
Talent Retention Strategies and Organisational Performance in Nile University of Nigeria Abuja

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Abstract: *This study examines the effect of talent retention strategies on organisational performance at Nile University of Nigeria. Employing a quantitative descriptive survey design, data were collected from 165 valid responses drawn from a sampled workforce of academic and senior administrative staff. The questionnaire instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha 0.85–0.91). Using Pearson correlations and multiple linear regression (SPSS v.26), the four retention dimensions (competitive compensation and benefits, career development opportunities, work-life balance initiatives, and leadership and organisational culture) were tested as predictors of organisational performance. The full model was statistically significant ($F = 91.758, p < 0.001$) and accounted for 69.5% of the variance in organisational performance ($R^2 = 0.695$). Leadership and organisational culture emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.367, p < 0.001$), followed by career development ($\beta = 0.260, p < 0.001$), compensation and benefits ($\beta = 0.150, p = 0.005$), and work-life balance ($\beta = 0.107, p = 0.037$). Findings confirm that an integrated retention strategy, which balances hygiene factors with motivators, substantially enhances institutional outcomes such as faculty stability, research output and student satisfaction. The study recommends prioritising leadership development and structured career pathways, while strengthening work-life balance policies and regular salary benchmarking. Results contribute empirical evidence from the Nigerian private higher education context and inform strategic human resource interventions for improved organisational performance.*

Keywords: talent retention strategies, organisational performance, competitive compensation and benefits, career development opportunities, work-life balance initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st-century knowledge economy, organizations across all sectors have recognized that their most critical and valuable asset is their human capital. This is particularly true in the higher education landscape, where the quality of academic and administrative staff directly

determines an institution's reputation, competitive advantage, and ability to fulfil its core mandates of teaching, research, and community service. The success of a university is intrinsically linked to the expertise, innovation, and commitment of its faculty and key administrative personnel. The global higher education sector is characterised by intense competition for top-tier talent. Academics and skilled administrators are highly mobile, often seeking institutions that offer not only financial rewards but also robust professional development, a conducive work environment, and a clear path for career advancement. In this context, the challenge for universities has shifted from merely attracting talent to effectively retaining it. High employee turnover results in significant financial costs (recruitment, onboarding, training), loss of institutional knowledge, disrupted student learning, and diminished research continuity, ultimately impairing organisational performance. Nile University, as a growing and ambitious institution, operates within this competitive environment. To achieve its strategic goals of academic excellence, research prominence, and enhanced student enrolment, it must ensure the stability and satisfaction of its workforce. Implementing effective talent retention strategies is no longer a peripheral human resources function but a core strategic imperative for sustaining and improving the university's overall performance. The general objective of this research is to examine the effect of talent retention strategies on the organisational performance of Nile University.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Talent Retention

Talent retention refers to an organisation's ability to maintain a stable and committed workforce by implementing strategies that reduce voluntary employee turnover (Shahzad et al., 2024). In the context of higher education, talent retention encompasses the policies, practices, and organisational climate that encourage faculty and key administrative staff to remain with the institution over extended periods (Nagita et al., 2025). According to Mukwawaya (2025), retention is not merely about preventing departures but about creating an environment where employees are motivated, engaged, and see a long-term future with the organisation. The contemporary understanding of talent retention has evolved from traditional human resource management approaches to a more strategic, employee-centric perspective. Recent research emphasises that in knowledge-intensive organisations such as universities, retention strategies must address both extrinsic factors (compensation, benefits) and intrinsic factors (meaningful work, recognition, career growth) (Nagita et al., 2025). Scholars increasingly view retention strategies as investments rather than costs, as the expense of losing talented employees far exceeds the investment in keeping them engaged and satisfied (Wang et al., 2025).

Competitive Compensation and Benefits

Compensation and benefits represent the financial and non-financial rewards that organisations provide to employees in exchange for their services (Gashi et al., 2025). In the academic context, compensation packages typically include base salary, performance bonuses, research grants, health insurance, retirement benefits, and other allowances (McKnight Associates, 2024). According to expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), employees are motivated to remain with an organisation when they perceive that their efforts are fairly rewarded. Recent research asserts that competitive compensation is a hygiene factor in retention—while insufficient

compensation can drive turnover, compensation alone may not ensure long-term commitment without other supporting factors (Wang et al., 2025). Research by CUPA-HR (2024) demonstrates that compensation systems that are perceived as fair, transparent, and competitive with market rates significantly reduce turnover intentions. In higher education specifically, recent findings indicate that salary competitiveness relative to peer institutions is a critical determinant of faculty retention (Gashi et al., 2025). Furthermore, McKnight Associates (2024) highlight that comprehensive benefit packages, including health care, retirement plans, and professional development allowances, enhance job satisfaction and organisational commitment among university staff.

