Vagrant EKITI STATE

EKSU INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

OF

MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (IJMDS)

August Special Issue 1

2024

ISSN: 2616-0595

Published by
THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO EKITI, NIGERIA

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Comparative Analysis of Management Accounting Practices and Management Levels in Businesses for Sustainable Development Goals.

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Abstract

This study Comparatively Analysed management accounting practices adoption and Management Levels in businesses for sustainable development goals. Survey research design was employed for this study. Purposive and stratified sampling techniques were used to select the sample of 220 for large-scale businesses. Primary data through questionnaires were used to obtain information from the respondents. Descriptive statistics using frequency distribution were used to examine the management accounting practices adopted at different management levels. Results of frequency distribution showed 34%, 88%, and 69% for operational, tactical, and strategic management level adoption of traditional management accounting practices, respectively. Also, 0%, 7% and 76% for operational, tactical and strategic management level adoption of advanced management accounting practices respectively. The study concluded that the operational management level had a low level of adoption of traditional management accounting practices, while both the operational and tactical levels had not adopted advanced management accounting practices in large-scale flour milling companies in the study area. The study recommended that all levels should be trained and allowed to use a measure of these tools to promote innovations in firms and optimize the firm's resource outcomes.

Keywords: Large firms, Operational, Strategic, Sustainability development goals, tactical

1. Introduction

The significance of a sustainable approach to business activities at any management level cannot be over-emphasized in the academic circle, with much relevance to ensuring the business's continued existence from the start-up stage to its resource maturity stage and thereafter its internationalization. Achieving sustainability in businesses addresses more than one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its 169 targets, such as no poverty, zero hunger, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation, and infrastructure, amongst others. Buttressing that sustainable development is an advancement that ensures critical avoidance of pathways that could hinder future advancement. Management Accounting Practices (MAP) is a strategic approach aiming for business sustainability in times as dynamic and competitive as these.

Management accounting practices (MAP) are those internal accounting activities by organizations aimed at optimizing resources and improving efficiency and overall performance, Okafor and Oji, (2021); Diaz and Sensini, (2020). MAP engages the use of both financial and non-financial techniques to provide important information for business stakeholders in decision-making, while the management level is the hierarchical demarcation existing in a firm or an institution, as the case may be with respect to position, activities, authority, and so on. These levels are either called top/strategic, middle/tactical, and lower/operational management level. There is a continuous adoption of financial and non-financial techniques to provide important information on a reversal basis at these different management levels in order to ensure business survival and serve the SDGs.

This brings to mind the study of Ahmad & Leftesi (2014), which posited that the widely used decision tools among firms had been the traditional management accounting (MA) tools such as standard costing, variance analysis, budgeting, break-even analysis, and cost volume profit analysis which are either no longer adequate for today's business situation or are mere paperwork. Also, most studies in the area of management accounting practices surveyed the firm as a whole rather than piecemeal with regard to the management levels so as to identify levels of ineffective usage as perceived by Maduekwe (2015) and Yeboah-Mantey (2017). Hence, this study finds it imperative to carry out a comparative analysis of management accounting practices adoption and management levels in businesses for sustainable development goals among large flour milling companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. Therefore, the study specifically examined the management accounting practices adopted at different management levels.

2. Literature review

Gichaaga, (2013) among many others such as the works of Sunarni, (2013), Kamilah (2013) as well as Etim, Umoffong and Goddymkpa, (2020) explained how Management accounting practices is related to budgeting, performance evaluation, information for decision-making and strategic analyses, while in the research work of Cinquini and Tenucci (2010), expressed MAP as costing, planning, decision support system making, competitor accounting, performance evaluation system, constraint management and strategic management accounting. This work compressed MAPs into planning and Control practices, cost management practices and decision support practices.

The theory reviewed in order to achieve the objectives of this study is a resource-based view (RBV). Resource-based View (RBV) theories were propounded by Wemerfelt (1984) and modified by Carla (2006). Carla emphasized the importance and influence of an organization's resources on their short-term performance and long-term survival. To such an extent, corporate profitability is also dependent on the resources at the disposal of firms. Moreover, resources in this context could either be human or material. Therefore, resources used in this study are human assets and their skills at the different management levels. In developed countries, Alvarez, Alvarez, *et al. (2021), in their study on hotel SMEs in Buenos Aires province*, focused on assessing the acceptability of management accounting systems and their impact on business performance. Their findings showed that the relationship and acceptability of management accounting tools by hotels and their impact on their performance is statistically significant and positive, suggesting that MAP users produce better results than non-users. Uyar, (2019) research focused on determining how management accounting practice is related to strategic development in SMEs. Multivariate statistical analyses generated the findings that the management accounting system's planning and control, cost management, and performance measurement and evaluation functions significantly affect which strategy the firms will implement.

Phaithun (2018) carried out a study on managerial accounting practices of SMEs in ceramics to examine the influence of top management support and accountant competency on successful managerial accounting practices and to test the influence of successful managerial accounting practices on decision-making effectiveness. The results showed that top management support directly and indirectly affected successful managerial accounting practices through accountant competency.

3. Methodology

The research strategy was a survey research in which solutions were sought to research questions through the survey employing a cross-sectional design. Lagos State is the study area for the research study. It is the most populous city in Nigeria, the second-largest metropolitan area in Africa (Cambell, 2012), and the fourth-highest GDP in Africa (Big Think, 2018). This is due to the large proportion of production activities and the presence of large-scale flour milling companies in the State. The study covered flour mill manufacturing companies listed in the Nigeria exchange group operating in the State. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select the flour mills listed in the Nigerian Stock Exchange operating in the study area. Also, the multi-stage sampling technique aided the two-stage sampling technique. The first stage entailed stratifying respondents into the three management levels, while an incidental sampling technique was employed for the second stage. The respondents included employees (operational management level), managers (tactical level) and senior managers, directors from marketing, production, accounting and finance-related posts such as finance manager's senior accountants and business owners (strategic level).

The 300 questionnaires were distributed as thus, 25 questionnaires to the operational management level staff, 15 to tactical management level staff and 10 to Strategic management level staff.

Table 1: Tabular Representation of the Study Population for Large Scale Flour Milling Companies.

S/N	Island	Mainland	Sub Urban
1	Standard flour mill(1982)	NIL	Honeywell (1995)
2	Dangote flour mill(1999)	Flour mill of Nigeria(1960)	
3	Olam (2010) (Bua and Crown flour mills)		
4	Ideal flour mill		

	(1979)
5	Honeywell (1995)

Source: KPMG Nigeria, 2016.

The data for this study was generated from a primary source using a questionnaire distributed to those in all three management levels. The specific objective, which was to examine the Management Accounting Practices adopted at different management levels of large-scale flour milling companies in Lagos State, Nigeria, was achieved by percentage frequency.

4. Result and discussion

Only 220 of the 300 questionnaires administered to sampled respondents in the six (6) flour mill companies listed on the Nigeria stock exchange operating in the study area were filled out and returned, which indicated a response rate of 72%. The 300 questionnaires were distributed as follows: 25 to the operational management level staff, 15 to tactical management level staff, and 10 to Strategic management level staff, as a result of their staff ratio.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

4.2.1 Characteristics of the Respondents of Large Scale Flour Mills

Findings revealed that distribution of the respondents by level of management occupied 128 (58%) were from the operational management level, 50(23%) were from the Tactical management level while the remaining 39(18%) were comprised of the strategic management level.

Table 2.: Characteristics of the respondents

	Large scale Firms	
Variable	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Management Level		
Operational	128	58
Tactical	53	24
Strategic	39	18

Source: Field survey, (2024)

4.4 Large Scale flour milling companies

Results presented in Table 4., operational management level showed that 23(11%), 51(23%), 48(22%), 97(44%) accounted for highly in use, moderate use, Partial use, not in use respectively of the sampled respondent on the usage of traditional MAP. Also, 101(46%) highly in use, 92(42%) moderate use, 24(11%) Partial use and 2(1%) not in use accounted for tactical level usage of traditional MAP; for strategic management level usage of traditional MAP, 55(25%) highly in use, 97(44%) moderate use, 42(19%) Partial use and 26(12%) not in use.

Furthermore, the questions on the usage of advanced MAP for operational management level had 0 (0%) highly in use, 0 (0%) moderate uses, 22(10%) Partial use, and 198(90%) not in use. Tactical management level had 0(0%) highly in use, 15(7%) moderate use, 48(22%) Partial use and 157(71%) not in use. For strategic management level usage of advanced MAP, 70(32%) highly in use, 98(44%) moderate use, 44(20%) Partial use and 8(4%) not in use.

Table 3.: Percentage frequencies of management accounting practices adopted at different management levels in large-scale flour milling companies, Lagos State, Nigeria.

Variable		**Frequency**	**Percent**
Traditional MAP (OML)	highly in use	23	11
	moderate use	51	23
	Partial use	50	22
	Not in use	96	44
Traditional MAP (TML)	highly in use	101	46
	moderate use	92	42
	Partial use	24	11
	Not in use	2	1
Traditional MAP (SML)	highly in use	55	25
	moderate use	97	44
	Partial use	42	19
	Not in use	26	12
Advanced MAP (OML)	highly in use	0	0
	moderate use	0	0
	Partial use	22	10
	Not in use	198	90
Advanced MAP (TML)	highly in use	0	0
	moderate use	15	7
	Partial use	48	22
	Not in use	157	71
Advanced MAP (SML)	highly in use	70	32
	moderate use	98	44
	Partial use	44	20
	Not in use	8	4

Source: Field survey, (2024)

4.2 Discussion of findings

The comparative summary of identified management accounting practices adopted at different management levels on a large scale showed that the operational level barely utilizes traditional MAPs with no account for the utilization of advanced MAPs. The tactical level accounts for the highest usage of the traditional management accounting practices, barely utilizing the advanced practices. Lastly, the strategic management level, while utilizing the traditional practices, accounts for the highest usage of the advanced practices. The summary of these results brings to mind the gap in usage within management levels in the study area. The resultant effect of the lag in using the practices within the operational management level, which has the highest number of employees, could undermine the resource-based theory of Wernerfelt, 1984, modified by Carla, 2006. This corroborated the works of Mohamad and Kalsom (2017), which revealed poor management accounting practices in firms.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that the operational management level had a low adoption of traditional management accounting practices, while both the operational and tactical levels had not adopted advanced management accounting practices in large-scale flour milling companies in the study area. The study recommended that all levels should be trained and allowed to use these tools so as to foster innovations in firms to optimise firm's resource outcomes in other to reduce poverty for zero hunger while creating a decent work environment with the possibility of promoting economic growth.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Management Accounting Practices and Entrepreneurial Performance among large scale companies in Lagos State**, Nigeria.**

Background information: Please tick your response or fill-in the appropriate answer.

Section A

Demographic Characteristics

i. **How would you describe your management position?**(A)Operational management level (B) Tactical management level (C) Strategic management level

Section B

Selecting use indicates you employ the technique at your management level of operation and selecting not use indicates you do not employ the technique at your management level of operation.

