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Talent Management and Organisational Performance Among Non-Academic Staff of Government Universities in Ondo State

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Abstract: Talent management plays a pivotal role in enhancing organisational performance, particularly within the administrative framework of Nigerian universities. This study investigates the relationship between talent management practices and quality service delivery among non-academic staff in government-owned universities in Ondo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examines the effects of talent acquisition, talent motivation, and talent development on service quality. A survey research design was employed, utilizing structured questionnaires to collect primary data from non-academic staff across four government universities in Ondo State. A total of 240 valid responses were retrieved and analysed using multiple regression analysis. The findings reveal that talent acquisition, motivation, and development significantly and positively influence the quality of service delivery among non-academic personnel. The study concludes that effective talent management is instrumental in improving organisational performance in the higher education sector. It recommends that government universities in Ondo State should enhance their talent acquisition strategies by implementing locally driven succession planning and internal development programmes, particularly for non-academic staff.

Keywords: talent acquisition, talent motivation, talent development, non-academic staff, quality service delivery, organisational performance.

INTRODUCTION

Organisations are established to provide specific services, and the quality of these services is largely determined by the competence of the workforce and the resources available to them. In the

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current knowledge driven and service-oriented global economy, talent management has become a strategic imperative for organizations seeking to enhance performance and ensure long-term sustainability. Effective talent management practices particularly talent acquisition, motivation, and development have increasingly become central to organizational success, especially in knowledge-intensive environments such as tertiary institutions.

Talent management, a core function of modern Human Resource Management (HRM), involves systematically attracting, developing, and retaining individuals who contribute meaningfully to organizational goals. According to Fazal (2023), talent plays a critical role in driving high performance across organizations. In today's competitive environment, the ability to recruit, develop, and retain skilled and innovative employees has emerged as a key differentiator. This challenge is even more pronounced in public sector organizations such as universities, where constraints related to funding, bureaucratic procedures, and structural inefficiencies may hinder effective talent management.

In Nigeria, the need for robust talent management systems in government-owned universities has become increasingly urgent. These institutions face significant challenges including an aging workforce, high turnover rates, and the migration of skilled professionals to better opportunities abroad. These trends have led to a decline in service quality, particularly among non-academic staff who form the backbone of university administration and daily operations. As Ogogo (2024) notes, the quality of service delivery in public institutions is a primary indicator of institutional performance and public trust.

Service delivery in tertiary institutions is critical not only for institutional success but also for national development. Poor service delivery often reflects gaps in talent management policies and practices. The loss of experienced personnel due to inadequate motivation, lack of development opportunities, or poor recruitment practices leads to institutional knowledge gaps and diminished productivity. Replacing lost talent is often costly and time-consuming, especially when considering the specialized training required in university environments.

Government universities in Ondo State, Nigeria, have been particularly affected by these challenges. Issues such as inadequate work environments, limited adherence to international best practices in HRM, and insufficient reward and recognition systems have undermined efforts to build and retain a productive workforce (Ekhsan *et al.*, 2023). While some universities have introduced talent management initiatives—such as structured talent acquisition processes, employee development programs, and performance-driven motivation schemes these efforts have yet to yield globally competitive outcomes. The persistent low rankings of Nigerian universities suggest that current strategies may be insufficient or improperly implemented.

Against this backdrop, this study investigates the impact of talent management practices on organisational performance, with a focus on non-academic staff in government universities in

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Ondo State. Non-academic staff were selected for this study due to their relatively stable tenure compared to academic staff, many of whom frequently emigrate in search of better opportunities. Additionally, the choice of government universities over private institutions is informed by their more formalized administrative structures and broader scope of public service delivery, making them suitable for evaluating the long-term effects of talent management strategies.

