

Lecturers' Perception of Academic Staff Retention Strategies, Job Satisfaction and Goal Achievement in Private Universities in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract

Academic staff retention and job satisfaction in Nigeria has raised deep concern among educational stakeholders. Thus, effective retention strategies capable of engaging competent workforce must be put in place to achieve institutional goals. Thus, the study examined academic staff retention strategies, job satisfaction and goal achievement in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study comprised 1,921 academic staff and 139 management staff in all the 23 private Universities from in the South-west, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 10 out of the institutions that were established before the year 2000 to provide information pertinent to the study. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select 60 Management staff. Proportional sampling technique was used to select 200 employers of labour. "Academic Staff Retention Strategies Questionnaire" (ASRSQ), "Job Satisfaction Questionnaire" (JSQ) and "Goal Achievement Questionnaire" (GAQ) were used to collect data for the study. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions raised. The findings of the study revealed that the levels of academic staff retention strategies, job satisfaction and goal achievement were average. The study concluded that effective retention strategies enhanced job satisfaction of academic staff in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria. The study recommended that compensation packages for academic staff in private Universities be enhanced and made relevant to prevailing economic circumstances through periodical review.

Keywords: Academic Staff Retention Strategies, Job Satisfaction, Goal Achievement, Private Universities.

Introduction

University education in contemporary era globally is vastly becoming a complex enterprise due to huge resources required, differential in productive capacities, earning potentials and increasingly demanding environment. This complexity demands for a high degree of competence and proven scholarship from the institutional academic employees in particular and the entire personnel in general. Thus, adequate retention techniques and measure capable of enhancing academics job satisfaction must be put in place for private Universities to concentrate on their mandates of teaching, research and community development. It is however alarming that private owned Universities in Nigeria are threatened by continuous brain drain and the pressure to retain knowledgeable personnel especially in the 21st Century when the institutions are losing experienced academics to both developed and developing countries (Grace-Odeleye, 2020; Mitchell, Chorney, Gural, Simmons-Swinden, Picheca&Baxter, 2019; Osasuli, 2014; Zhou & Wang, 2019). Retention of workers which are considered the hub of knowledge has become a critical issue in universities, especially the private Universities as explained by Mubaraq, Wahab and Khan (2012). This has raised deep concern among university managers, administrators, parents, students and relevant educational stakeholders that retention of competent, gifted, knowledgeable and staff with special academic experience poses a great problem to private Universities in Nigeria.

The Federal Ministry of Education (2013) revealed that despite the concerted efforts made by the National Universities Commission to retain talented workforce, there is very low lecturers' retention as private Universities alone had 66.1 % of academics turnover and attrition. Also, it was reported through the National Universities Commission (2013) that there were 79 private Universities legally recognized in Nigeria, yet, the institutions are still experiencing paucity of key lecturers due to brain drain syndrome. Thus, academic staff retention remains a great challenge to private Universities in Nigeria due to continuous brain drain and pressure to attract and retain specialized, experienced and verse academics due to pivotal but eschew reasons. Tetty (2016) affirmed universities owned by private bodies in Nigeria do not seem capable of mobilizing the intellectual strengths required for driving the process as most of their experts bases have left to the degree that adequate teaching capacity is not available to give standard education for the students left behind. This is increasingly becoming prominent in private Universities and research landscape, where establishments do not only compete with one another in attracting and retaining experienced academic staff and researchers, but also with other universities abroad.

An evaluation of private Universities in Nigeria in the past twenty years showed that the institutions are beleaguered by myriad of problems that affect their roles as Centre for intellectual excellence that they were conceived to be (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2014). This was corroborated by Osalusi (2014) who affirmed that brain drain was a phenomenon that afflicted the Nigerian private Universities most especially in the 21st Century that the institutions have lost experienced academics to even smaller African countries like: Ghana and Rwanda and developed countries like: Britain, America, France and Germany. Academic staff turnover has grave implications on service quality, image of institutions, academic synergies, scope of knowledge production, consistency and stability of academic enterprise. There is need to attract, motivate and retain knowledgeable, competent and proven scholars from the University academic staff through competitive pay, stimulating work environment, promotional opportunity and progressive human resource policies that consequently enhance academics job satisfaction towards the actualization university goals. This study therefore considered effective measures of retaining competent work force a vital input to enhance job satisfaction of academic staff towards the goal achievement of institutions.