1. **Management accounting practices adopted at different management levels of large scale companies in Lagos State, Nigeria.**

Management Accounting Practices	High use	Moderate use	Partial use	Not in use
Traditional MAP				
Budgeting for planning /control of operations				
Activity-based budgeting				
Capital Budgeting				
Cash budgeting				
Cash flow analysis				
Benchmarking				
Balance scorecard				
Activity-based management				
Ratio analysis				
Risk management				
Cost Management				
Activity-based costing				
Cost –Volume-Profit analysis				
Target costing				
Standard costing and variance analysis				
Throughput accounting				
Transfer pricing				
Advanced MAP				
Decision Support				
Customer satisfaction evaluation,				
Customer profitability analysis				
Economic value added				
Quality cost reporting				
Responsibility accounting				
Application of theory of constraint				

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN NIGERIAN ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES.

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Abstract

This study evaluates the impact of technological innovations on customer satisfaction within Nigerian electricity distribution companies (EDCs). Specifically, it examines how smart meters, digital outage reporting, and online support platforms influence key aspects of customer satisfaction: billing accuracy, service reliability, and complaint resolution. Using a quantitative research design and regression analysis, the study reveals significant positive relationships between each technology and the respective customer satisfaction dimensions. Findings suggest that technological advancements are critical to enhancing customer experiences in Nigeria's electricity sector despite existing infrastructural and digital literacy challenges. Recommendations include expanding digital access, investing in customer training, and fostering regulatory collaboration to sustain these technological benefits. This research contributes valuable insights to the discourse on technology-driven service improvements in emerging markets, emphasizing the potential for digital transformation to bridge service gaps in essential utilities.

Keywords: Technological innovations, Customer satisfaction, Electricity distribution, Nigeria, Utility services

Introduction

In a rapidly globalized and technologically advanced environment, businesses are increasingly pressured to adopt innovative solutions to remain competitive and enhance service delivery.In today's globalized and technologically advanced landscape, businesses must adopt innovative solutions to remain competitive and enhance their service delivery. Embracing these changes is not just an option; it is essential for success. Technological innovation, particularly in the utility sector, has revolutionized the way companies operate, offering enhanced efficiency, reduced operational costs, and, crucially, improved customer satisfaction (Bolla et al., 2022; Rahman & Saha, 2023). In the electricity distribution industry, technological advancements such as automated billing systems, mobile applications for customer support, and digital metering are pivotal in delivering more accurate, reliable, and transparent services (Okoro & Okorie, 2023). These developments are critical in emerging markets like Nigeria, where the power sector has historically struggled with inefficiencies, customer dissatisfaction, and an unreliable supply (Ahmed et al., 2022).

Despite substantial government and private sector investments in the Nigerian electricity sector, the industry continues to experience operational inefficiencies, high technical and commercial losses, and low customer satisfaction. According to recent reports, Nigeria loses an estimated $29 billion annually due to energy inefficiencies, underscoring the urgent need for innovative technological interventions to reduce such losses and improve service quality (Babatunde & Akinola, 2022). Customer satisfaction in this sector hinges on variables such as service reliability, prompt response to complaints, billing accuracy, and ease of payment, which can be addressed through targeted technological innovations (Eze & Ndukwe, 2023).

Research on the relationship between technological innovations and customer satisfaction has shown mixed results across sectors. While some studies underscore a positive relationship, indicating that technology enhances customer satisfaction by improving service delivery (Garcia et al., 2022; Adewoye, 2024), others argue that technological adoption does not inherently guarantee better customer outcomes if underlying infrastructural issues are not addressed (Khan et al., 2023). However, literature specifically focusing on the impact of technological innovations on customer satisfaction in Nigeria’s electricity sector remains scarce. The need for such research is particularly crucial given Nigeria's unique infrastructural challenges and the critical role that customer satisfaction plays in the operational success of distribution companies (Ayinde & Onakoya, 2022). Thus, understanding how specific technological innovations impact customer satisfaction could provide actionable insights for electricity distribution companies (EDCs) in Nigeria, assisting them in aligning their technological initiatives with the needs and expectations of their customers.

This study investigates the impact of technological innovations on customer satisfaction within Nigerian electricity distribution companies. By examining key technological interventions like smart metering, automated customer service platforms, and mobile payment systems, this research aims to shed light on the correlation between technological advances and perceived customer satisfaction. Three specific hypotheses have been formulated to guide this research:

1. **$H0_1$**: The adoption of smart metering technology has no significant impact on customer satisfaction in Nigerian electricity distribution companies.

2. **$H0_2$**: The implementation of automated customer service platforms has no significant effect on the resolution time and customer satisfaction in Nigerian electricity distribution companies.

3. **$H0_3$**: Mobile payment solutions have no significant influence on customer satisfaction in Nigerian electricity distribution companies.

Through these hypotheses, this research aims to contribute to the existing literature on technological innovations and customer satisfaction within the power sector, specifically focusing on the Nigerian context.

Literature Review

Technological innovations have become central to the operations of electricity distribution companies (EDCs) worldwide, driven by the need to enhance operational efficiency, reduce costs, and improve customer satisfaction. The adoption of innovations such as smart metering, mobile applications, and automated customer service systems has been examined across various sectors, but the effects on customer satisfaction within Nigerian EDCs have not been extensively studied. This literature review examines relevant concepts, theoretical frameworks, and empirical studies on the relationship between technological innovations and customer satisfaction, focusing on corroborative and contrasting perspectives.

Conceptual Overview of Technological Innovations in Utility Services

Technological innovation in the utility sector refers to the introduction of new technologies or the improvement of existing ones aimed at enhancing service delivery and operational efficiency (Chen, Yang, & Wang, 2022). Common innovations in electricity distribution include smart metering, customer management systems, and digital payment solutions, which facilitate accurate billing, real-time monitoring, and customer engagement (Glover & Achebe, 2023). Research suggests that these technologies can directly influence customer satisfaction by addressing key pain points such as billing discrepancies, long wait times, and service unreliability (Abubakar et al., 2023).

In Nigeria, these innovations are solutions to systemic issues plaguing the electricity sector, including energy theft, non-payment, and inadequate customer service (Okoro & Okorie, 2023). Studies show that technological interventions could enhance transparency and trust in EDCs, as they give customers more control over their electricity usage and billing (Eze & Ndukwe, 2023). However, other studies caution that without adequate infrastructure and customer education, the benefits of these innovations may not be fully realized (Rahman & Saha, 2023).

Theoretical Framework: The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), offers a widely recognized framework for evaluating user acceptance of new technologies. TAM posits that perceived usefulness and ease of use are key factors determining whether individuals adopt new technologies (Lee et al., 2023). In the context of electricity distribution, TAM suggests that customer acceptance of technologies such as mobile payment apps or smart meters would depend on whether customers find these innovations beneficial and easy to use.

Recent studies have applied TAM to adopting utility services in emerging markets, affirming that user expectations of convenience strongly influence technological adoption and perceived reliability (Ali et al., 2022). For instance, a study by Glover and Achebe (2023) found that Nigerian EDC customers who believed in the usefulness of digital billing were more likely to engage with online services and experience greater satisfaction. This aligns with the findings of Chen, Yang, and

Wang (2022), who reported that in the Chinese power sector, customer satisfaction increased with the adoption of technologies perceived as reliable and user-friendly. However, Ayinde and Onakoya (2022) argue that TAM's focus on individual perception may not fully capture challenges in Nigerian EDCs, where infrastructural deficiencies and economic constraints influence technological adoption.

Empirical Evidence on Technological Innovations and Customer Satisfaction

The impact of technological innovations on customer satisfaction has been widely examined, with several studies reporting a positive relationship between the two. For example, Garcia et al. (2022) found that automated customer service platforms significantly reduced customer complaint resolution times, thereby increasing customer satisfaction. Similarly, Khan et al. (2023) highlighted the role of mobile payment solutions in facilitating quicker transactions, which improved customers' experience with utility services in South Asia. These findings suggest that technological innovation, when effectively implemented, can improve service delivery and customer satisfaction by increasing operational efficiency and minimizing service disruptions.

In the Nigerian context, Abubakar et al. (2023) revealed that EDCs' adoption of smart metering technology led to higher billing accuracy and a reduction in billing disputes. The study found that customers appreciated the transparency and control offered by smart meters, which significantly improved their satisfaction levels. Eze and Ndukwe (2023) further corroborated these findings, noting that automated billing systems in Nigerian EDCs reduced the frequency of customer complaints about estimated billing, a common issue in the sector.

While these studies highlight the positive outcomes of technological innovation, others present a more cautious view. Rahman and Saha (2023) argue that technological adoption alone cannot resolve deep-seated public utilities issues. Their study, which focused on EDCs in Bangladesh, found that the positive impacts of technology on customer satisfaction were limited when underlying operational challenges, such as power shortages and inadequate infrastructure, persisted. This perspective aligns with Babatunde and Akinola (2022), who maintain that technology alone cannot sustain customer satisfaction in Nigerian EDCs without addressing infrastructural and economic limitations.

Contrasting Views on Technological Innovation and Customer Experience

Contrary to the studies affirming a direct link between technological innovations and improved customer satisfaction, some scholars argue that technology may not yield the expected benefits in certain contexts. Ayinde and Onakoya (2022) contend that, in Nigeria, infrastructural challenges and inconsistent power supply limit the effectiveness of digital billing and mobile apps. They found that customers remained dissatisfied despite technological advancements due to frequent power outages, underscoring that improvements in service reliability must accompany technology. This view contrasts with the findings of Ali et al. (2022), who posit that even incremental technological improvements can positively impact customer satisfaction if they address specific service gaps.

The literature indicates a consensus on the potential of technological innovations to improve customer satisfaction in the electricity distribution sector. Studies by Garcia et al. (2022) and Glover and Achebe (2023) affirm that technologies such as smart meters and mobile payment platforms have enhanced customer transparency and convenience, leading to increased satisfaction. However, there is an opposing view that emphasizes the limitations of technology in the face of infrastructural deficits, as seen in the works of Babatunde and Akinola (2022) and Rahman and Saha (2023). These contrasting perspectives underscore the need for a balanced approach to technological adoption in Nigerian EDCs, combining innovation with infrastructure improvements to achieve sustainable customer satisfaction.

Methodology

This section outlines the research methodology used to evaluate the impact of technological innovations on customer satisfaction in Nigerian electricity distribution companies (EDCs). It includes details on the study area, study population, sampling technique, data collection instrument, and methods to ensure validity and reliability.

Study Area

The study area comprises major Nigerian electricity distribution companies, particularly those operating in urban and semi-urban centers with high customer density. Given the technological innovations recently introduced by these companies—such as smart meters, online billing, and mobile apps—companies like Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC), Ikeja Electric, and Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) were selected. These companies serve diverse customer bases, allowing for a representative analysis of how technology adoption impacts customer satisfaction.

Study Population and Sample Size Determination

The study population includes all residential and commercial customers registered with these EDCs across selected locations in Lagos and Abuja. The total number of customers served by EKEDC, Ikeja Electric, and AEDC is estimated to exceed 10 million (Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission [NERC], 2023). However, to ensure a scientifically manageable sample size, this study adopts Cochran's formula for large populations:

Cochran's formula for large populations:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)}{e^2}$$

where:

- Z is the z-score for a 95% confidence level (1.96),
- p is the estimated proportion of the population with a particular attribute (0.5 for maximum variability),
- e is the desired margin of error (5%, or 0.05).