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of talent management on organisational performance in government universities in Ondo State. The specific objectives are to asses the impact of talent acquisition, talent motivation and talent development on organisational performance. Research questions and hypotheses were formulated in alignment with these objectives to guide the study. The findings are expected to provide insights into how talent management practices can be optimized to enhance service quality and institutional performance in Nigerian higher education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

This section explores the core concepts relevant to this study organisational performance and talent management and their underlying dimensions: talent acquisition, talent motivation, and talent development.

Organisational Performance

Organisational performance refers to the degree to which an organization effectively and efficiently achieves its objectives. It encompasses various dimensions including productivity, profitability, market share, operational stability, and the delivery of high-quality goods and services. According to Igbinoba et al. (2022), organizational performance is influenced significantly by the skills, competencies, and motivation of employees, which collectively drive institutional success. In the context of this study, organizational performance is assessed through the lens of quality service delivery among non-academic staff in government-owned universities in Nigeria.

Talent Management

Talent management is broadly defined as a strategic and integrated approach to attracting, developing, motivating, and retaining employees who contribute significantly to organizational success (Ekhsan et al., 2023). It involves not only the recruitment of high-potential individuals but also creating enabling environments that foster continuous learning and engagement. Akanda et al. (2021) describe talent management as a dynamic process aimed at building a pool of capable individuals through integrated development frameworks led by organizational leaders. In this study, talent acquisition, talent motivation, and talent development are used as key dimensions to measure talent management, based on their prevalence in the human resource strategies of public universities in Nigeria.

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Talent Acquisition

Talent acquisition involves the systematic processes used by organizations to identify, attract, and recruit individuals with the skills and potential required to meet strategic needs. It includes activities such as employer branding, workforce planning, and candidate engagement. Krishnan et al. (2020) assert that attracting top-tier talent is essential for ensuring leadership continuity and driving long-term organizational growth. In addition, many institutions have adopted incentive-based pay systems and other value propositions to attract high-performing individuals (Schlechter et al., as cited in Igweh, 2023). In this study, talent acquisition is conceptualized as the organization's ability to identify and bring in capable personnel who can contribute to improved service delivery.

Talent Motivation

Talent motivation refers to the practices and strategies used to inspire and retain employees by aligning personal goals with organizational objectives. It encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, including recognition, performance-based incentives, and career advancement opportunities. As noted by Oztoprak and Lundmark (as cited in Murphy et al., 2023), reward and recognition systems are powerful tools for fostering loyalty, enhancing job satisfaction, and reinforcing desired behaviors. Motivated employees are more likely to demonstrate increased engagement, productivity, and commitment, all of which contribute to improved organizational performance.

Talent Development

Talent development focuses on the continuous learning and professional growth of employees through training, mentoring, and career development initiatives. It is a critical component of organizational sustainability, particularly in knowledge-based institutions such as universities. Oladapo (2024) emphasized that talent development constitutes a core element of high-performance work systems, directly influencing institutional outcomes. Similarly, Okeke et al. (2023) argued that structured learning and development programs are essential for equipping employees with the competencies needed to perform effectively and adapt to dynamic environments. In this study, talent development is viewed as a strategic driver of workforce capability and organizational excellence.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on the Human Capital Theory (HCT), which provides a foundational framework for understanding the relationship between talent management and organizational performance. Originally developed by economists such as Adam Smith and later advanced by scholars like Schultz and Becker, HCT posits that individuals' knowledge, skills, and competencies represent a form of capital that can be developed and leveraged to yield economic returns (Satyvendra, 2019).

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Within the context of modern organizations, Human Capital Theory has evolved to emphasize that investment in employees through education, training, motivation, and professional development is critical for improving productivity and achieving strategic goals (Adeniji et al., 2019). Axelrod (as cited in Satyvendra, 2019) underscores that effective talent management is essentially an investment strategy, where human capital serves as a key driver of innovation, service quality, and competitive advantage.

According to Acar and Yener (as cited in Adeniji et al., 2019), organizations that prioritize the acquisition and development of talent are more likely to enhance employee performance and organizational outcomes. This aligns with the core assumption of HCT that investments in human capital particularly in high-potential individuals produce measurable returns in the form of efficiency, innovation, and service delivery.