Purpose of the Study

1. To investigate the level of academic staff retention strategies that are put in place in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria;
2. To assess the level of job satisfaction of academic staff in private Universities in South –west, Nigeria and;
3. To determine the level of goal achievement of private Universities in South- west, Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of academic staff retention strategies that are available in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of job satisfaction of academic staff in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria?
3. What is the level of goal achievement in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria?

Literature Reviews

Academic staff retention strategies and job satisfaction play substantial roles in overall performance of the institution and sine-qua-non for achieving university goal. Extensive studies like: Mak and Sockel (2011); Netswera (2005); Rapport (2013); Dentol (2012); Oluwole (2009); Jame, Mike and Namusong (2012); and Wisdom (2006) overwhelmingly proved that retaining high caliber of competent and proven scholars have lasting influence on university goal achievement. Universities operate in highly competitive environment and call for the institutions to retain qualified, competent and experienced academics cannot be over accentuated for the actualization of set goals. Abdulkadir and Abdulkalam (2015) carried out a research on factors that determine lecturers' job fulfillment among Private Universities in Bangladesh. A total of 346 respondents were considered from 10 private Universities using non probability sampling. A pre-tested, closed ended questionnaire and five-point Likert scale were employed to collect data. Also, descriptive statistics, multiple regression, factor analysis and Pearson product moment correlation statistic were employed as statistical tools. The outcomes of the findings showed that pay package, administrative back up, work safety and group solidarity were significant contributors of lecturers' job satisfaction. The study recommended that management of private Universities should give priority to compensation package, job security and working conditions for maintaining overall work contentment of academics.

Adenike, Oluwaseun and Sunday (2017) conducted a comparative study on job satisfaction between lecturers' in Private and government owned universities in Nigeria. Job satisfaction was considered using recognition, pay and functioning atmospheres. The sample of the study was 120 academic staff comprises 32 lecturers' from Landmark University, OmuAran and 88 academics from University of Ilorin. Three research questions were raised and answered to guide the study using percentage, while three hypotheses were formulated and tested using T- test statistics. Besides, interviews were orally carried out arbitrarily with eight lecturers in both institutions. The results of the work showed that significant disparity exist between career contentment of academic staff in private and public institutions of higher education in the

country. Demetria, Jacinta and Theonestena (2007) carried out a study on workplace administrative strategies and academic staff retention in South Highland Private Universities, Tanzania. The findings showed that workplace factors and administrative strategies contributed to low academic retention in the institutions. Jocylin (2009) examined academic staff recruitment and retention strategies in the University of Limpopo, South Africa. The study revealed that academic staff complained of bureaucratic bottleneck that surround recruitment and retention strategies which resulted to frustration, stress and feelings that no one cares about their situation and dissatisfaction with their institutions.