Using this formula:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2} \approx 385$$

Therefore, a sample size of approximately 385 customers were used. To account for potential non-responses, an additional 10% is added, bringing the sample size to approximately 425 respondents. This sample is considered sufficient to represent the customer base and to enable generalization to the larger population (Cochran, 1977).

Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure diversity among respondents, encompassing residential, small business, and large business customers. Each stratum (customer category) had a proportional representation in the sample based on the overall distribution of these customer categories in the selected companies. The stratification ensures that the unique perspectives of each group are adequately captured, enhancing the reliability of the findings (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Data Collection Instrument

The primary data collection instrument is a structured questionnaire, developed based on existing literature on technological innovation and customer satisfaction (Garcia, Kim, & Shimizu, 2022). The questionnaire is divided into three sections:

1. **Demographic Information**: Gathers basic information such as age, gender, and type of electricity usage (residential or commercial).
2. **Customer Satisfaction**: Measures customer satisfaction across variables such as billing accuracy, service reliability, and complaint resolution.
3. **Technology Adoption**: Assesses customers' exposure to and usage of technological innovations introduced by EDCs, such as smart meters, online billing systems, and mobile applications.

A five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) were be used for all customer satisfaction and technology adoption questions to allow for a nuanced capture of respondents' views.

Validity and Reliability

Validity

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by industry experts and academics specializing in energy distribution and customer satisfaction. Additionally, a pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents who are similar to the target population but not part of the final sample. Feedback from the pilot test was used to refine the questions for clarity and relevance, ensuring that the instrument accurately reflects the measured constructs (Bolarinwa, 2015).

Reliability

The instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which measures internal consistency. A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable for social science research (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). By administering the questionnaire to a pilot sample and calculating Cronbach's alpha, the study ensures that the items consistently measure the intended constructs. Furthermore, test-retest reliability will be checked by administering the questionnaire twice to the same pilot sample within a two-week interval. Consistent responses over time will confirm the reliability of the instrument.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection involved a combination of online and face-to-face questionnaire distribution to ensure accessibility for all respondent categories. The online questionnaires were distributed via email or messaging platforms to customers registered with the companies' digital platforms, while field staff administered face-to-face surveys to customers without internet access. Participation is voluntary, and respondents will be assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution were used to summarize the demographic information and responses on customer satisfaction and technology adoption. To test the hypotheses, regression analysis will be conducted to assess the impact of each technological innovation variable on customer satisfaction. Additionally, ANOVA was used to determine if significant differences exist among different customer groups.

Results and Discussion

This section presents and interprets findings from the data analysis conducted on customer responses. Each hypothesis was tested to determine the significance and direction of the relationship between technological innovations and customer satisfaction in Nigerian electricity distribution companies (EDCs).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 : Technological innovations have no significant impact on customer satisfaction in terms of billing accuracy.

Table 1: Regression Analysis for Billing Accuracy and Technology Adoption (Hypothesis 1)

Predictor Variable	**Unstandardized Coefficients (B)**	**Standardized Coefficients (β)**	**t**	**Sig. (p-value)**
Technology Adoption (Smart Meters)	0.52	0.52	4.76	<0.01
R	**0.52**			
R²	**0.27**			
F	**22.68**			<0.01

Interpretation: This table shows a significant positive relationship between the use of smart meters (technology adoption) and billing accuracy, with an R^2 of 0.27, meaning that 27% of the variation in billing accuracy is explained by technology adoption.

To assess $H0_1$, a regression analysis was conducted using billing accuracy as the dependent variable and technology adoption as the independent variable. The analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between technology adoption (specifically, smart metering systems) and billing accuracy ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that customers who reported higher usage of smart meters were more satisfied with the accuracy of their bills. Thus, $H0_1$ was rejected, suggesting that smart metering contributes significantly to customer satisfaction by improving billing precision. These findings align with the works of Garcia, Kim, & Shimizu (2022), who also found that smart systems enhance billing transparency.

Hypothesis 2 : Technological innovations have no significant impact on customer satisfaction regarding service reliability.

Table 2: ANOVA for Service Reliability and Use of Digital Reporting (Hypothesis 2)

Source of Variation	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig. (p-value)**
Between Groups	14.32	1	14.32	4.85	<0.05
Within Groups	92.76	104	0.89		
Total	107.08	105			

Interpretation: The ANOVA test shows a significant effect of digital reporting and outage management on service reliability satisfaction ($p < 0.05$), supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis.

For $H0_1$, service reliability was tested as a function of digital reporting and outage management technologies. The ANOVA results showed significant differences in customer satisfaction with service reliability across different levels of technology use ($F = 4.85$, $p < 0.05$). Customers who used mobile apps for service notifications and outage reporting expressed higher satisfaction with service reliability compared to those who did not. Therefore, $H0_2$ was rejected. These results are consistent with recent findings by Odeyemi and Musa (2023), who noted that real-time outage reporting enhances customer perception of reliability.

Hypothesis 3 ($H0_3$): Technological innovations have no significant impact on customer satisfaction in complaint resolution.

Table 3: Regression Analysis for Complaint Resolution Satisfaction and Online Support Platforms (Hypothesis 3)

Predictor Variable	**Unstandardized Coefficients (B)**	**Standardized Coefficients (β)**	**t**	**Sig. (p-value)**
Online Support Platform Usage	0.38	0.38	3.09	<0.05
R	**0.38**			
R^2	**0.14**			
F	**9.54**		<0.05	

Interpretation: This table presents the regression analysis results for the impact of online support platforms on complaint resolution satisfaction. The findings indicate a significant positive effect, with an R^2 value of 0.14, meaning that 14% of the variance in satisfaction with complaint resolution is explained by online support usage. Regression analysis was conducted with complaint resolution satisfaction as the dependent variable and usage of online support platforms as the independent variable. The findings showed a positive, significant effect ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.05$). Customers who engaged with EDCs' online support and complaint channels reported higher satisfaction in resolution timeliness and effectiveness. Consequently, H03_{03}03 was rejected, supporting the idea that accessible online platforms contribute to effective complaint handling. Similar research by Adebayo & Okafor (2023) corroborates this, highlighting how digital service channels promote efficiency in customer service processes.

Discussion

The results underscore the substantial role of technological innovations in enhancing customer satisfaction across various aspects of service quality in Nigerian EDCs. Specifically, smart meters improve billing transparency, digital outage reporting bolsters perceived reliability, and online support systems expedite complaint resolution. These findings echo a growing body of research that advocates for technological integration in utility services to meet modern consumer expectations (Garcia et al., 2022; Odeyemi & Musa, 2023). However, while technology adoption shows promise, successful implementation also hinges on customer digital literacy and infrastructure stability, which pose challenges in emerging markets like Nigeria. Further studies could explore how EDCs might support customer adoption and expand these technologies to underserved areas.

Summary, Conclusion, Recommendation and Contribution to Knowledge

Summary

This study aimed to evaluate the impact of technological innovations on customer satisfaction within Nigerian electricity distribution companies (EDCs). Focusing on three primary areas—billing accuracy, service reliability, and complaint resolution—the research explored whether specific technological advancements positively influenced customer perceptions. The analysis showed that the adoption of smart meters improved billing accuracy, digital outage reporting enhanced service reliability, and online support platforms significantly facilitated complaint resolution, leading to higher customer satisfaction. These findings align with recent studies that underscore technology's critical role in modernizing customer service in utility sectors (Adebayo & Okafor, 2023; Odeyemi & Musa, 2023).

Conclusion

The evidence from this study suggests that technological innovations are instrumental in enhancing customer satisfaction in the Nigerian electricity sector. The rejection of all three null hypotheses confirmed that targeted technological solutions significantly improved billing accuracy, service reliability, and complaint resolution. This emphasizes the need for Nigerian EDCs to continue investing in digital technologies to meet evolving customer expectations. The results corroborate previous research by Garcia et al. (2022), who found similar benefits of smart systems in enhancing utility services. However, implementing these technologies requires overcoming infrastructural and digital literacy challenges prevalent in Nigeria (Musa et al., 2022).

It was recommended that DisCO should invest in customer training and support and maximize customer satisfaction it should deploy technological innovation across both urban and rural areas to ensure equitable to reliable service.

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THE ROLE OF COERCION MITIGATION PRACTICES IN ENHANCING STABILITY IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the role of talent retention practice, specifically coercion mitigation strategies, in promoting institutional stability in public and private universities in Southwest Nigeria. With increasing faculty turnover rates and dissatisfaction due to inadequate support systems, these universities face significant challenges in sustaining academic quality and continuity. This study utilized a survey research design to accomplish its objectives. The research choice is based on the compatibility between quantitative research and deductive approaches. The study population consisted of academic staff members from selected public (federal or state) and private universities in Southwest Nigeria. The total population for the study is 8,550. Using Taro Yamane sampling formula a sample size of 382 respondents were obtained. Sourced data through this study's administered questionnaire were estimated using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involved the use of frequency tables to present demographic data of respondents while inferential statistics involved the use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Technique in testing the formulated hypotheses. The analysis result showed that coercion mitigation strategies have a positive significant impact on institutional stability in public and private universities in southwest Nigeria. Hence, it was concluded that talent retention practice has a statically significant impact on institutional stability in public and private universities in southwest Nigeria. It was recommended that universities should refine their recruitment strategies to bolster institutional stability. This includes providing clear advancement opportunities to attract and retain high-quality staff and faculty.

Keywords: Talent, Talent Retention, Coercion Mitigation Strategies

1.1 Introduction

The need for effective talent retention practices in Nigeria's higher education sector is critical to ensuring stability, continuity, and quality education. In the face of significant challenges such as high turnover rates and increasing staff dissatisfaction, talent retention has become a focal point for both public and private universities in Southwest Nigeria. Academic institutions worldwide rely heavily on the expertise and stability of their workforce to sustain programs, build student success, and uphold institutional reputations (Nwagwu, 2021). For Nigeria, where both public and private universities often grapple with limited resources, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and disparities in job satisfaction, the importance of comprehensive retention strategies that can mitigate turnover and foster loyalty among staff cannot be overstated.

One major component of talent retention practices involves *coercion mitigation*, which addresses the factors that can lead to a forced or reluctant decision to leave an institution, such as poor work-life balance, inadequate support systems, and lack of career development opportunities (Ajayi & Adeniyi, 2020). Coercion mitigation in higher education calls for policies that prioritize the well-being of academic staff, offering flexibility, resources for personal and professional growth, and supportive management to create a favorable work environment. Particularly in public universities, where economic uncertainties and job-related stress are prevalent, these initiatives can reduce the likelihood of staff departure, ultimately promoting stability. Additionally, coercion mitigation supports a culture of collaboration and commitment, fostering an environment where academic staff are more likely to stay and contribute to long-term institutional goals (Alani & Kolade, 2022).