Wilson (2015) further elaborates that Human Capital Theory explains the positive correlation between organizational inputs (such as training and motivation) and outputs (such as service quality and employee performance). The theory suggests that systematic investment in people is not only economically rational but also essential for sustained organizational success. Recent contributions by Lawrence and Koffi (2023), and Narayanan (2023), reaffirm that HCT provides a robust explanatory framework for analyzing how organizations can create value through the strategic management of talent. These scholars argue that human capital investment especially in public sector institutions such as universities is instrumental in building the capability needed to address complex service delivery challenges.

In the context of this study, HCT supports the assumption that the performance of government universities can be significantly enhanced by strategically managing talent through recruitment, motivation, and professional development. Thus, the theory offers a relevant and practical lens through which to assess the impact of talent management practices on organizational performance in Nigerian higher education institutions.

Empirical Review

Roba, et al. (2024) studied talent management strategies and service delivery in sub-national governments in Kenya. The study used the descriptive method of analysis through the use of survey. The study sampled 140 respondents (47 county secretaries, 47 county directors of HRM and 46 municipality managers from municipalities based at the county headquarters of 46 counties) through interviews and questionnaires method. From the data collected, the study analysis revealed that correlation analysis from the data collected shows that service delivery positively correlated with talent management strategies at 0.05 significance levels, while the regression analysis revealed that talent management strategies explain about 65.30% variance in service delivery. The findings shows that talent management strategies help to improve service delivery in Kenya's subnational (county) governments in terms of their workforce. The study was recommended that proactive planning and adequately structuring should be put in place for county's workforce based

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on knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that are suitable for employee in the modern era.

Septiandina and Sari (2024) assessed talent management and staff performance as it relates to service quality with Dental Hospital of Cimahi City, West Java. Quantitative approach with a survey method was used for the study, the population used for the study was 70 respondents with a sample of 32 respondents selected from the population. The data analysis technique used is path analysis using SPSS version 25. The findings showed that there exist a positive influence between talent management and the performance of staff, as talent management has an impact on the quality of service of staff in terms of their delivery.

Ogogo (2024) explores the antecedents and consequences of talent management practices in Nigeria's public sector. Drawing on existing literature and empirical evidence, the factors that influence talent management practices within the sector, their impact on competitiveness and service provision and the relevance of talent identification and retention to the sector are highlighted to make a case for effective public sector talent management practices in today's Nigeria where her sector organizations are looking to compete with the rest of the world. The study presents that talent management is essential for organizations to attract, develop, and retain professional and highly skilled employees. In the context of the Nigerian public sector, attracting, identifying, developing and retaining a motivated, productive and exceptional workforce is critical to building a high performance sector where service delivery is significantly impacted and national development is effectively realized as a result.

Similarly, Tantau (2023) concludes, based on the reviewed literature that talent management is a tool to strengthen organizational capability through individual development, performance enhancement, career development and succession planning. Talent management strategies can facilitate development of employees, enhance service delivery and also gives companies an enhanced corporate image. The study recommends that organizations should enact policies that promote talent management which will in turn promote employee retention. The study further recommends that an empirical study be fully carried out to examine and validate the conceptual model developed in this study by using a survey methodology to study in South-South Region of Nigeria.

Lawrence and Koffi (2023) examined talent retention, job satisfaction, and training and development as proxies for effective job performance. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted with a sample size of 142 staff. The questionnaire was developed, validated, and tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test the hypotheses using SPSS. The findings revealed that talent retention significantly influences employee job performance. It concluded that increased productivity in a competitive environment requires effective use of resources and therefore recommended that the management of the

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organization should continuously show commitment to talent management with a policy review based on current realities to help the organization boost productivity and performance

Asaad, *etal* (2023) examine the influence of talent management practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, rewards and compensation) on employee performance in Jordanian service organizations. A questionnaire was adopted and distributed among the employees in the service organizations in Jordan; the study's respondents were 267 employees from service organizations (telecommunication firms, banks, and tourism firms). SmartPLS 3 was used to analyze the data and to examine the measurement and structural models. The findings of the study suggest that implementing talent management practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, and rewards and compensation) can improve employee performance in Jordanian service organizations.

