 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

**Employee Self-Service andAffective Commitment**: The result of the data analysis reveals that at a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), rho = 0. 541**. This means that as strong positive correlation exists employee self-service andaffective commitment. Therefore, the null hypothesis ($Ho_3$) is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis ($Ha_3$) is accepted. This proposes that employee self-service andaffective commitment have a significant positive relationship.

**Employee self-service andBehavioural Commitment:** The result of the data analysis reveals that at a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), rho = 0.581**. This means that there is a significant association between employee self-service andbehavioural commitment. The null hypothesis, $Ho_4$, is rejected and the alternate accepted. This suggests that there is a positive relationship between employee self-service andbehavioural commitment.

**Table 3: Virtual Collaboration and Communication and Employee Commitment**

**Correlations**

| | | | Virtual Collaboration and Communication | Affective Commitment | Behavioural Commitment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spearman's rho | Virtual Collaboration and Communication | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .510** | .515** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .000 | .000 |
| | | N | 314 | 314 | 314 |
| | Affective Commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .510** | 1.000 | .608** |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | . | .000 |
| | | N | 314 | 314 | 314 |
| | Behavioural Commitment | Correlation Coefficient | .515** | .608** | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | . |
| | | N | 314 | 314 | 314 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

**Virtual Collaboration and Communication and Affective Commitment**: The result of the data analysis reveals that at a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), rho = 0. 510**. This means that a positive correlation exists virtual collaboration and communication and affective commitment. Therefore, the null hypothesis ($Ho_5$) is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis ($Ha_3$) is accepted. This proposes that virtual collaboration and communication and affective commitment have a significant positive relationship.

**Virtual Collaboration and Communication and Behavioural Commitment:** The result of the data analysis reveals that at a significant level $p < 0.05$ ($0.000 < 0.05$), rho = 0.515**. This means that there is a significant association between virtual collaboration and communication and behavioural commitment. The null hypothesis, $Ho_6$, is rejected and the alternate accepted. This suggests that there is a positive relationship between virtual collaboration and communication and behavioural commitment.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The test of hypotheses one and two revealed that automation and efficiency is positively correlated with the employee commitment of the public universities in Rivers State. The outcomes of the bivariate analysis show that automation and efficiency was associated with the measures of employee commitment (affective commitment and behavioural commitment). This implies that the implementation of automation and efficiency improvements within public universities in Rivers State has a beneficial impact on employee commitment. Therefore, the positive correlation suggests that as automation and efficiency increase, employees are more likely to feel emotionally connected to their universities and

demonstrate higher levels of loyalty and dedication in their actions. This implies that efforts to streamline operations and integrate advanced technologies can play a crucial role in fostering a committed and engaged workforce within these public universities, likewise, the findings from the bivariate analysis indicate that these technological and process enhancements are positively correlated with both affective commitment and behavioural commitment among employees. This is in line Aladwan et al., (2023) that E-HRM practices relates with employee commitment within five-star hotels. It also agrees with Mohamed et al., (2022) that automation improves efficiency and enables organizations to reallocate human resources to more value-added tasks.

The results of testing hypotheses three and four showed a positive correlation between employee self-service and employee commitment of public Universities in Rivers State's. The bivariate analysis's results indicate that employee self-service was linked to affective commitment and behavioural commitment. This implies that the adoption of employee self-service systems in public universities in Rivers State is positively associated with higher levels of employee commitment. The bivariate analysis demonstrates that employee self-service tools are linked to both affective commitment and behavioural commitment among employees. Hence implementing and enhancing employee self-service systems, which empower employees to manage their personal and work-related information more efficiently, can significantly contribute to fostering a more committed and engaged workforce within these public universities. This conforms with Khashman & Al-Ryalat, (2015) whose findings revealed a significant positive impact of E-HRM dimensions on the operational performance metrics. It also aligns with Jang, et al. (2022) that ESS enhances cost savings and resource optimization for organizations.

The testing of hypotheses five and six demonstrated a positive correlation between virtual collaboration and communication and employee commitment within public universities in Rivers State. The results from the bivariate analysis indicate that virtual collaboration and communication are linked to both affective commitment and behavioural commitment. This association suggests that enhancing virtual collaboration and communication tools can lead to stronger emotional attachment and greater loyalty and dedication among employees in these universities. This implies that the implementation of virtual collaboration and communication tools within public universities in Rivers State positively impacts employee commitment. The bivariate analysis results indicate that these virtual tools are linked to both affective commitment and behavioural commitment among employees. This suggests that investing in and promoting the use of virtual collaboration and communication technologies can significantly enhance employee commitment by fostering better connections, facilitating efficient communication, and supporting a more cohesive work environment. As a result, employees are likely to be more engaged and committed to their roles and the university. This agrees with the findings ofFarhan et al. (2021) that E-HRM positively influences employee productivity. It also agrees with Thathsara & Sutha. (2021) that E-HRM practices significantly and positively influence organizational performance.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored the impact of E-Human Resource Management (E-HRM) on employee commitment in public universities in Rivers State, focusing on the relationship between E-HRM components—automation and efficiency, employee self-service, and virtual collaboration and communication—and two dimensions of employee commitment: affective commitment and behavioural commitment. The analysis revealed a positive correlation between automation and efficiency and both affective and behavioural commitment.

Enhanced automation and efficiency lead to stronger emotional bonds and identification with the institution (affective commitment) and increased loyalty and dedicated actions from employees (behavioural commitment).

Employee self-service systems also showed a positive association with both affective and behavioural commitment. Empowering employees with self-service tools fosters a greater emotional attachment to their universities (affective commitment) and results in more loyalty and dedication in their actions (behavioural commitment). Additionally, virtual collaboration and communication tools were found to positively impact affective and behavioural commitment. Effective virtual collaboration enhances communication and connectivity, leading to stronger emotional bonds (affective commitment) and better teamwork and communication, resulting in higher levels of loyalty and commitment through employees' behaviours (behavioural commitment). Implementing E-HRM practices such as automation and efficiency, employee self-service, and virtual collaboration and communication significantly enhances both affective and behavioural commitment among employees in public universities in Rivers State. This underscores the importance of leveraging technology to foster a committed and engaged workforce in the educational sector.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proffered to the Public Universities:

1. Invest in advanced automation technologies for administrative tasks to focus on more meaningful work, fostering a stronger emotional attachment and affective commitment to the institution.
2. Implement efficient automation systems that facilitate clear and transparent performance tracking to increase employee satisfaction and loyalty, as employees can see the direct impact of their work on institutional goals.
3. Provide robust employee self-service platforms that allow staff to manage their personal and professional information easily to increase employees' emotional connection and commitment to the university, as they feel more in control of their work environment.
4. Enhance the functionality of employee self-service systems to include career development tools and resources and support employees' professional growth, to foster greater behavioural commitment, as staff are more likely to stay loyal and dedicated to institutions that invest in their future.
5. Implement comprehensive virtual collaboration tools that promote frequent and meaningful interactions among employees to build stronger emotional bonds among staff.
6. Establish clear guidelines and best practices for using virtual collaboration and communication tools effectively and provide training to improve teamwork and communication, leading to enhanced loyalty and dedication (behavioral commitment) as employees work more cohesively towards common goals.

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