

## **Nexus Between Retention Strategies And Lecturers' Effectiveness In Private Universities In South-West, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*Retention of academic staff in private Universities in Nigeria has raised deep concern among stakeholders in educational industry. Thus, effective retention measures of competent workforce are sinquanon for the actualization of university mandates. This study, therefore, examined nexus between retention strategies and lecturers' effectiveness in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised 1,921 academic staff in all the 23 private Universities in South-west, Nigeria. Three states were purposively selected for the study, while proportional sampling technique was used to select 565 academic staff using research advisor. The researcher-designed questionnaires titled: "Retention Strategies and Lecturers' Effectiveness Questionnaire" were used for data collection. The reliability coefficients of the instruments were ascertained using test re-test method of reliability giving 0 .69 and 0 .73 for 'RSQ and 'LEQ respectively. Person product moment correlation statistic was used to test the hypotheses formulated in the study. The findings of the study shown that significant relationship exist between retention strategies and lecturers' effectiveness in private universities in south-west, Nigeria. The study recommended among others that academic staff should be given autonomy to pursue intellectual inquiry related to their areas of specialization without unreasonable restriction, Prominent should be given to inbuilt packages for insurance policies and retirement benefits to keep academic staff fit with socio-economic demand at old age and compensation package of academic staff in private Universities should be enhanced and made relevant to prevailing economic circumstance through periodical review..*

**Keywords:** Nexus, Retention Strategies, Lecturers' Effectiveness and Private Universities

## Introduction

Universities play a critical role in the development of human capital and national development. They are founded with the purpose of disseminating, propagating, and applying knowledge. Consequently, due to the vast resources needed, variations in productive capacities, earning potentials, and an increasingly demanding environment, higher education has become a difficult undertaking in the modern world. This involvement necessitates demonstrated scholarship from the entire staff as well as from the academic staff at the institution in particular. Retaining academic personnel is crucial to fulfilling the mission of universities, which includes teaching, research, and community development. Academic staff is an invaluable asset to institutions. To focus on their responsibilities of teaching, research, and public service, academic staff members needed to possess a high degree of expertise and demonstrated scholarship in order for these establishments to succeed and advance. Therefore, in order for the institutions to succeed in achieving their goals, they have to employ efficient retention strategies that can attract and retain qualified employees (Osasuli, 2017).

The issue of academic staff retention in Nigeria has not received enough attention in the literature, but is often encompassed under the global phenomenon of brain drain. Unquestionably, the factors linked to brain drain also support the retention of academic staff, and both are entwined because many skilled immigrants work as current or potential employees. Higher education institutions needed qualified instructors with the right incentive packages so they could focus as much as possible on their responsibilities of teaching, research and

publishing, and public service. Universities are not more famous than their capacity to retain academics with track records. But keeping flexible faculty members who are passionate about achieving university goals has continued to be a point of contention for managers, owners, and educational administrators. This could be explained by the substantial financial requirements, the academic staff's marketability, and the high development costs. No educational sector can genuinely maintain and uphold quality over an extended length of time without highly qualified faculty. According to Ibikunle (2018), there is a consistent turnover of capable, informed, and accomplished scholars even in private university administrations that offer their bright faculty members attractive salaries and an exciting learning environment.

The attraction and retention of experienced and competent academics at private universities in Nigeria continues to be a major challenge due to the ongoing brain drain and pressure to retain them for important but unachievable reasons like job security and working conditions. According to Mubaraq, Wahab, and Khan (2017), keeping knowledgeable, skilled, and talented staff who are also thought to be the center of knowledge has become crucial for institutions, especially private ones. Administrators at the university, parents, students, and other pertinent educational stakeholders are extremely concerned about this. The effectiveness of teaching, research, and development as well as community services is severely impacted by retention strategies used for the academic staff because these strategies cause institutions to lose eminent scholars and take a long time to replace them. The difficult prospects and potentials of knowledge development and learning are significantly impacted by private university owners' incapacity to retain eminent

academic staff (Kazeem, 2019). However, it is concerning that Nigeria's privately held universities are in danger as a result of a widespread outflow of highly qualified workers, especially in the twenty-first century as the establishments are losing seasoned faculty members to both developed and developing nations (Osasuli, 2017).