Talent retention practices that combine coercion mitigation strategies can significantly enhance institutional stability within Southwest Nigeria's public and private universities. These practices not only help retain skilled staff but also contribute to creating a stable and conducive academic environment that supports both student and faculty success. By addressing the underlying issues of dissatisfaction and improving recruitment approaches, Nigerian universities can strengthen their positions in an increasingly competitive global educational landscape (Okeke & Anugwom, 2023). Effective talent retention thus serves as a cornerstone for institutional growth, stability, and sustainability in Nigeria's higher education sector.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The challenge of retaining skilled academic staff has become a pressing concern for universities in Southwest Nigeria, both public and private. High turnover rates, driven by factors such as poor working conditions, limited career advancement opportunities, and insufficient compensation, pose a significant threat to the stability and growth of these institutions (Ajayi & Adeniyi, 2020). Public universities, in particular, often face systemic issues such as bureaucratic delays and limited funding, which can hinder efforts to implement competitive talent retention practices. Private universities, while somewhat more flexible, also struggle with establishing long-term retention strategies that balance competitive recruitment with sustainable institutional growth (Edeh & Ojo, 2021). These challenges disrupt the continuity of academic programs and reduce the universities' ability to attract and retain high-caliber staff, ultimately impacting educational quality and institutional reputation.

Another critical issue contributing to the retention problem is the lack of effective coercion mitigation and supportive recruitment strategies tailored to the unique socio-economic environment of Nigeria. Coercion mitigation, which involves reducing forced attrition and addressing issues like burnout and job dissatisfaction, is often insufficiently addressed, leading to high stress and diminished morale among faculty (Nwagwu, 2021). Additionally, recruitment strategies that do not align well with the long-term goals and professional needs of academic staff result in a mismatch between faculty expectations and the institutional realities. This disconnect between institutional practices and faculty needs creates an unstable work environment, making it challenging for universities to build a dedicated, skilled workforce committed to the institution's goals.

The lack of focused research on context-specific retention strategies within Nigerian universities further exacerbates the issue. Most retention studies concentrate on general practices but fail to address the specific challenges faced by public and private universities in Nigeria's unique socio-economic landscape. The absence of tailored solutions that address both immediate needs, like competitive recruitment, and long-term stability measures, such as professional development and support, limits the effectiveness of current retention practices (Okeke & Anugwom, 2023). Therefore, this study aims to investigate how targeted talent retention practices, particularly in the areas of coercion mitigation and recruitment strategies, can enhance institutional stability and academic continuity in Southwest Nigeria's public and private universities.

The existing literature on talent retention in Nigerian universities reveals notable gaps, particularly in context-specific strategies that cater to both public and private institutions. While studies frequently address general challenges such as high turnover and limited career development, they often overlook the unique socio-cultural and economic factors influencing retention in Southwest Nigeria. Additionally, there is limited research comparing the effectiveness of coercion mitigation and recruitment strategies across public and private universities, which operate under different constraints and opportunities. Empirical studies that explore the nuanced impact of professional development, work-life balance, and targeted recruitment on faculty loyalty and institutional stability are sparse, leaving a need for tailored, evidence-based practices that address the specific needs of Nigeria's diverse higher education landscape.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Talent and Talent Retention

Retention of talented individuals is challenging due to ongoing environmental and demographic shifts. According to Kumar (2022), organisations should incorporate retention factors and employee commitment into their organisational culture. Talent retention is crucial for organisations to have the appropriate individuals with the requisite abilities and skills to implement and achieve business strategies. Talent retention is a critical aspect of business strategy, involving the identification, recognition, management, and retention of skilled individuals. Kumar (2022), in his own opinion said organisations must effectively retain and manage talented employees in order to ensure their survival and growth in all sectors. Lin and Wang (2022), explained that decision-makers have the ability to modify their employment strategies by incorporating different talent retention factors. This may enhance employee commitment and involvement by prioritising the long-term interests of the company during the recruitment process.

In the opinion of Tobon and Luna-Nemecio (2021), talent is a complex concept that has been examined by scholars across different fields, including psychology, management, and economics. Talent is commonly defined as possessing exceptional abilities or the potential for exceptional performance Kumar (2022). Talent is a composite of inherent abilities and acquired skills that are honed through intentional practise and exertion (Ericsson, 2016). This perspective emphasises the significance of environmental factors and the influence of personal experiences in the cultivation of talent. Other researchers have similarly highlighted the significance of motivation and engagement in the process of nurturing talent.

2.1.1.1 Coercion Mitigation Strategy

Research work on Coercive Management Behaviour (CMB) by Doe (2018), is also referred to in scholarly research as bullying or abusive supervision (Tepper et al., 2017). Frowe (2021), argued that coercion is widely recognised as morally problematic, necessitating healthcare professionals to engage in critical reflection and moral justification when considering its use. Globally, healthcare institutions are actively seeking to minimise the utilisation of coercion, explore more effective alternatives, and enhance the implementation of coercive measures (Sepahvand, & Bagherzadeh Khodashahri, 2021). Moral doubt regarding the moral justification of coercion often serves as a catalyst for critical reflection and the transformation of cultures and attitudes towards coercion (Molewijk, Kok, Husum, Pedersen & Aasland, 2017).

2.1.2 Institutional Stability

In order to attain high educational standards, it is crucial to maintain institutional stability within society (Apple, 2023). A well-executed recruitment and selection process has been found to be indicative of a high-quality educational system within a given society. The impact of influence on administrative effectiveness, educational achievement, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce is significant and should not be underestimated. To maintain workforce efficiency and institutional stability, it is imperative to establish a robust recruitment and selection process (Fadare, 2015). Optimis (2011) developed a model that examines the relationship between reward management practices and organisational stability. The speaker emphasised that achieving stability within an organisation is challenging without a highly skilled workforce and ongoing investment in human capital (Toan, 2023).

The success of an institution is heavily reliant on the presence of talented individuals. Reward management enhances workforce efficiency and productivity within work organisations (Kehinde, 2012; Lucy, Poorkavoos & Wellbelove, 2015; Goswami, 2016). Organisational stability fosters job commitment and satisfaction. Additionally, it fosters brand loyalty and improves the reputation of companies within the communities in which they operate. Organisational stability is crucial for the success of businesses, as they rely on a stable environment to thrive. Organisations that lack stability, experience instability, crises, conflicts, and societal disrespect face significant challenges in achieving growth (Imran, Murtiza, & Akbar, 2023). This is due to the reluctance of both government and non-governmental agencies to engage in any transactions with such firms (Onuba & Edeh, 2018).

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 The Resource Based View of Firms

According to Anastasiu, Gavriş, and Maier (2020), the resource-based view posits that firms can achieve sustainable competitive advantage by possessing a unique and irreplaceable human resource pool that cannot be replicated or substituted by competitors. The resource-based view suggests that firms should regularly assess their workforce to ensure that they possess the appropriate individuals with the necessary skills in suitable positions to maintain a lasting competitive advantage (Gerhart, & Feng, 2021). The strength or weakness of a firm is largely determined by the calibre of its employees and the quality of their working relationships. The core principle of resource-based thinking involves identifying and safeguarding the most valuable assets through the implementation of barriers to imitation.

According to Kryscynski, Coff and Campbell (2021), firms that successfully recruit and retain exceptional individuals can gain a competitive advantage through the development of human capital. However, he emphasises the importance of distinguishing between "human capital advantage" and "human process advantage". The former arises from the utilisation of individuals possessing valuable knowledge and skills, much of which is implicit. The latter, however, is a result of the firm's establishment of complex and advanced processes, such as cross-departmental cooperation and executive development, which are difficult for others to replicate. The use of human resource management systems is necessary for firms to gain a competitive advantage.

Li (2022), argues that while technology and capital can be acquired by most firms for a price, it is difficult to acquire a ready pool of highly qualified and motivated employees. To establish differentiation, companies must exercise caution in their recruitment and selection procedures. The HR practices of the company should prioritise the selection of highly skilled individuals. Recruitment is a crucial tool for companies to attain their overall business objectives. Biea, Dinu, Bunica and Jerdea (2024) argue that new employees are consistently engaged, receptive to learning, and adaptable to new environments. It is more cost-effective to identify the appropriate candidate during the recruitment process rather than invest in training and development at a later stage.

2.2.2 Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

In the work of Hansen (2020), the Maslow hierarchy of needs posits that there are five essential human needs, which span from basic physiological necessities at the lowest level to self-actualization at the highest level. The satisfaction of each lower need is a prerequisite for the emergence of the next need as a motivating factor. According to Maslow (1954), a business can fulfil these basic needs by offering a fair wage, providing meals, and offering rest facilities. Safety needs encompass various aspects, such as job security, safe working conditions, and pension schemes.

Additionally, addressing social needs can be achieved through measures like fostering teamwork and offering social facilities such as clubs or sports pitches. Self-esteem in the workplace is influenced by external perceptions, which can be enhanced through the provision of status symbols such as cars, offices, and new job titles as rewards for employees. Providing employees with opportunities to acquire qualifications in the workplace can enhance their self-esteem. Self-actualization involves reaching one's maximum potential. A business should prioritise the feasibility of promotion and the availability of opportunities for employees to exercise their initiative. Maslow proposed a hierarchical arrangement of human needs, as illustrated in the figure below.

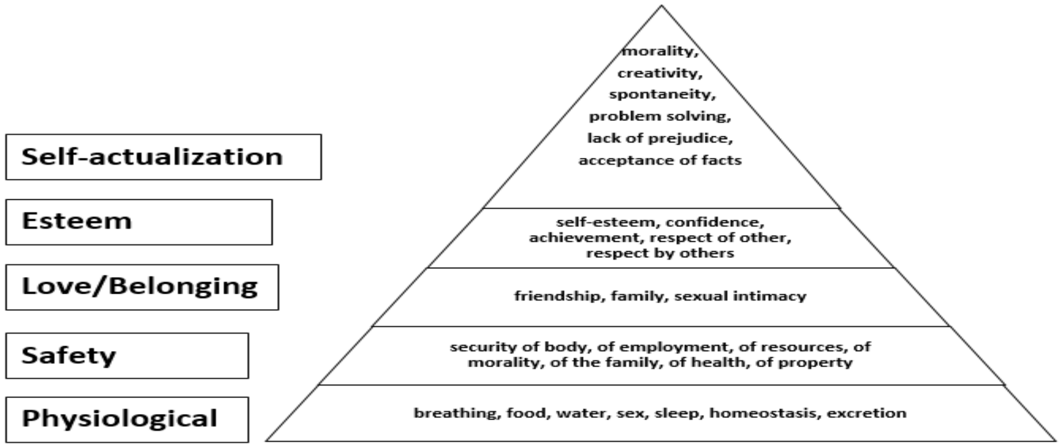

Fig. 2.1 Maslow hierarchy of needs

(Source: Adapted from Maslow (1954) Motivation and personality. New York: Harper and Row.)

This theory offers valuable insights for managers and organisations. One recommendation for managers is to develop policies and practices that aim to satisfy employees' needs in order to motivate them (Ercantan, & Eyupoglu, 2022). It was further explained that it is important to recognise that human beings have numerous needs that must be fulfilled. Another implication is that organisations should establish support programmes and focus groups to assist employees in managing work-related stress, particularly during difficult periods. Additionally, organisations have a responsibility to cultivate a conducive environment that enables employees to reach their maximum potential. Failure to create a conducive work environment may lead to employee frustration, resulting in decreased performance, job satisfaction, and an increased intention to leave the organisation.