Okeke, et al (2023) attempted to incorporate components from the talent management practices at individual levels of employees` attitudes, thus, providing a more thorough understanding of the dynamic relationship between talent management practices and employee outcomes in Nigerian Federal Teaching Hospitals. Descriptive statistics of the constructs were performed and the data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 25 software. The results showed that talent retention and talented employees` organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) were the most crucial components of the success of effective talent management implementation in the healthcare industry.

Tunio, et al (2023) examined the impact of talent management on the sustainable performance of businesses in the automotive sector in Pakistan. The study utilized data collected from 309 automotive firms and explored how the link between talent management and sustainable performance is moderated by process innovation. The study employed partial least-square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) as the chosen method for data analysis. The study's found that the results indicate that talent Management has a beneficial impact on sustainable performance amiable performance. The study also offers potential avenues for future research to replicate the findings across different industries.

Awolaja (2023) examined to identify the relationship between employee retention strategies and organizational performance of academic staff in selected private universities in Osun State, Nigeria. The study used a survey research design. The questionnaire was administered to three hundred and eighty-seven (387) respondents while only three hundred and fifteen (315) were completed and returned. For data classification, descriptive statistics of tables and percentages were used as well as inferential statistics of ordinary least square (OLS) in hypothesis testing. The results from the research revealed that opportunities for advancement, competitive compensation plan and good work-life balance positively affect the performance of academic staff in the selected private universities. The work recommended that the management of private universities should

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invest heavily in the areas of opportunities for advancement, competitive compensation plan and good work-life balance for their employees in other to reduce labor turnover.

Amushila and Bussin (2021) determined that the talent management influence the retention and turnover of employees at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). The data of the study use qualitative research was implemented to target a population of 39 administrative middle level staff at NUST. Semi-structured interview was conducted and research articles were reviewed. The study found that the relationship between talent management and employee retention and concluded synchronization of talent management practices and employee retention initiatives led to reduced employee turnover. The study implement to achieve talent management properly, line managers and also HRM managers to identify what hinders and facilitates talent management.

Wangechi, *et al* (2020) aimed to assess the effect of learning and development on service delivery in the hospitality industry in Nyeri County, Kenya. The study used a cross-sectional survey analysis to determine the relationship between the variables. The research used a stratified sampling technique collected from 104 participants for the study. The study also used a semi-structured questionnaire. The findings of the study showed that learning and development was a significant and positive influence on service delivery. The study recommended that organizations should stress and develop robust learning and development interventions to mitigate performance-related challenges, realize the desired quality service delivery and stability.

Conceptual Framework

The dependent variable is organizational performance and is measured using quality of service delivery while the independent variable is talent management and is measured using talent acquisition, talent motivation and talent development as shown figure 1.



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of this study

Research Gap

The relationship between talent management and organizational performance has received considerable attention in existing literature, with numerous studies affirming a positive correlation between effective talent management practices and improved institutional outcomes. However, a critical review of prior studies reveals inconsistencies in findings across different contexts. These variations may be attributed to differences in control variables, geographical settings, institutional

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types, and the measurement tools employed. Consequently, the extent and direction of the impact of talent management on organizational performance remain inconclusive.

Moreover, most previous studies have focused broadly on organizational performance without isolating quality of service delivery a key outcome indicator in public sector institutions such as universities. In addition, the literature has predominantly emphasized academic staff, often neglecting the crucial role of non-academic staff in the administration, governance, and day-to-day operations of tertiary institutions.