According to the Federal Ministry of Education (2017), there is extremely little retention of lecturers despite the National Universities Commission's concerted attempts to retain competent employees. Private universities alone experienced 66.1% attrition and turnover of academic staff. According to the National Universities Commission (2021), there are 99 legally recognized private universities in Nigeria. These universities have emerged as strong rivals to state and federally owned universities, rather than as allies. Yet, because of the brain drain phenomenon, the institutions continue to struggle with a shortage of important instructors. Privately held universities in Nigeria don't appear to be able to mobilize the intellectual strengths needed to drive the process because the majority of their expert bases have fled to the point where there isn't enough capacity to give quality education for the students left. This is becoming increasingly prevalent in the context of private universities and research, as institutions compete not exclusively with one another for the attraction and retention of seasoned academics and researchers, but also with universities outside. Due to the fact that other universities are frequently enticing talented individuals with various incentive packages, the situation has significantly increased competition for these individuals (Tetty, 2016).

According to an evaluation of private universities in Nigeria conducted over the past

20 years, these institutions have a number of difficulties that limit their capacity to serve as hubs for intellectual brilliance (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2016). Osalusi (2017) provided confirmation that the phenomenon of brain drain plagued private universities in Nigeria during the 21st century, as these institutions lost experienced faculty members to public universities and other sectors in the country. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), among other things, the National Policy on Education states that the effectiveness of university education in Nigeria is guaranteed in terms of manpower and national development, intellectual advancement, and national integration promotion. However, 60% of the graduates of private universities were found to have displayed inadequate training, poor perception, and insufficient skills to cope with the workforce expectations in key industries (Kazeem, 2019). It is essential for universities to bring in and retain skilled, competent, and seasoned academic staff members by offering competitive salary, an exciting workplace, opportunities for advancement, and forward-thinking HR practices. These measures will also increase academics' job satisfaction and help the university achieve its objectives. This study, therefore examined academic staff retention strategies as determinants of goal achievement in private universities in south – western, Nigeria.

Educational institutions around across the globe concur that effective workforce retention with critical abilities is crucial for accomplishing the goals of the institution. In order to keep academic workforces engaged and devoted to their organizations, several strategies need to be adopted starting from hiring and continue throughout training and re-orientation. This extends beyond focussing solely on one aspect of human resources (Freythuth, 2017). Employers

use retention tactics as a concerted effort to create and foster an environment that encourages current employees to stick with the organization through the implementation of principles and policies that take into account their different requirements (Chandik, 2017). Universities operate in a very competitive environment, thus it is imperative that they retain qualified, capable, and experienced academics if the intended outcomes are to be achieved. as a result of their special characteristics, universities act as repositories of information. Fewer institutions can afford to hire, develop, and release their most valuable and skilled academic staff members when it is difficult to find better replacements. Retention is primarily done to prevent experienced employees from leaving the organization, which could have a negative impact on output and institutional quality. It is exceedingly difficult for private universities to quickly fill open jobs and sustain excellent institutional performance due to the churn of qualified academic staff (Babakuse, 2018).

Strategies designed to keep core faculty members should provide global retention tactics to increase instructors' output despite an ever-increasing turnover rate. The importance of holding onto valuable personnel for the success of an educational institution has been well demonstrated by literature. Universities that are unable to hold onto their top performers will eventually have a staff that is dissatisfied and underqualified, which will make it harder for them to stay competitive (Rappaport, 2019). Administrators acknowledge that keeping essential personnel in their organizations is one of the most difficult parts of their jobs, as having a high degree of proven personnel is more important than ever in the modern day. According to research by Harris, Kinner, and Griffen (2016), employees frequently

cited aspects such a competitive pay, a welcoming workplace, positive interpersonal relationships, and occupational safety as fundamental motivators that affect their retention in the companies. The goals and objectives of universities are directly impacted by the retention of highly qualified and established scholars in the system (Denton, 2019).