2.3 Empirical Studies

Ngaira and Oyagi (2016), conducted a research on analysis of employee retention strategies on organisational performance of hospitals in Mombasa County and found that the high turnover rate of medical professionals has been a global concern for healthcare management, leading to challenges in retaining skilled staff in the healthcare sector. Retention strategies for medical professionals are necessary to maintain competitiveness within the healthcare industry. The study revealed a significant and positive correlation ($R = 0.485$, $p < 0.05$, $\varepsilon = 0.006$) between recruitment strategies and the organisational performance of public hospitals in Mombasa County. The regression analysis indicated a statistically significant relationship between supervision strategies and performance ($p = 0.036$). The study found that employee retention strategies have a positive and significant impact on organisational performance, suggesting a need for improvement in these strategies. The study suggests that the management of public hospitals in Mombasa County should enhance employee retention strategies due to their observed positive impact on organisational performance.

Molewijk (2017) conducted a study using descriptive analyses. The findings indicated that the majority of the 379 respondents expressed uncertainty regarding whether coercion should be considered offensive. Additionally, they generally agreed with the notion that coercion is necessary for providing care and ensuring security. However, there was a slight disagreement among respondents regarding whether coercion could be viewed as a form of treatment. Staff members did not express significant levels of moral uncertainty regarding the use of coercion.

3.0 Methodology

This study utilised a survey research design to accomplish its objectives. The research choice is based on the compatibility between quantitative research and deductive approaches. The population of the study consisted of academic staff members from selected public (Federal or State) and private universities in Southwest Nigeria. The total population for the study is 8,550 as contain in Table 3.1. The population data for each institution was obtained from the Nigeria University Digest, 2019. To ensure manageable data, the study will use the Taro Yamane (1967) formula cited in Umar and Wachiko (2021), to determine the appropriate sample size for the study. Table 3.1 displays the universities that were sampled in each study area. Simple random sampling was employed as a probability sampling technique to ensure equal opportunity for all elements in the population to be selected for sampling.

Table 3.1: Population of the Study

Universities	Location	Population	Sample
Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti.	**Ekiti State**	1,075	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382\text{x } 1075}{8,550}$ = 48
Afe Babalola University		509	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382 \text{ x } 509}{8,550}$ = 23
Federal University of Technology, Akure	**Ondo State**	857	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382 \text{ x } 857}{8,550}$ = 38
Achievers University, Owo		133	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382 \text{ x } 133}{8,550}$ = 6
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife	**Osun State**	1339	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382 \text{ x } 1339}{8,550}$ = 60
Bowen University, Iwo		417	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382 \text{ x } 417}{8,550}$ = 19
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye	**Ogun State**	293	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382 \text{ x } 293}{8,550}$ = 13
Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun		560	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382 \text{ x } 560}{8,550}$ = 25
University of Lagos, Lagos	**Lagos State**	1265	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382 \text{ x } 1265}{8,550}$

			= 57
Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos		150	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382 \text{ x } 150}{8,550}$ = 6
University of Ibadan, Ibadan	**Oyo State**	1,682	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382 \text{ x } 1682}{8,550}$ = 75
Lead City University, Ibadan		270	$\frac{(N)(n)}{N} = \frac{382 \text{ x } 270}{8,550}$ = 12
Total Population		**8,550**	382

Source: Nigerian University Digest (2019)

Sourced data through the administered questionnaire for this study were estimated using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involved the use of frequency tables to present demographic data of respondents while inferential statistics involved the use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Technique in testing the formulated hypotheses.

4.0 Result and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics Analysis of Respondents

Table 4.1 Bio-data of the Respondents

		Frequency	**Percent**
Gender	Male	233	72.6
	Female	88	27.4
	Total	321	100
Age	20-25 years	2	.6
	26-40 years	83	25.9
	41 years and above	236	73.5
	Total	321	100
Years of Experience	1-5 years	51	15.9
	6-10 years	96	29.9
	11-15 years	72	22.4
	16 years and above	102	31.8
	Total	321	100
Type of University	Private	80	24.9
	Public	241	75.1
	Total	321	100

Source: Data Output, 2024.

The bio-data of the respondents presents a detailed demographic profile of the academic staff surveyed. Among the respondents, 233 are male, representing 72.6% of the sample, while 88 are female, constituting 27.4%. This gender distribution indicates a significant male predominance within the academic staff of the participating universities. The implication of this finding might suggest that male academic staff are more represented in the sample, which could influence the study's results and interpretations, potentially reflecting gender-specific perspectives and experiences in the academic environment.

The age distribution shows that the largest group is those aged 41 years and above, totaling 236 respondents or 73.5%. This is followed by the 26-40 years age group with 83 respondents (25.9%), and a very small group of 2 respondents (0.6%) aged 20-25 years. The predominance of older, more experienced staff suggests a mature academic workforce, which may impact perspectives on institutional policies and practices. This age distribution could imply that the experiences and opinions reflected in the study are shaped by long-term involvement in academia, potentially providing insights into established practices and long-term trends.

The years of experience data reveals that 102 respondents (31.8%) have 16 years and above of experience, followed by 96 respondents (29.9%) with 6-10 years of experience. The 11-15 years group comprises 72 respondents (22.4%), while 51 respondents (15.9%) have 1-5 years of experience. The presence of a significant proportion of highly experienced academic staff alongside a notable group of mid-career professionals suggests a wealth of expertise within the sample. This distribution implies that the study benefits from a broad range of experience levels, providing a balanced view of both seasoned and relatively newer perspectives in academia. Finally, the distribution of the types of universities shows that 80 respondents (24.9%) are from private universities while 241 respondents (75.1%) are from public universities.

4.2 Analysis of the Research Objectives

Effect of Coercion Mitigation Strategies on institutional stability in public and private universities in southwest Nigeria

The criteria for model specification as presented in table 4.2 shows that the decision to determine the effect of coercion mitigation strategies on institutional stability using SEM is appropriate. For the specification, the ratio of chi-square/df = 3.163 which is within the acceptable threshold. Also other indices such as RMSEA (0.068), NFI (0.924), RFI (0.897), IFI (0.783), TLI (0.921) and CFI (0.822) are largely indicative of the suitability of the approach (Table 4.13). As a result, Figure 4.3 depicts the effect of coercion mitigation strategies which is shown in Table 4.14.

Table 4.2 Diagnostic of the coercion mitigation strategy and institutional stability model

Indicators	Values

Chi-Square/df	3.163
RMSEA	0.068
NFI	0.924
RFI	0.897
IFI	0.783
TLI	0.921
CFI	0.822

Source: Data Analysis, 2024.

Estimated effect of coercion mitigation strategy on institutional stability

The analysis result as presented in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.1 revealed that the constructs of coercion mitigation strategy including lack of alternatives, investment, nonwork influences, and location have a positive significant effect on the institutional stability of universities both public and private in Southwest, Nigeria with the coefficient values of 0.342 for lack of alternatives, 0.473 for investment, 0.224 for nonwork influences and 0.512 for location. This indicated that a 1% increase in these constructs would breed a significant rise in institutional stability in both private and public universities in Southwest, Nigeria. The result further revealed that these various constructs of coercion mitigation strategy are crucial in achieving the determined impact.

Table 4.3 Path Analysis of the CFA of the coercion mitigation strategy and institutional stability model

			Estimate	**C.R**	**P**
La1	<------	Lack of Alternatives	.425	3.287	***
La2	<------	Lack of Alternatives	.392	3.172	***
La3	<------	Lack of Alternatives	.296	2.864	.021
La4	<------	Lack of Alternatives	.253	2.647	.034
In1	<------	Investment	.386	3.025	***
In2	<------	Investment	.635	4.284	***
In3	<------	Investment	.528	3.983	***
In4	<------	Investment	.634	4.246	***
Ni1	<------	Nonwork Influences	.624	4.213	***
Ni2	<------	Nonwork Influences	.587	4.017	***
Ni3	<------	Nonwork Influences	.724	5.384	***
Lo1	<------	Location	.819	6.143	***
Lo2	<------	Location	.725	5.375	***
Lo3	<------	Location	.826	6.863	***
Institutional Stability	<------	Lack of Alternatives	.242	4.546	.012
Institutional Stability	<------	Investment	.473	4.837	***
Institutional Stability	<------	Nonwork Influences	.224	4.363	.036
Institutional Stability	<------	Location	.512	6.625	***

Source: Data Analysis, 2024.

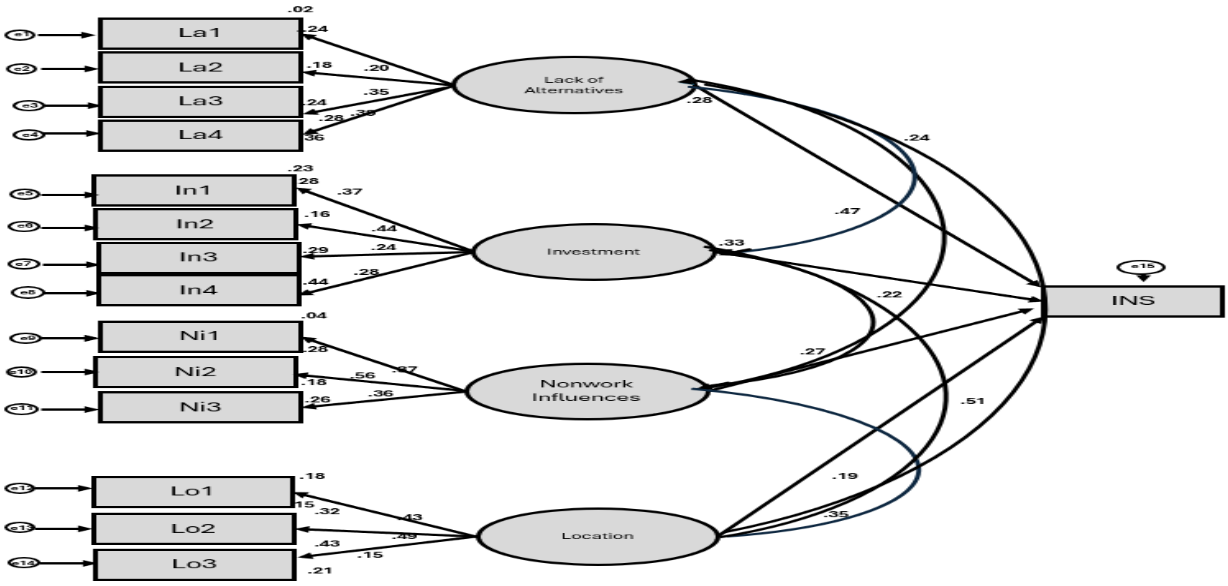

Figure: 4.1: Path analysis of Coercion Mitigation Strategy and Institutional Stability model

4.3 Discussion of Findings

It was revealed that coercion mitigation has a positive significant effect on institutional stability in public and private universities in southwest Nigeria. This finding highlights the importance of addressing coercive forces and creating a supportive environment to maintain institutional integrity and performance. Coercion mitigation involves addressing factors such as lack of alternatives, investment, nonwork influences, and location to reduce the negative impacts of coercive pressures and enhance stability within academic institutions. When universities provide a unique and attractive environment, they can mitigate coercive pressures by ensuring that individuals have fewer reasons to seek alternatives. For instance, a private university in Southwest Nigeria that offers unique academic programs, exceptional facilities, and competitive benefits can reduce the likelihood of faculty and students leaving for other institutions. By creating an environment where alternatives are limited or less attractive, the university can foster greater stability and loyalty among its members.