Tetty (2006) investigated employees retention strategies in universities in developing countries: Elements of sustainable strategies. Five universities were selected (University of Botswana, Kwazulu Natal University, Makerere University, University of Ghana and University of Ibadan) for case study analysis. Each case was conducted via a staff member from selected institutions under the supervision of the learning coordinator. Questionnaires were administered to all lecturers in all the selected institutions through a web based electronic format to which research subjects were directed. The results of the research shown that African universities are confronted with challenging tasks concerning retention of lecturers. It was recommended that African Universities should institutionalize sustainable strategies to rejuvenate staffing capabilities thereby enhancing their roles in socio- economic development. Micheal and Chipunza (2013) examined erosion and preservation of high-ranking lecturers at tertiary institutions in South-Africa. The research employed mixed method research design. Fifty-two items of self-developed questions were employed for gathering relevant information from the participants. Convenient sampling method was employed to select 255 senior lecturers from 10 universities that cut across South Africa. Chi-square statistical analysis was made use of to find the connection among abrasion and maintenance of experienced lecturers as hypothesized in the study. The results of the research showed that attrition of academic employees in the institution of higher education influence interpersonal relationship, job security, stimulating academic environment and work autonomy. It was recommended that University authority should devise principles as well as plans that promote and sustain research collaboration, interpersonal relationship and spirit of collegiality with a view to completely eliminate xenophobia tendencies in South African Higher Institutions of Learning.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 1,921 and 139 non-academic staff in all the private Universities in the South- West, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select three out of the six States and 10 private Universities that were established before the year 2000. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 60 Management Staff in each of the institutions, while 565 lecturers were proportionally selected. Random sampling technique was employed to select 200 employers of labour. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to analyze the data obtained and answered the research questions raised. The instruments used for the study were three researcher-designed questionnaires titled: “Academic Staff Retention Strategies Questionnaire” (ASRSQ), “Job Satisfaction Questionnaire” (JSQ) and “Goal Achievement Questionnaire” (GAQ). The reliability coefficients of the instruments were ascertained using test re-test method of reliability giving .69, .85 and .73 for ‘ASRSQ, ‘JSQ and ‘GAQ respectively. This affirmed that the instruments were reliable to be used for the study.

Findings

Research Question 1: What is the level of academic staff retention strategies in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 1: Level of Academic Staff Retention Strategies in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria

S/N	Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Academic Freedom	57	2.71	0.38	Average
2.	Job Security	57	2.75	0.47	Average
3.	Compensation packages	57	2.88	0.77	Average
4.	Training opportunities	57	2.80	0.44	Average
	Weighted Mean Score		2.78	0.52	Average

Table 1 shows that academic freedom, job security, compensation packages and training opportunities had mean scores of 2.71, 2.75, 2.8 and 2.80 respectively and were found to be average. Thus, the weighted mean score of 2.78 clearly indicates that the level of academic staff retention strategies in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria was average.

Research Question 2: What is the level of academic staff job satisfaction in private Universities in South-West, Nigeria?

Table 2: Level of Academic Staff Job Satisfaction in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria

S/N	Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Working Conditions	530	2.77	0.48	Average
2.	Promotional Opportunities	530	2.80	0.35	Average
3.	Leadership Qualities	530	2.98	0.72	Average
	Weighted Mean Score		2.85	0.52	Average

Table 2 indicates that working conditions, promotional opportunities and leadership qualities had mean scores of 2.77, 2.80 and 2.98 respectively and were found to be average. Thus, the weighted mean score of 2.85 shows that the level of academic job satisfaction in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria was average.

Research Question 3: What is the level of goal achievement in private Universities in South west, Nigeria?

Table 3: Level of Goal Achievement in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria

S/N	Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Manpower Development	190	3.07	0.42	Average
2.	National Development	190	3.00	0.97	Average
	Weighted Mean Score		3.04	0.70	Average

Table 3 reveals that manpower developments had mean scores of 3.07, while national development had 3.00 and were found to be average. Therefore, the weighted mean score of 3.04 shows that the level of goal achievement in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria was average.

Discussion of Findings

The answer to research question one showed that the level of academic staff retention strategies made available in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria was average with the weighted mean score of 2.78. This implies that private Universities in South-west, Nigeria still need to intensify efforts in making available effective retention strategies and measures capable of engaging competent and proven academic staff to prevent continuous brain drain as it could have adverse effect on productivity and service delivery. This is premised on the fact that the eminence of universities cannot surpass their abilities to attract and retain first class academic employees to focus on their obligations of teaching, research and community engagement. This finding corroborated the study of Netswera (2005) which revealed that universities serve as storehouse of knowledge that cannot afford to lose their valued and trained academics as it could be difficult to find better replacement. Appropriate strategies aimed at retaining academic employees must be made available by the administration of private Universities irrespective of the institutional size so as to keep the top talents. Persistent turnover of lecturers from universities make it difficult for the institutions to immediately fill the vacuum and maintain high institutional performance (Babakuse, 2008).