The problems of academic staff retention in Nigeria are largely included in the general categories of brain drain and are not sufficiently validated in the literature (Mihyo, 2017). In fact, the same factors that are known to cause brain drain also cause problems with worker retention, so both are unkempt. According to Tetty (2016), the majority of highly skilled and experienced academics have left Nigerian private universities in search of higher paying positions elsewhere. As a result, it is now difficult for them to acquire the necessary teaching skills to provide the next generation of citizens with a standard education. Retention strategies that work improve instructors' passion, commitment, and drive to meet the university's objectives (Denton, 2019). The mainstay of academic staff retention, based on a review of the literature on the subject, is staff members with core competencies. The main justification for retention is to keep competent employees from leaving the organization, as doing so could seriously hinder the achievement of university goals (Netswara, Rankhumise & Mavundia, 2015).

The theoretical basis of this research is equity theory, which was developed by Stacy Adam in 1963 and focused on the idea that justice and fairness are essential traits of a driven person. According to the theory, people are motivated by fairness. If they see that their input or output ratios are unfair when compared to the referent group, they want to

alleviate this unfairness and restore their perception of the situation's justice. Perceived inequality and perceived equality are the two main concepts at the center of this theory (Koontz, 2000). Employees may decrease output quality or quantity or even quit the organization if they believe that they are not being treated effectively in comparison to their contemporaries. They are likely to maintain on a similar quantity of output if the perceived reward structure is equitable. They might become more diligent if the benefits exceed their expectations. If it is found that an employee is underpaid or not receiving the proper recognition, they become angry and upset with the company, hoping to bring justice and a feeling of fairness back to the situation.

The theory is based on academic staff idiosyncratic judgment between the input they bring into the university system (education, time, experience, commitment and effort) and the outcome they receive from it (promotion, recognition and increase pay) against the perceived inputs and outcome of other employees. Therefore, it guides to understand what may influence academic staff of private Universities to leave in that they keep on comparing what academics in other institutions earn in order to ensure fairness between their inputs and outputs. In turn, this contributes to staff mobility in the university environment. There is a tendency in human nature to distort their inputs concerning the effort and subjective comparison (Beardwel, 2017). Therefore, academics at private universities could underestimate or overestimate their contributions to the effectiveness of teaching, research, and community service. On the reverse side, if the perceived inequality is allowed to continue unchecked, it may lead to a pent-up sense of injustice and resignation to an incident that appears to be insignificant. Accordingly,

institutional management should prioritize the role that pay plays in determining motivational outcomes. Furthermore, managers of the institutions should not downplay the role that pay plays as a source of equity disputes like gender equality and comparable worth in the workplace.

Numerous research on university goal achievement and retention tactics have been carried out. Odundayo, Rowland, and Adewale (2020) looked at how the work environment affected the retention of academics at Southern Nigerian public universities. The study's conclusions demonstrated that the sampled universities had been concerned about the issue of inadequate and deteriorating infrastructure. Akanbi (2018) looked into how teachers' productivity was affected by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in Oyo State's private universities. The results showed that basic retention methods included recognition, remuneration packages, capacity building, and work environment. At Kenya Public University, Jane, Mike, and Namusonge (2017) investigated the variables that influenced academic staff retention. The study employed a longitudinal methodology to elucidate the factors that impact the retention of core, established scholars within the institutions. The nation's government-owned universities faced numerous difficulties as a result of globalization, which heightened rivalry and expanded labor mobility. The preservation of teachers in Kenya is a pressing issue that grew more problematic during the 2015–2016 academic year due to double enrollment. The study suggested that effective strategies for the preservation of distinguished scholars should involve a combination of tactics.