Also, when institutions invest in high-quality facilities, research opportunities, and support services, they demonstrate a commitment to providing a supportive and conducive working and learning environment. This investment can reduce coercive pressures related to inadequate resources or poor working conditions. Nonwork influences, such as personal life and social factors, can also impact institutional stability. Addressing these influences involves creating a work environment that supports employees' and students' broader life needs, including work-life balance, family support, and community involvement. By acknowledging and accommodating these nonwork factors, universities can mitigate the coercive pressures that might arise from external stressors. In addition, Universities situated in desirable or strategically advantageous locations may experience fewer coercive pressures related to location constraints.

Empirically, Adeyemi and Akinbode (2022) found that universities that addressed factors such as investment in resources and support for nonwork influences experienced higher levels of institutional stability. Their study highlighted the importance of creating a supportive environment to mitigate coercive pressures and enhance commitment among faculty and students. Similarly, studies by Olaniyan and Ojo (2021) demonstrated that addressing location-related factors and providing adequate investment in facilities were associated with improved stability and performance in Nigerian universities. However, Okeke and Ogunleye (2023) argued that while coercion mitigation is important, its impact on institutional stability may be influenced by other external factors such as government policies and economic conditions. Their study suggested that focusing solely on internal coercion mitigation without considering broader external challenges might not fully address the factors affecting institutional stability.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study underscores the critical role of talent retention practices in fostering stability within public and private higher education institutions in Southwest Nigeria. Effective retention strategies, such as competitive compensation, professional development opportunities, and supportive work environments, are essential for mitigating high staff turnover and ensuring institutional continuity. Differences between public and private universities highlight the need for tailored approaches to address specific challenges within each sector. By adopting comprehensive talent retention practices, Nigerian universities can enhance academic quality, attract skilled professionals, and strengthen their overall stability in a competitive educational landscape. Hence, it was concluded that talent retention practices significantly influence the institutional stability of both private and public universities in Southwest, Nigeria.

Recommendations

To enhance institutional stability, universities should implement comprehensive strategies to mitigate coercive pressures. This involves creating attractive and unique institutional environments to reduce the appeal of alternatives. Institutions should prioritize substantial investment in infrastructure and resources, ensuring that facilities and support systems meet high standards. Additionally, universities should address nonwork influences by offering flexible work arrangements, family support programs, and community engagement opportunities. Strategic location decisions should also be made to enhance the university's appeal and accessibility. By addressing these areas, universities can reduce coercive pressures and build a more stable academic environment. Regular assessments of coercive factors and continuous improvement of institutional policies and practices will further support long-term stability.

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INCENTIVE STRATEGIES AND INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of incentivesn strategies on institutional stability in public and private universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the impact of incentive strategies on institutional stability in public and private universities in Southwest, Nigeria. the study adopted a descriptive survey research design and covered a total population for the study is 8,550. The population data for each institution was obtained from the Nigeria University Digest, 2019. To ensure manageable data, the study used the Taro Yamane (1967) formula cited in Umar and Wachiko (2021), to determine the appropriate sample size for the study which was reported to be 382 respondents. The collected data through the administered questionnaire was estimated using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involved the use of frequency tables to present demographic data of respondents while inferential statistics involved the use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Technique. Analysis results showed that incentives strategies have a positive significant effect on institutional stability in public and private universities in southwest Nigeria. The study concluded that talent retention strategies statistically significantly impact institutional stability in public and private universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Therefore, it was recommended that universities should design and implement comprehensive incentive programs that align with the needs and expectations of their faculty and staff.

Keywords: Talent Retention Strategies, Incentive Strategies, Institutional Stability, Public and Private Universities

1.1 Introduction

Talent retention has become a critical concern for institutions worldwide, especially within the academic sector, as universities increasingly compete to attract and retain skilled faculty and staff. In the context of higher education, talent retention is vital for maintaining high educational standards, enhancing research output, and sustaining institutional stability. Academic talent retention not only preserves the quality and consistency of educational programs but also bolsters the institution’s reputation, which is essential for attracting future talent and resources. The importance of retaining talent in universities is underscored by the impact of high turnover rates on institutional stability, which can hinder organizational growth, disrupt educational continuity, and impose additional costs on recruitment and training. According to Alam et al. (2021), talent retention strategies, such as career development programs, competitive compensation packages, and supportive work environments, are essential in sustaining the vitality of educational institutions and ensuring their longevity.

In Nigeria, the challenges related to talent retention are particularly pronounced due to various socio-economic factors. Both public and private universities face increasing difficulties in retaining academic staff, driven by issues such as inadequate funding, political interference, and limited professional growth opportunities (Alani & Kolade, 2022). These challenges are exacerbated by the “brain drain” phenomenon, where qualified Nigerian academics seek employment in more stable and financially rewarding environments abroad, leading to a significant loss of intellectual capital within the country. As reported by Okeke and Anugwom (2023), brain drain remains a persistent issue that threatens the sustainability of Nigeria’s higher education sector, as institutions struggle to retain skilled academics amid attractive opportunities in other countries.

The retention of talent is essential for institutional stability, as universities rely on experienced faculty and staff to develop robust academic programs, support student development, and contribute to the institution's research reputation. Universities with high retention rates are better positioned to maintain consistent standards in teaching and research, which are critical for achieving long-term stability and growth (Nwagwu, 2021). Public universities in Nigeria face unique challenges in this regard due to underfunding, often leading to poor infrastructural development, irregular salary payments, and limited research resources. In contrast, private universities generally offer more competitive compensation and better working conditions, but they also grapple with the challenge of attracting top-tier academics who may view public institutions as more prestigious (Ajayi & Adeniyi, 2020). These differences highlight the necessity of tailored talent retention strategies that address the specific needs and challenges of each institution type.

Moreover, the implementation of talent retention strategies can significantly impact institutional stability by fostering a supportive and empowering work environment. According to a study by Ali et al. (2022), employee engagement, opportunities for professional growth, and a positive organizational culture are among the primary factors influencing retention rates. Nigerian universities must consider these factors in developing retention strategies that cater to the needs of their academic staff. Initiatives such as mentorship programs, research grants, and transparent promotion policies can enhance job satisfaction, reduce turnover rates, and ultimately contribute to institutional stability (Edeh & Ojo, 2021). Implementing such strategies within Nigerian universities is crucial for building resilient institutions capable of withstanding challenges and advancing the nation's educational goals. The increasing globalization of education and competition for academic talent worldwide necessitates Nigerian universities adopt innovative and sustainable retention strategies. By examining the distinct challenges and opportunities associated with talent retention in both public and private institutions, this study aims to provide insights into effective approaches for sustaining a stable, high-quality educational environment in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The talent retention problem in Nigeria’s public and private universities is both complex and pressing, particularly in the context of Southwest Nigeria, where institutional stability is heavily influenced by the availability and commitment of skilled academic staff. Despite efforts to foster educational quality and research excellence, Nigerian universities face high turnover rates among faculty and staff, which disrupts academic continuity, diminishes the quality of education, and hinders the institutions' ability to meet global standards. As noted by Nwagwu (2021), universities struggling to retain talent often experience declines in academic performance, decreased morale among remaining staff, and a diminished institutional reputation, which can negatively impact student recruitment, funding, and overall institutional growth. Consequently, this study seeks to address the underlying challenges in talent retention and its implications for university stability in both public and private sectors.

A primary concern is the significant disparity in talent retention strategies and working conditions between public and private universities in Nigeria. Public universities are generally plagued by insufficient funding, leading to issues such as delayed or irregular salaries, limited research grants, inadequate infrastructure, and substandard working conditions. These factors often drive academic staff to seek employment elsewhere, either in more stable private institutions or in universities abroad, contributing to the brain drain phenomenon that weakens Nigeria’s educational sector (Alani & Kolade, 2022). In contrast, while private universities may offer better remuneration and resources, they sometimes lack the job security and academic prestige that public institutions traditionally hold, leading to a different set of challenges in retaining high-caliber talent (Ajayi & Adeniyi, 2020).

The lack of effective talent retention practices has broader implications for institutional stability in Nigerian universities. High turnover rates disrupt academic programs and research continuity, leading to frequent interruptions in course delivery and reduced student satisfaction. As highlighted by Alam et al. (2021), turnover not only affects the immediate work environment but also weakens the institution’s competitive position, as skilled staff are fundamental to building robust academic programs, generating research outputs, and attracting further talent and funding. These disruptions particularly impact public universities, where resource constraints and bureaucratic challenges hinder the development of supportive work environments that could improve retention rates.

Additionally, the prevailing economic conditions in Nigeria further exacerbate talent retention challenges. Economic instability, inflation, and limited career advancement opportunities within the country contribute to the appeal of international institutions for skilled academics seeking better compensation and professional growth (Edeh & Ojo, 2021). The lack of robust career development programs in Nigerian universities often leads to dissatisfaction among academic staff, who may feel undervalued and underutilized. Okeke and Anugwom (2023) emphasize that without opportunities for career advancement and professional development, universities face a continuous cycle of losing skilled individuals, which impedes knowledge transfer, reduces mentorship opportunities for younger faculty, and diminishes research productivity.

The importance of effective talent retention strategies is further underscored by the increasing competition among universities globally. Nigerian universities are now competing not only with local institutions but also with international universities that actively recruit skilled academics from developing countries. According to Nadeem and Rahman (2022), global competition for academic talent has heightened the need for robust retention strategies, as institutions worldwide seek to attract and retain skilled individuals to boost their own educational and research standards. In this globalized context, the inability of Nigerian universities to retain talent poses a risk to the country's educational development and hinders its competitiveness on the international stage.

Despite extensive research on talent retention and institutional stability, several gaps remain in the literature, particularly within the context of Nigerian universities. Most studies focus broadly on the challenges faced by public universities, often overlooking the nuanced differences between public and private institutions in terms of retention strategies and institutional needs (Ajayi & Adeniyi, 2020). Additionally, while existing literature acknowledges the impact of economic instability and brain drain on talent retention, there is limited research that addresses how specific socio-cultural and organizational factors within Nigeria uniquely affect faculty retention and turnover intentions (Alani & Kolade, 2022). Furthermore, few studies have explored the role of structured professional development, mentorship programs, and work-life balance initiatives as potential strategies tailored for Nigerian academic institutions (Nwagwu, 2021).