Career Development Opportunities

Career development opportunities encompass the formal and informal mechanisms through which organisations support employee growth, skill enhancement, and career progression (Nagita et al., 2025). These may include training programmes, mentorship, promotion pathways, sabbatical leaves, and opportunities for research collaboration (Mukwawaya, 2025). According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), when organisations invest in employee development, employees reciprocate with increased commitment and loyalty. Recent research found that perceptions of career development opportunities are among the strongest predictors of intention to stay with an organisation (CUPA-HR, 2025). In the university context, career development is particularly crucial given the emphasis on continuous learning, research productivity, and academic advancement (Nagita et al., 2025). Empirical research demonstrates that career development opportunities significantly reduce turnover rates, especially among early and mid-career professionals who are most vulnerable to attrition (Mukwawaya, 2025). For academic staff, opportunities for promotion to senior ranks, access to research funding, conference participation, and involvement in institutional governance are critical retention factors (Nagita et al., 2025).

Work-Life Balance Initiatives

Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life, enabling individuals to effectively manage both domains without excessive conflict or stress (Clarke & Kelliher, 2020). Work-life balance initiatives include flexible working arrangements, family-friendly policies, reasonable workload expectations, and institutional support for personal well-being (Lei et al., 2025). According to conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), individuals seek to acquire, maintain, and protect resources including time, energy, and psychological well-being. Organisations that support work-life balance help employees conserve these resources, thereby reducing burnout and turnover intentions (Lei et al., 2025). Research indicates that work-life balance practices are positively associated with organisational commitment and negatively related to turnover (Clarke & Kelliher, 2020). In academia, the challenge of work-life balance is particularly acute due to heavy teaching loads, research pressures, administrative duties, and the blurring of boundaries between work and personal time (Lei et al., 2025). Recent studies show that universities offering flexible work arrangements, parental leave policies, and manageable workloads experience significantly lower faculty turnover rates (Nagita et al., 2025).

Leadership and Organisational Culture

Leadership refers to the process through which individuals influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward organisational effectiveness and success (Opolot et al., 2025). Organisational culture encompasses the shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that characterise an institution and shape employee behaviour (Liu, 2025). According to transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985), leaders who inspire, intellectually stimulate, and demonstrate individualised consideration create environments where employees feel valued and committed. Research demonstrates that supportive leadership and positive organisational culture are among the strongest predictors of employee retention (Tian et al., 2020). In higher education, leadership quality at both departmental and institutional levels significantly influences faculty satisfaction and retention decisions (Opolot et al., 2025).

Organisational culture that emphasises collegiality, shared governance, recognition of achievement, and respect for academic freedom fosters a sense of belonging and institutional commitment (Liu, 2025). Studies found that faculty perceptions of institutional fairness, transparency in decision-making, and inclusive culture are strongly associated with retention outcomes (Opolot et al., 2025).

Organisational Performance

Organisational performance is a multidimensional construct that reflects the extent to which an organisation achieves its strategic objectives and creates value for its stakeholders (Rukhviyanti, 2025). In higher education institutions, performance measurement extends beyond traditional financial metrics to include academic quality, research productivity, student outcomes, and institutional reputation (Mendez Bravo et al., 2022). The Balanced Scorecard approach emphasises that organisational performance should be assessed across multiple dimensions including financial performance, customer satisfaction, internal processes, and learning and growth (Rukhviyanti, 2025). For universities, this translates to measures such as faculty stability and satisfaction, research output and citations, student enrolment and satisfaction, graduation rates, and competitive positioning in institutional rankings (Méndez Bravo et al., 2022). Recent studies argue that university performance is particularly dependent on human capital, as the core activities of teaching and research are labour-intensive and quality-dependent (Salau et al., 2021). Therefore, the ability to retain talented academics and administrators directly influences institutional performance outcomes (Nagita et al., 2025).