In Bangladesh's private universities, Abdulkadir and Abdulkalam (2015) conducted study on the

factors that influence teachers' retention. Using non-probability sampling, 346 respondents were selected from ten private universities. Relevant data for the study were gathered using a five-point Likert scale and a closed-ended, pre-tested questionnaire. The statistical techniques used to analyze the data collected for the study included factor analysis, multiple regression, and the Pearson product moment correlation statistic. A theoretical framework for occupation satisfaction was developed and used to the retention of academic staff. The study's conclusions showed that a lecturer's retention was significantly influenced by their compensation package, administrative support, job security, group cohesiveness, and organizational policies. The study suggested that in order to sustain academics' total job satisfaction, private university management should prioritize benefits such as job security, salary, and working environment.

Jacob and Idah (2016) examined on the preservation of instructors in the selected South African higher education institution. Eighty lecturers who had worked for several decades in higher education institutions comprised the study. The survey, which drew responses from 80 professors, also showed that the key components keeping them in their chosen field of work are leadership, wage advancement, and career contentment. Work satisfaction was correlated with academic progress, job advancement, and the likelihood of productive environments as factors that are always present. The people who responded claimed that a job in education offers meager pay due to its narrow opportunities for growth and its demanding workload, which makes it challenging to fulfill advancement standards. It was suggested that unambiguous academic support

services be maintained in order to foster both academic advancement and the maintenance of important instructors. Additionally, academics with transparent ranking should be given pay packages that are consistent and explicit.

Tetty (2016) examined into sustainable solutions' components for staff retention in universities in developing nations. For the case study analysis, five universities were chosen: University of Botswana, Kwazulu Natal University, Makerere University, University of Ghana, and University of Ibadan. Under the guidance of the learning coordinator, staff members from certain institutions handled each case. Research subjects were routed to a web-based electronic format that delivered questionnaires to all lecturers in all of the selected institutions. The study's findings demonstrated that maintaining lecturers is a difficult issue for African universities. The incapability to catch the attention of potential academic employees has led to extreme pressure among existing lecturers as well as diminished Universities capacity to preserve a respectable level of performance vis-à-vis their core mandates of national human resource capacity, innovation and overall development of their societies. It was recommended that African universities should institutionalize sustainable strategies to rejuvenate staffing capabilities thereby enhancing their roles in socio-economic development.

High ranking academics' retention and attrition at South African tertiary institutions were studied by Micheal and Chipunza (2016). A mixed method research strategy was adopted in the study. A self-created questionnaire consisting of fifty-two items was used to get relevant data from the respondents. A convenient sampling technique was used to select 255 renowned lecturers from ten South African

universities. The study's hypothesis regarding the relationship between abrasion and skilled lecturers' retention was tested using chi-square statistical analysis. The results of the research demonstrated how a higher education institution's decline in academic staff affects work autonomy, employment security, and exciting environments for learning. It was suggested that in order to totally eradicate xenophobic tendencies in South African higher education institutions, university authorities should develop policies and strategies that support and maintain research collaboration, interpersonal relationships, and a sense of collegiality.

### Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research design. The population of the study is made up of all 1,921 academic staff from all the 23 private Universities from the six states that constitute the South- West, Nigeria. Three out of the six states were purposively selected, while 10 private Universities from Ogun, Osun and Oyo States established before the years 2000 were likewise selected using purposive sampling. Proportional sampling technique was employed to select 565 academic staff for the study using research advisor. The researcher-designed questionnaires titled: "Academic Staff Retention Strategies and Lecturers' Effectiveness Questionnaire" were used to elicit relevant information for the study. Person product-moment correlation statistic was used to test the hypotheses formulated in the study. The instruments were validated and subjected to reliability test-retest method giving 0.69 0.73 for 'ASRSQ, 'LEQ respectively. This affirmed that the instruments were reliable for the study.