There is also a notable lack of empirical studies that compare the effectiveness of talent retention strategies across public and private universities in Southwest Nigeria, a region known for its diverse institutional challenges and opportunities. This gap limits the understanding of how different strategies may be implemented and adapted for maximum effectiveness in these varying institutional contexts (Edeh & Ojo, 2021). Addressing these gaps is crucial to developing a comprehensive and context-specific approach to talent retention that can support long-term stability and growth in Nigerian higher education

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Talent Retention

Talent management refers to the implementation of processes and cultural norms within an organisation to effectively attract, develop, deploy, and retain talent in order to achieve strategic objectives and meet future business needs. Talent management poses a significant challenge to achieving comprehensive development across various sectors of the economy. The authors also suggested that global organisations, including educational institutions, are currently grappling with the dual challenges of talent management and retention (Oyadiran, Musa, & Agunbiade, 2023). Talent management (TM) is a process that involves the identification, development, and retention of talented individuals in order to achieve the desired level of performance within a company, enabling an effective response to business challenges (Karunathilaka, Yajid, & Khatibi, 2016). It has been suggested that the primary goal of businesses is not only to recruit and hire suitable employees but also to attract and retain them for an extended period of time (Oyadiran, et al., 2023).

Talent retention refers to the actions taken by a business entity to create a conducive working environment that encourages current employees to stay within the organisation . They further said that organisations employ talent retention strategies to address employee needs, enhance job satisfaction, and reduce costs associated with employee turnover. The primary concern for the private sector currently is talent retention, as employee behaviour has shifted and young talents are more inclined to switch jobs when presented with new opportunities Various resources, such as financial capital, human capital, and physical assets, contribute to enhancing a firm's effectiveness. Among these resources, human capital is considered the most crucial (Kehinde, 2012).

According to Kissoonduth (2017), talent retention is a strategic process aimed at attracting, developing, and retaining individuals who possess the necessary skills and abilities to effectively address both present and future challenges within an organisation. Employee retention refers to the practise of encouraging employees to stay with an organisation for an extended duration, either until the completion of a specific project or for the longest possible period. An effective employer should possess the ability to both attract and retain employees. Employee retention is of greater significance than the process of recruitment. Organisations actively seek talented employees and invest resources in their development, anticipating future benefits. In Musakuro (2022), employee retention refers to the processes by which employees are encouraged to remain with an organisation for an extended duration, either until their retirement or the completion of a specific project. Retaining talented employees and ensuring their commitment is essential for achieving both individual and organisational goals.

2.1.1.1 Incentive Strategies

Incentives are crucial for motivating workers to enhance their productivity and exert greater effort. Rewards and compensation programmes influence workers' motivation to enhance their performance and contribute to the organization's goals. Incentives are motivating factors that encourage employees to behave in specific ways within their work setting, typically resulting in increased effort. Rewards are intended to enhance employee efficiency and retain the most productive workers (Ali et al., 2021).

According to Mabaso (2017), incentives are external factors that motivate individuals to increase their effort and productivity. These incentives are provided as a result of the individual's exceptional performance, as they are more likely to work harder and be more effective when they feel satisfied within the organisation. Furthermore, incentives can be defined as rewards given for exceptional performance, with the assumption that the salary is sufficient to make the worker recognise the job's value and meet their basic needs (Nnubia, 2020).

Murad, Ladika, Mustika, Cakranegara, and Jayanto (2022) categorise incentive compensation based on achievement or production. Firstly, full bonus, namely one-time cash payment/cash or right to buy company shares based on performance; secondly, profit sharing, namely the provision of bonuses based on company profits; thirdly, revenue sharing, namely the provision of bonuses for successfully exceeding the set performance targets or work efficiency occurs and lastly payment for the knowledge they have, namely the provision of an increase in wages/salaries for new skills or jobs they master (Murad et. al., 2022).

2.1.2 Institutional Stability

To clarify the concept of organisational stability, it is prudent to begin by defining the term "stability" itself. According to Merriam-Webster (2018), stability is defined as the state or level of being stable, such as having the ability to withstand or endure. According to MusinessDictionary.com (2018), stability refers to the capacity of a substance to remain unaltered over a period of time when subjected to specified or reasonably anticipated storage and usage conditions. Management is a field characterised by a multitude of theories, wherein concepts often possess varying interpretations within the same discipline. Scholars argue that organisational stability is a stage of maturity characterised by both stability and growth. According to Brainmass.com (2018), organisational stability refers to the point at which a company's financial, human resources, and production have achieved consistent growth in terms of profitability, employee evaluation, and advancement. Francis and Imiete (2018) defines institutional stability in this study as the presence of stable laws and practices that enable universities to maintain effective administration, a reliable management information system, stable decision-making and planning processes, and an efficient human resource management system.

2.2. Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory emphasises that individuals possess inherent abilities, behaviours, and personal energy, which collectively constitute the human capital they contribute to their work, (Choudhary, Memon, & Mishra, 2020). The value generated is a result of the knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by individuals. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritise strategies for attracting, retaining, and developing human capital. According to Armstrong (2009), individuals possess and utilise human capital, which includes knowledge and skills, to create intellectual capital. The interactions between individuals, known as social capital, contribute to their knowledge and also contribute to the institutionalised knowledge that organisations possess, known as organisational capital.

Work involves a reciprocal exchange of value rather than the unilateral exploitation of an asset by its owner. According to Adamides and Karacapilidis, (2018), the value created in organisations is primarily attributed to the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritise strategies for retaining, developing, and managing the human capital they possess. The human capital theory views individuals as valuable assets and emphasises that organisations can achieve significant returns by investing in their development. Adam Smith (1723–1799) proposed the Human Capital Theory, which posits that individuals possess valuable skills and abilities that can be considered fixed capital, similar to machines.

Becker made a significant contribution to employee development theory in the area of training. According to Becker (1964), investments in education and training have a positive impact on productivity. However, the responsibility for funding these investments, whether it falls on the employee or the firm, depends on the type of training. Teodorovicz, Lazzarini, Cabral and McGahan, (2024), argued that firms lack adequate incentives to invest in their workers' skills due to the possibility of trained employees leaving to work for other employers who can utilise these skills.

2.3 Empirical Review

The research of Ogini, Ogunlusi and Faseyiku (2014) was on retention strategies and organisational survival. The study identified retention strategies that were in existence in the private universities in Nigeria and investigated the extent to which existing employee retention strategies affect organisational survival in the private universities. Primary and secondary data were used for the study. Random sampling technique was adopted with reference to the stratified sampling procedure which ensures proportional representation of the population sub-group to select 600 respondents (100 respondents from each university) from the population of 3,634 academic staff of six private universities in the Southwestern Nigeria. The questionnaire was developed with reference to Likert five rating scale where the respondents were provided with optional responses from which to select one that applied to their opinion. Out of 600 questionnaires administered, 549 were found useful for the research work representing 92%. The secondary data were extracted from the records of the selected universities and journals as well textbook relating to the variables (Independent and dependent). Competitive pay, facilities, dignity and respect, job security, training support, recognition and reward were identified as the retention strategies commonly adopted as practice in the private universities in Nigeria.

In the work of Aibieyi and Oghoato (2015) found that organizations are run by people, processes, technology and capital but it is the aspect of the human side of the organization that makes decision. The quality of employees at the disposal of an organization determines result. The competitiveness of Nigerian universities and shortage of competent staff makes it pertinent for universities to attract, retain and motivate highly talented employees. The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between talent management and employee retention. Talent management is represented by performance management, employee’s empowerment, compensation and reward. While employees retention is represented by organizational culture.

The study employed primary source of data through administered questionnaires and Secondary sources of data were also used while reviewing related literature. Test of equality, Pearson correlation and ordinary least square regression techniques were utilized for the data analysis. The result indicated that performance management (X1=2.09) was significant and positively related to organizational culture. Employee empowerment (X2) was significant and negatively related to organizational culture. Compensation and reward (X3=52) was positive and had insignificant impact on organizational culture. The study therefore recommended that universities should adopt a proactive performance management system to have a more transparent and dynamic institutional culture so as to encourage and retain skillful and talented employees.

According to Steg's (2016) study, individuals may not consistently act in accordance with their biospheric values due to a lack of support or activation of these values within their respective contexts. Strategies for promoting pro-environmental actions can focus on enhancing biospheric values or modifying the decision-making context to increase the likelihood of supporting and activating these values. This approach empowers individuals to align their actions with the values they consider significant. Behaviour change strategies can leverage the human tendency to be consistent or conform to social norms. Policies promoting pro-environmental actions are more likely to gain acceptance when individuals perceive them as having favourable outcomes for their core values with fewer negative consequences. Perceived fairness is crucial in policy acceptance, as policies are more likely to be accepted when costs and benefits are distributed equitably and fair decision-making procedures are utilised.

Aremo and Olanipekun (2023), examined talent management and employee retention among selected manufacturing firms in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study was underpinned by resource-based view theory and social exchange theory. Population of the study was three hundred and seventy one (371) and a sample size of one hundred and seventy five (175) was drawn. Primary data were obtained from one hundred and fifty eight (158) respondents through multi-stage sampling techniques. Findings presented that competency mapping significantly affect employee retention with (β=.946, p=.000), employee engagement significantly affect employee retention with (β=.951, p=.000), a positive and significant relationship exists between performance management and employee retention with (r=0.983, p-value<0.05) and career development have significant connection with employee retention with(r=0.874, p-value<0.05). The study concluded that incorporating talent management strategy and effectively communicating the same to concerned parties is the foundation for talent management. It also helps employees understand that the organisations are thinking about their future and so it improves retention. Thus, management of the selected firms must ensure that process for managing talent is engraved in the business strategy by regularly analyzing talent and communicating the talent management strategies to employees.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of academic staff members from selected public (Federal or State) and private universities in Southwest Nigeria. The total population for the study is 8,550. The population data for each institution was obtained from the Nigeria University Digest, 2019. To ensure manageable data, the study used the Taro Yamane (1967) formula cited in Umar and Wachiko (2021), to determine the appropriate sample size for the study which was reported to be 382 respondents. The collected data through the administered questionnaire was estimated using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involved the use of frequency tables to present demographic data of respondents while inferential statistics involved the use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Technique.

4.0 Result and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics Analysis of Respondents

Table 4.2 Bio-data of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	233	72.6
	Female	88	27.4
	Total	321	100
Occupation	Academic Staff	321	100.0
	Total	321	100
Age	20-25 years	2	.6
	26-40 years	83	25.9
	41 years and above	236	73.5
	Total	321	100
Institution	ABUAD	21	6.5
	EKSU	39	12.1
	BOWEN	15	4.7
	BABCOCK	20	6.2
	Achievers University	3	.9
	FUTA	31	9.7
	OAU	41	12.8
	Lead City	16	5.0
	OOU	24	7.5
	Pan Atlantic University	5	1.6
	UI	62	19.3
	UNILAG	44	13.7
	Total	321	100
Years of Experience	1-5 years	51	15.9
	6-10 years	96	29.9
	11-15 years	72	22.4
	16 years and above	102	31.8
	Total	321	100
Level/Rank	Reader	37	11.5
	Assistant Lecturer	26	8.1
	Lecturer I	74	23.1
	Lecturer II	49	15.3
	Senior Lecturer	74	23.1
	Professor	53	16.5
	Graduate Assistant	8	2.5
	Total	321	100
Type of University	Private	80	24.9
	Public	241	75.1
	Total	321	100

Source: Data Output, 2024.