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959). Social Exchange Theory posits that employment relationships are built on reciprocal exchanges—when organisations provide valued resources (competitive compensation, development opportunities, supportive culture), employees reciprocate with commitment, effort, and loyalty. This framework explains why comprehensive retention strategies engender organisational commitment and reduce turnover (Shahzad et al., 2024). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between hygiene factors (compensation, working conditions) that prevent dissatisfaction and motivators (recognition, career growth, meaningful work) that drive satisfaction and commitment (Alrawahi et al., 2020). This theory suggests that effective retention requires addressing both categories—ensuring adequate hygiene factors while simultaneously providing genuine motivators that foster long-term engagement (Wang

et al., 2025). Recent applications of this theory in higher education contexts confirm its continued relevance (Gimpl, 2024).

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between talent retention strategies and organisational performance across various contexts. Recent research among various institutions found that both intrinsic (job satisfaction, career development) and extrinsic (compensation, benefits) factors significantly influenced retention, with intrinsic factors showing stronger effects among knowledge workers (Shahzad et al., 2024). In the higher education sector specifically, Nagita et al. (2025) investigated retention factors in faith-based universities in Uganda and found that career development opportunities, working conditions, and leadership quality were the most significant predictors of faculty retention. Similarly, Mukwayaya (2025) examined retention strategies in South African universities, revealing that compensation, recognition, and organisational culture collectively explained substantial variance in retention outcomes. A recent study by Salau et al. (2021) in Nigerian universities demonstrated that institutions with comprehensive retention programmes experienced significantly lower faculty turnover rates compared to those with minimal retention initiatives, with corresponding positive effects on research productivity and student outcomes. More recently, research confirmed that talent management practices, including retention strategies, positively predicted organisational performance in higher education institutions, with employee engagement serving as a mediating variable (Nagita et al., 2025).

Literature Gap

Despite the growing body of research on talent retention and organisational performance, a critical gap exists in the current literature that this study addresses. While extensive research has been conducted on talent retention in Western universities and corporate settings, and most existing studies examine retention strategies in isolation, there remains a significant absence of comprehensive, quantitative research that simultaneously examines multiple retention strategies and their collective impact on broader organisational performance indicators within the context of private universities in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Nigeria. The contextual differences in economic conditions, labour market dynamics, and institutional structures in developing countries warrant context-specific investigation (Salau et al., 2021), yet empirical evidence from Nigerian private higher education institutions remains scarce. Furthermore, prior research has predominantly focused on retention rates and turnover intentions as outcome variables, with limited attention to multidimensional organisational performance indicators such as faculty stability, research output, student satisfaction, and institutional reputation. Much of the existing literature also relies on qualitative approaches or secondary data analysis, creating a methodological void for rigorous quantitative studies employing advanced statistical techniques to establish causal relationships.

Given the rapidly evolving higher education landscape, particularly post-COVID-19, and changing employee expectations, there is an urgent need for current empirical data on the effectiveness of integrated retention strategies in contemporary university settings (CUPA-HR, 2025). This study fills this multifaceted gap by adopting a comprehensive quantitative approach that simultaneously examines compensation and benefits, career development opportunities,

work-life balance initiatives, and leadership and organisational culture as an integrated retention framework, while assessing their collective impact on multiple dimensions of organisational performance at Nile University. By doing so, this research provides timely, context-specific, methodologically rigorous evidence that contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical talent management in the Nigerian private higher education sector.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design to examine the relationship between talent retention strategies and organisational performance at Nile University (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population comprised 287 employees, consisting of 198 academic and 89 senior administrative staff. Using Taro Yamane's formula, a sample size of 167 was calculated ($n = 287 / (1 + 287(0.05)^2)$); this was increased to 180 using simple random sampling to account for potential non-response and minimise bias. Data were collected using the 'Talent Retention and Organisational Performance Questionnaire' (TROPQ). The instrument comprised a demographic section and 40 items covering compensation, career development, work-life balance, leadership, and performance. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, adapted from validated instruments by recent researchers (Shahzad et al., 2024; Nagita et al., 2025; Rukhviyanti, 2025). Content validity was established via expert review, while reliability was confirmed through a pilot study (n=30). Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranged from 0.85 to 0.91 across all variables, exceeding the 0.70 threshold for internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Following ethical approval and informed consent, data collection occurred over four weeks via electronic and physical administration. Of the 180 questionnaires distributed, 165 were deemed valid, yielding a 91.7% response rate. Data were analysed using SPSS version 26.0. Hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level using the following multiple regression model:

$$OP = \beta_0 + \beta_1CB + \beta_2CD + \beta_3WLB + \beta_4LC + \epsilon$$

Where OP represents Organisational Performance, and the independent variables are Compensation and Benefits (CB), Career Development (CD), Work-Life Balance (WLB), and Leadership and Culture (LC).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Analysis

The analysis of 165 respondents revealed a typical gender distribution for Nigerian higher education, with 59.4% male and 40.6% female. The age distribution was concentrated in the mid-career bracket, with the majority (43.0%) aged 36–45, followed by 25–35 (31.5%). Academic staff constituted 69.7% of the sample, while administrative staff made up 30.3%. Regarding tenure, most respondents (35.2%) had served between 4–6 years, indicating sufficient institutional experience to evaluate performance.

Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

Descriptive statistics assessed the implementation levels of retention strategies:

- **Leadership and Organisational Culture** (M = 3.71, SD = 0.78): Rated highest, respondents positively evaluated leadership transparency, collegiality, and supportiveness.
- **Career Development Opportunities** (M = 3.68, SD = 0.82): Also rated highly, reflecting effective training programmes, promotion pathways, and research support.
- **Compensation and Benefits** (M = 3.24, SD = 0.89): Rated moderately, suggesting that while packages are acceptable, competitiveness requires improvement.
- **Work-Life Balance Initiatives** (M = 3.12, SD = 0.95): Received the lowest rating, highlighting concerns regarding workload management and flexibility.
- **Organisational Performance** (M = 3.58, SD = 0.76): Perceived as moderately high across indicators such as faculty stability and research productivity.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation examined the relationships between retention strategies and organisational performance. All strategies demonstrated significant positive correlations at the 0.01 level:

1. Leadership and Organisational Culture: Strong positive relationship ($r = 0.726, p < 0.01$).
2. Career Development Opportunities: Strong positive relationship ($r = 0.718, p < 0.01$).
3. Compensation and Benefits: Moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.564, p < 0.01$).
4. Work-Life Balance Initiatives: Moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.542, p < 0.01$).

Leadership and organisational culture emerged as the strongest correlate. Correlations among independent variables ranged from 0.548 to 0.694, confirming distinct constructs without multicollinearity concerns.

Test of Hypotheses

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the five research hypotheses. The regression model examined both the individual and combined effects of retention strategies on organisational performance.

Model Summary:

$R = 0.834$; $R^2 = 0.695$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.688$; Standard Error of Estimate = 0.425; F-statistic = 91.758; p-value < 0.001. The model summary indicates that the four retention strategies collectively explain **69.5%** of the variance in organisational performance ($R^2 = 0.695$). This represents substantial predictive power, confirming that retention strategies are major determinants of organisational performance.

ANOVA Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	66.342	4	16.586	91.758	0.000
Residual	28.932	160	0.181		
Total	95.274	164			

Source: Authors' Computation, 2026

The ANOVA results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 91.758$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the retention strategies collectively have a significant effect on organisational performance.

Regression Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
(Constant)	0.452	0.198	-	2.283	0.024	-
Compensation and Benefits	0.128	0.045	0.150	2.844	0.005	Reject H_0
Career Development	0.241	0.052	0.260	4.635	0.000	Reject H_0
Work-Life Balance	0.086	0.041	0.107	2.098	0.037	Reject H_0
Leadership and Culture	0.358	0.055	0.367	6.509	0.000	Reject H_0