The answer to research question two showed that the level of academic staff job satisfaction in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria was average with the weighted mean score of 2.85. This shows that there is still need for improvement in the job satisfaction of lecturers' in these institutions. Therefore, the

institutions should be mindful of the fact that job satisfaction is fundamental to the tenable and institution of higher education standard. Employees demonstrate pleasurable attitudes if provided with stimulating work environment, prompt promotional prospect and consultative management approach that consequently enhance productivity. The findings agreed the studies of Adenike, Oluwaseun and Sunday (2017) that employees' job contentment is a fundamental determinant of service quality, productivity and overall job performance. Satiated staff are creative and enthusiastic towards the actualization of institutional objectives. This is because, the higher the fulfillment of employees, the greater the goal accomplishment of the organization; and the lower their satisfaction, the lower the goal achievement would be. Ogbwobi (2014) study revealed that when academic staff discovered that their needs are not fulfilled in the work environment, rise in the speed of voluntary break off of the work will arise. Therefore, for any private Universities to start and actualize its goals of providing the manpower requirements to advance national development, the institution must retain experienced and fulfilled lecturers through conducive working conditions, promotional opportunities and leadership qualities.

The answer research question three revealed that the level of goal achievement in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria was average with the weighted mean score of 3.04. This affirms that the goal achievement in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria regarding the provision and development of manpower required to accelerate socio-economic and scientific development of the country have not been maximally achieved. As the level of the goal achievement of these institutions was average, the implication of this is that the graduates turnout from the private Universities that are engaged in both public and private establishments are narrowly trained and do not maximally meet the manpower requirements of the vital sector. This shows that the products of the institutions required management training besides their professional skills for the actualization of the set goals. The findings corroborated the study conducted by Kazeem (2010) that the ineffectiveness of many graduates of private Universities to maximally apply the acquired knowledge for the demand of labour market could be attributed to inadequate possession of basic skills and knowledge acquired during their days in these institutions. This is evidence that goal attainment of these schools was not fully actualized.

Conclusions

Universities operate in highly competitive environment and the need for the institutions to retain qualified, competent and experienced academics cannot be over accentuated for the actualization of set goals. Retention and satisfaction of lecturers' who are key resources in universities system is germane for academic recital and maintenance of evergreen improvement. Thus, effective academic staff retention strategies would go a long way in enhancing job satisfaction of lecturers' in private Universities in South-west, Nigeria thereby leading to the effective actualization of the goals of these institutions. Therefore, the administration of these establishments must take serious direction attrition speed and put proper retention techniques such as academic freedom, training opportunities, stimulating work environment and effective leadership in place for quality instructional service delivery.

Recommendations

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

- i. the management of private Universities should intensify concerted efforts towards effective measures capable of retaining competent academics through granting of autonomy to academic staff to pursue intellectual inquiry, assurance of job security, attractive compensation packages and improved training opportunities.
- ii. prominence should be given to stimulating working conditions, timely and fair promotion and leadership by consensus by the institutional management to enhance the realization of the institution goals;
- iii. academic staff should be given autonomy to pursue intellectual inquiry related to their fields of expertise in a way that they deem most appropriate to the course and consistent with the core values and mission of the university without unreasonable restriction;
- iv. the management of private Universities should make provision for inbuilt packages for insurance policies and retirement benefits that will keep academic staff fit with socio-economic demand at old age; and

- v. the compensation package of academic staff in private Universities should be enhanced and relevant to prevailing economic circumstance by reviewing them periodically.

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