### Findings

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant relationship between academic freedom and lecturers' effectiveness in private universities in South– west, Nigeria

**Table 1**

Correlation Analysis between Academic Freedom and Lecturers Effectiveness

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Academic Freedom	565	2.71	0.38	0.66	0.02	$H_{01}$ Rejected
Lecturers Effectiveness	565	3.03	0.69			

As shown in Table 1, the calculated r- value is 0.66 while the p-value is 0.02 is less than the significant level of 0.05. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between academic freedom and lecturers' effectiveness in private universities in south west, Nigeria was rejected .This implies that there was a significant relationship between academic freedom and goal achievement in private University in South-west, Nigeria.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between job security and lecturers effectiveness in private universities in South – west, Nigeria

### Correlation Analysis between Job Security and Lecturers Effectiveness

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Cal. r-value	p-value	Decision
Job Security	565	2.75	0.47	0.31	.02	Ho <sub>2</sub> Rejected
Lecturers Effectiveness	565	3.04	0.69			

As indicated in Table 2, the calculated r- value is 0.31 while the p-value is 0.02 is less than the significant level of 0.05. Thus, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between job security and lecturers effectiveness in private universities in south-west, Nigeria was rejected. This shows that there was a significant relationship between job security and lecturers effectiveness in private University in South-west, Nigeria

### Discussion Of Findings

The results of the first hypothesis test indicated that, in private universities in South-West Nigeria, there was a strong correlation between academic freedom and the efficacy of instructors. This finding provides evidence that the effectiveness of professors at a private university in Southwest Nigeria and academic freedom are strongly correlated. This illustrates that a key factor in determining whether the goals of higher education institutions are realized is the extent to which employment grants professors in these institutions a great deal of autonomy to teach freely and do research without fear of retaliation. This result supported the research by Afe (2014), which showed that academic independence and autonomy are necessary prerequisites for achieving university goals. Amstrong (2017) corroborated the study's findings by pointing out that knowledge workers were unable to concentrate on their primary responsibilities of teaching, research, and public service when academic freedom was violated. Academic staff members at private universities cannot foster critical thinking if academic freedom is violated. Therefore, when lecturers are free to engage in critical and intellectual inquiry without unjustified restriction, the institutional goals of providing and advancing the manpower needed to accelerate the socio-economic and scientific development of the nation can be actualized effectively.

The result of the second test of the hypothesis showed a significant relationship between job security and lecturers' effectiveness in private universities in South-West, Nigeria. Job security is a crucial factor that influences lecturers' commitment to actualize effectiveness of lecturers in teaching, research, and community services. This finding supported a study by Jame (2018), which found that employees perform better and reflect goal achievement when they have more job security. Employees stay with an organization if they are confident in their ability to continue their work, have built-in insurance plans, and retirement benefits that will enable them to meet socioeconomic demands as they age. In his research, Tower (2017)



underlined that private university administrations should guarantee academic staff job security in addition to hiring them, provided that they are committed to achieving institutional performance as a whole.

### Conclusion

The role of universities in retaining valuable manpower for the success of an educational institution cannot be overemphasized. Universities that failed to retain high performers will be left with under satisfied and less qualified workforce, which ultimately hinders the ability to remain competitive. Universally, administrators admit that one of the most demanding aspects of job is the retention of key employees in their establishments in that high degree of proven of employees is more vital in contemporary era

### Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study, it was recommended that:

academic freedom and autonomy should be given priority for academics to pursue intellectual inquiry related to their fields of expertise with the core values to teaching, research and community service without perverse restraint;

academic staff development programmes such as; research grants, attendants and participation in seminars, workshops and conferences that will enrich the knowledge and skills of academics should be accorded priority to ensure retention of competent and dedicated lecturers;

prominence should be given to stimulating work environment to boost lecturers' morale thereby facilitating the attainment of university goal;

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