Source: Authors' Computation, 2026

Compensation and benefits showed a significant positive effect on organisational performance ($\beta = 0.150$, $t = 2.844$, $p = 0.005$). Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Compensation and benefits significantly influence staff retention and organisational performance at Nile University. Career development opportunities demonstrated a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.260$, $t = 4.635$, $p < 0.001$). Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, career development opportunities have a substantial and significant effect on staff commitment and organisational performance, representing the second strongest predictor. Work-life balance initiatives showed a significant positive effect on organisational performance ($\beta = 0.107$, $t = 2.098$, $p = 0.037$). Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, work-life balance initiatives significantly contribute to reduced turnover and improved organisational performance, though with a smaller effect compared to other variables. Leadership and organisational culture emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.367$, $t = 6.509$, $p < 0.001$). Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, leadership and organisational culture have the most substantial significant effect on talent retention and organisational performance among all variables examined. The overall regression model shows that retention strategies collectively explain 69.5% of variance in organisational performance ($R^2 = 0.695$, $F = 91.758$, $p < 0.001$). Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a highly significant positive relationship between composite talent retention strategies and organisational performance at Nile University.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Compensation and Benefits and Organisational Performance: Compensation and benefits demonstrated a significant positive effect on organisational performance ($\beta = 0.150$, $p = 0.005$), though it was the weakest predictor ($M = 3.24$). This aligns with recent research arguing that competitive compensation functions primarily as a hygiene factor—preventing dissatisfaction rather than driving exceptional commitment (Wang et al., 2025). While scholars note that knowledge workers often prioritise intrinsic factors, the significant relationship confirms that inadequate compensation undermines retention (Gashi et al., 2025). Thus, while not a primary driver, market-competitive compensation remains an essential baseline requirement.

Career Development Opportunities and Organisational Performance: Career development emerged as the second strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.260$, $p < 0.001$; $M = 3.68$), supporting recent assertions that growth opportunities strongly predict intentions to stay (CUPA-HR, 2025). Consistent with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), when the university invests in staff growth, employees reciprocate with commitment. This is vital for academics, for whom professional advancement is central to identity (Nagita et al., 2025). Consequently, clear career pathways and research support are effective retention strategies that simultaneously enhance institutional outputs.

Work-Life Balance Initiatives and Organisational Performance: Work-life balance initiatives showed a significant but modest effect ($\beta = 0.107$, $p = 0.037$) and received the lowest mean score ($M = 3.12$). While consistent with recent research regarding the link to commitment (Clarke & Kelliher, 2020), the lower rating suggests this area is under-developed at Nile University. This aligns with the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), suggesting that support systems prevent burnout. The low score represents an urgent opportunity; enhancing flexibility and family-friendly policies could yield significant benefits, particularly given the high burnout levels reported in recent academic studies (Lei et al., 2025).

Leadership and Organisational Culture and Organisational Performance: Leadership and organisational culture emerged as the strongest predictor of performance ($\beta = 0.367$, $p < 0.001$; $M = 3.71$). This validates Bass's (1985) transformational leadership theory and recent findings that supportive leadership is a primary retention tool (Opolot et al., 2025). The high rating indicates Nile University has successfully cultivated a culture of collegiality and respect (Liu, 2025). In the Nigerian context, where relationship-oriented cultures are prevalent, transformational leaders who empower staff are critical for organisational effectiveness (Tian et al., 2020).

Composite Effect of Retention Strategies: The four strategies collectively explain 69.5% of the variance in organisational performance ($R^2 = 0.695$, $p < 0.001$). This high variance confirms that effective retention requires an integrated approach rather than isolated interventions (Shahzad et al., 2024). The findings validate Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959), demonstrating that retention requires both hygiene factors like compensation to prevent dissatisfaction and motivators like leadership to drive engagement (Alrawahi et al., 2020). The strong link between retention and performance confirms that retaining human capital is a strategic imperative for institutional success (Salau et al., 2021).