The bio-data of the respondents presents a detailed demographic profile of the academic staff surveyed. Among the respondents, 233 are male, representing 72.6% of the sample, while 88 are female, constituting 27.4%. This gender distribution indicates a significant male predominance within the academic staff of the participating universities. The implication of this finding might suggest that male academic staff are more represented in the sample, which could influence the study's results and interpretations, potentially reflecting gender-specific perspectives and experiences in the academic environment.

All 321 respondents are academic staff, which ensures consistency in the professional background of the sample. This uniformity eliminates variability related to professional roles outside academia and provides a focused view on academic staff experiences. The implication is that the findings are directly applicable to academic staff and their specific concerns, rather than being influenced by other occupational roles.

The age distribution shows that the largest group is those aged 41 years and above, totaling 236 respondents or 73.5%. This is followed by the 26-40 years age group with 83 respondents (25.9%), and a very small group of 2 respondents (0.6%) aged 20-25 years. The predominance of older, more experienced staff suggests a mature academic workforce, which may impact perspectives on institutional policies and practices. This age distribution could imply that the experiences and opinions reflected in the study are shaped by long-term involvement in academia, potentially providing insights into established practices and long-term trends.

Regarding institutional representation, University of Ibadan (UI) has the highest number of respondents at 62 (19.3%). Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) follows with 41 respondents (12.8%), and University of Lagos (UNILAG) has 44 respondents (13.7%). Other institutions such as Ekiti State University (EKSU) and Lead City University have fewer respondents, 39 (12.1%) and 16 (5.0%), respectively. This distribution indicates that some institutions are more heavily represented in the sample, which could influence the overall findings and their applicability to less-represented institutions. It highlights the need for careful consideration of institutional diversity when interpreting the results.

The years of experience data reveals that 102 respondents (31.8%) have 16 years and above of experience, followed by 96 respondents (29.9%) with 6-10 years of experience. The 11-15 years group comprises 72 respondents (22.4%), while 51 respondents (15.9%) have 1-5 years of experience. The presence of a significant proportion of highly experienced academic staff alongside a notable group of mid-career professionals suggests a wealth of expertise within the sample. This distribution implies that the study benefits from a broad range of experience levels, providing a balanced view of both seasoned and relatively newer perspectives in academia.

In addition, the distribution of academic ranks shows that 74 respondents (23.1%) are Lecturers I, and 74 are Senior Lecturers (23.1%). Professors make up 53 respondents (16.5%), while Readers account for 37 (11.5%). Assistant Lecturers and Graduate Assistants are less represented, with 26 (8.1%) and 8 (2.5%), respectively. This rank distribution indicates a diverse representation across different academic levels, which can provide a comprehensive understanding of perspectives across the academic hierarchy. The implication is that the findings are reflective of a range of academic positions, which may influence the study's insights into institutional and rank-specific issues. Finally, the distribution of the types of universities shows that 80 respondents

(24.9%) are from private universities while 241 respondents (75.1%) are from public universities.

4.2 Analysis of the Research Objectives

Objective 1: Effect of incentive strategy on institutional stability in public and private universities in southwest Nigeria

The estimated effect of incentive strategy on the institutional stability in private and public universities is presented in this sub-section. The structural equation model path was used to estimate the result. The construct fits the SEM specification, according to the model's diagnosis (Table 4.2). For instance, the chi-square/df of the model is 2.916, indicating the correctness of the model. Also, the model's comparative fit index (CFI) is 0.969, whereas the Normed Fit Index (NFI) is estimated to be 0.945. other model indices such as Relative Fit Index (RFI) (0.908), Incremental Fit Index (IFI) (0.977), Tucher-Lewis Fit Index (TLI) (0.961) and Root Mean Square Error (RMSEA) (0.041), all show that the model specification is appropriate.

Table 4.2 Diagnostic of the incentive strategy and institutional stability model

Indicators	Values
Chi-Square/df	2.916
RMSEA	0.041
NFI	0.945
RFI	0.908
IFI	0.977
TLI	0.961
CFI	0.969

Source: Data Analysis, 2024.

4.2.1 Estimated Effect of incentive strategy on institutional stability

Results in Figure 4.1 and Table 4.3 show the estimated effect of incentive strategy on institutional stability in public and private universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Results in Figure 4.1 shows the estimated effect on institutional stability. The result shows that extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards and flexible work arrangements have a positive and significant effect on institutions' stability ($\beta = 0.173$, $p < 0.05$) for extrinsic reward, ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.05$) for intrinsic reward and ($\beta = 0.188$, $p < 0.05$) for flexible work arrangement. The result suggests an increase in extrinsic reward, intrinsic rewards and flexible work arrangement practices would engender institutional stability of both public and private universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Though, the magnitude of intrinsic reward is higher relative to that of extrinsic reward and flexible work arrangement, suggesting that the effect of intrinsic reward on institutional stability is higher. Hence, it was established that incentive strategy has a positive significant effect on institutional stability in public and private universities in Southwest, Nigeria.

Table 4.3 Path Analysis of the CFA of the incentive strategy and institutional stability model

	Estimate	C.R	P
Ec1 <------ Extrinsic Rewards	0.645	3.265	***
Ec2 <------ Extrinsic Rewards	0.453	3.193	***
Ec3 <------ Extrinsic Rewards	0.475	4.384	***
Ec4 <------ Extrinsic Rewards	0.392	2.984	.001
In1 <------ Intrinsic Rewards	0.526	3.942	***
In2 <------ Intrinsic Rewards	0.826	3.874	***
In3 <------ Intrinsic Rewards	0.764	2.763	.005
Fl1 <------ Flexible Work Arrangement	0.644	2.598	.003
Fl2 <------ Flexible Work Arrangement	0.573	4.284	***
Fl3 <------ Flexible Work Arrangement	0.827	3.926	***
Institutional Stability <------ Extrinsic Reward	0.173	3.182	***
Institutional Stability <------ Intrinsic Reward	0.241	4.163	***
Institutional Stability <------ Flexible Work Arrangement	0.188	3.526	***

Source: Data Analysis, 2024.

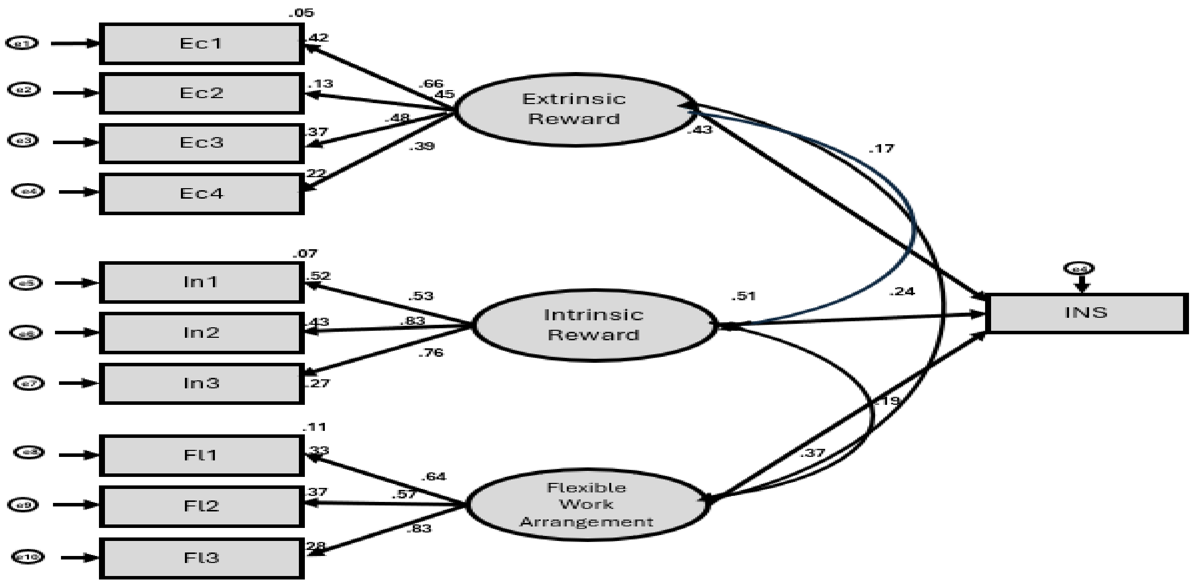

Figure: 4.1: Path analysis of incentive strategy and institutional stability model

4.3 Discussion of Findings

It was established that incentive strategies have a positive significant effect on institutional stability in public and private universities in southwest Nigeria. This implies that an increase in the incentive strategies, the institutional stability of both private and public universities in Southwest Nigeria would increase significantly. These incentive strategies are pivotal in ensuring that faculty and administrative staff remain motivated, engaged, and committed to their institutions. The positive and significant effect of incentive strategies on institutional stability can be attributed to three primary categories: extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards, and flexible work arrangements. Extrinsic rewards, such as salary increases, bonuses, and other financial incentives, directly impact employees' motivation and job satisfaction.

For universities in Southwest Nigeria, these tangible rewards are essential for reinforcing performance and achieving institutional goals. When faculty and staff receive financial incentives tied to their performance as and when due, they are more likely to engage in activities that enhance the university’s stability and growth. In contrast, intrinsic rewards encompass non-tangible benefits such as recognition, personal growth opportunities, and job satisfaction. These rewards address employees’ internal motivations and desires, playing a significant role in fostering a positive work environment. In the context of universities, intrinsic rewards can greatly enhance job satisfaction and morale. When faculty and staff feel valued and recognized for their efforts, their sense of accomplishment and loyalty to the institution strengthens. Flexible work arrangements, which include options such as telecommuting, flexible hours, and sabbaticals, also contribute significantly to institutional stability. These arrangements address employees' work-life balance needs, reducing stress and burnout. In Nigerian universities, flexible work arrangements have become increasingly important in maintaining staff well-being and productivity.

Empirical studies provide support for these findings. For example, research by Akinbode and Akinlabi (2021) highlighted the positive impact of extrinsic rewards on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in Nigerian universities, affirming the importance of financial incentives in maintaining institutional stability. Similarly, studies by Ojo and Ogunleye (2022) demonstrated that intrinsic rewards, such as recognition and opportunities for professional growth, significantly enhance job satisfaction and organizational loyalty among university staff. However, some studies, such as those by Adeyemi and Oyebode (2023), have challenged the notion that financial incentives alone lead to long-term stability, suggesting that the effectiveness of these incentives can vary depending on the institutional context and the perceived fairness of the reward system.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The findings from this study affirm that strategies like effective incentive packages and a strong alignment with institutional norms and values are essential for fostering stability and resilience in academic institutions. Addressing factors such as creating advancement opportunities, and engaging stakeholders can collectively strengthen institutional stability. Supported by frameworks like Human Capital Theory and Equity Theory, these strategies provide both theoretical and empirical insights into their role in achieving sustainable institutional success. The continuous implementation and refinement of these approaches are vital for universities to remain adaptable and resilient amidst changing challenges. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

i. Universities should design and implement comprehensive incentive programs that align with the needs and expectations of their faculty and staff. This includes offering competitive extrinsic rewards such as salary increases, bonuses, and performance-based incentives to recognize and motivate high achievers.

ii. In addition, intrinsic rewards (such as opportunities for professional growth, recognition programs, and meaningful work) should be emphasized to foster a deeper sense of satisfaction and engagement among employees.

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