Implications for Theory and Practice: Theoretically, the study supports Social Exchange Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory within the Nigerian higher education context, showing that providing valued resources elicits workforce loyalty. Practically, the results offer a clear hierarchy for intervention: prioritising leadership and culture yields the highest returns, followed by sustained investment in career development. Conversely, work-life balance requires urgent improvements as the weakest area, while competitive pay remains essential as a baseline hygiene factor. Ultimately, isolated strategies will produce suboptimal results, necessitating an integrated approach.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the effect of talent retention strategies on organisational performance at Nile University. The findings reveal that compensation, career development, work-life balance, and leadership collectively explain 69.5% of performance variance. Leadership and organisational culture emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.367$, $p < 0.001$), followed by career development ($\beta = 0.260$). Although compensation ($\beta = 0.150$) and work-life balance ($\beta = 0.107$) showed smaller effects, all strategies were statistically significant, confirming the necessity of an integrated approach. The study contributes significantly to the literature by providing empirical evidence from the under-researched Nigerian private university sector, employing rigorous quantitative analysis, and broadening performance metrics beyond simple retention rates to include faculty stability and institutional reputation. Practically, the findings suggest clear priorities. Investments in leadership and culture yield the highest returns on performance, making them a top priority, while career development remains critical for academic staff seeking professional growth. Conversely, work-life balance requires urgent attention as the weakest performance predictor. Compensation functions as a necessary hygiene factor to prevent dissatisfaction, but the study emphasises that a holistic strategy is essential; focusing on isolated areas yields suboptimal results. Validating Social Exchange Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, the results frame retention as a strategic investment rather than a cost, essential for preserving institutional knowledge and deepening student-faculty relationships. For Nile University, while leadership and career development are distinct strengths, addressing weaknesses in work-life balance is crucial for sustaining competitive advantage. Ultimately, this research offers a roadmap for universities in developing economies, asserting that mastering talent retention is vital for emerging as leaders in African higher education.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for Nile University and similar higher education institutions.

Strengthening Leadership and Organisational Culture: As leadership and organisational culture emerged as the strongest performance predictors, Nile University must prioritise investing in transformational leadership development for department heads and senior administrators. It is essential to institutionalise participatory governance structures that give staff a meaningful voice in strategic decisions. Furthermore, the university should establish regular communication forums to ensure transparency, implement formal recognition schemes to celebrate faculty achievements, and conduct periodic cultural assessments to identify interventions before retention issues arise. Promoting collegiality through interdisciplinary initiatives will further strengthen the sense of community.

Enhancing Career Development Opportunities: To leverage the strong impact of career development, the university should establish a comprehensive faculty development centre offering workshops and mentorship on pedagogy and research. Developing individualised career pathways with clear advancement criteria is vital, as is increasing research funding and support for conference attendance. Structured mentorship programmes pairing early-career

faculty with senior professors will facilitate integration, while transparent promotion criteria ensure that advancement is perceived as fair and merit-based.

Improving Work-Life Balance Initiatives: Given the urgent need for improvement in this area, priorities include implementing flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options, and conducting regular workload audits to prevent burnout. The university should adopt family-friendly policies, including extended parental leave and childcare support, alongside comprehensive wellness programmes that address mental and physical health. Crucially, enforcing boundaries on after-hours communication is necessary to ensure staff can maintain a healthy separation between professional and personal life.

Maintaining Competitive Compensation and Benefits: Although a weaker predictor, compensation functions as a necessary hygiene factor. The university must conduct regular salary benchmarking against peer institutions and develop transparent, performance-based salary structures. Enhancing the benefits package, covering health, housing, and technology, is essential, as is ensuring timely salary payments to prevent financial insecurity. Implementing performance-based incentives and communicating the total value of compensation packages will further help in reducing dissatisfaction.

Developing an Integrated Talent Management Framework: Nile University should establish a dedicated Talent Management Office to coordinate retention initiatives. This includes conducting annual retention risk assessments and utilising 'stay interviews' to understand what engages valuable employees. The university should develop succession planning programmes for high-potential staff and rely on comprehensive retention metrics, such as turnover rates and engagement scores, to drive proactive decision-making.

Context-Specific Recommendations for Nigerian Universities: To address local challenges, the university must invest in reliable infrastructure, specifically backup power and high-speed internet, to support academic work. Compensation strategies should account for local purchasing power and private sector competition. Additionally, building international partnerships to provide global research opportunities and addressing security concerns on campus are critical measures for retaining top talent within the Nigerian context.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

University management must elevate talent retention to a strategic priority, holding leaders accountable for outcomes. The Human Resources department should professionalise its practices through data analytics and management training. Simultaneously, regulatory bodies should develop national guidelines for faculty compensation and facilitate inter-institutional resource sharing to support broader systemic improvements.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research should employ longitudinal and mixed-methods approaches to establish causal relationships between retention strategies and performance. Studies should examine moderating variables such as gender, generational differences, and discipline-specific factors. Furthermore, investigating the cost-benefit analysis of retention strategies and the impact of

emerging factors, such as remote work and post-pandemic shifts, will provide deeper insights into effective talent management.

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