To date, there is a noticeable gap in research that specifically examines the influence of talent management practices namely talent acquisition, talent motivation, and talent development on the quality of service delivery among non-academic staff in government-owned universities in Nigeria. This is a significant oversight given the critical administrative responsibilities performed by non-academic personnel and the broader socio-economic implications of their effectiveness.

This study addresses this gap by focusing on non-academic staff in government universities in Ondo State, Nigeria, offering a context-specific analysis of how talent management strategies impact organizational performance, as measured by service quality. Additionally, this study introduces a refined set of variables for both the independent (talent management components) and dependent (service delivery) constructs, thereby providing a more nuanced and targeted contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to investigate the impact of talent management on organisational performance among non-academic staff in government universities in Ondo State, Nigeria. The cross-sectional approach was suitable, as data were collected at a single point in time using structured questionnaires administered to respondents.

The target population comprised all core non-academic staff across the four government-owned universities in Ondo State: Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA); Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko (AAUA); Olusegun Agagu University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa (OAUSTECH); Ondo State University of Medical Sciences (UNIMED).

Although the exact population size could not be determined at the time of the study, the Cochran formula for infinite population was employed to determine the sample size. Using a confidence level of 95% (Z=1.96) and an assumed response distribution (p=0.85), a sample size of 195 was derived. To ensure broader representation, a stratified random sampling technique was adopted across the institutions. Primary data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire items were developed by the researchers and aligned with the study's variables. Responses were captured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1=Strongly

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Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. To ensure the instrument's reliability and validity, it underwent both convergent and discriminant validity assessments, as well as composite reliability analysis. Validity was established through factor loading and average variance extracted (AVE), while internal consistency reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha.

The completed questionnaires were screened, coded, and subjected to data cleaning. Missing values were treated using mean substitution. The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 25). Descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages) were used to profile the respondents, while multiple linear regression analysis was employed to test the study hypotheses and measure the influence of talent management dimensions on organizational performance.

The study adapted the model by Asaad et al. (2023), modified to reflect the study's variables. The functional forms of the regression models are as follows: Therefore the model specification of study is as shown in equation 1.

$$OP = \beta_{01} + \beta_1(TM) + \epsilon_1$$
 1
 $SD = \beta_{01} + \beta_1(TA) + \beta_2(TMo) + \beta_3(TD) + \epsilon_1$ 2

Where: SD = Service delivery; TA = talent acquisition, TMo = Talent motivation, TD = Talent development, β_{01} = Interception of the line, β_1 , β_2 , β_3 , = Slope of the TA, TMo and TD respectively ϵ = Error terms

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results from the data analysis and discusses the key findings in relation to the study objectives. The survey administered 264 questionnaires across the four selected universities, achieving a response rate of 93% (246 returned). After data cleaning, 240 questionnaires were deemed valid and used for analysis, representing a usable response rate of 91%. The high response rate was facilitated by the presence of trained research assistants who assisted respondents in completing the questionnaire on the spot.

Measurement Model Assessment

The instrument's reliability and validity were evaluated using factor loading, average variance extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha. Table 1 presents the summarized results:

Table 1: Validity and Reliability Analysis

\mathbf{S}	Variable	Items	Factor	AVE	Cronbach's
			Loading		Alpha
1	Talent	Talent acquisition (TA)	0.8345		
	management	Talent motivation (TMo)	0.8454	0.8270	0.783
	(TM)	Talent development (TD)	0.8012		
2	Organization	-			
	performance	Quality of Service delivery (SD)	0.8002	0.8002	0.775
	(OP)				
			Average	0.8136	0.779

Source: Researcher's Computation, (2025)

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All constructs recorded factor loadings above 0.80, exceeding the recommended minimum of 0.70 (Saunders et al., 2019). The AVE values were above the 0.50 threshold, indicating strong convergent validity. Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs were above 0.70, confirming acceptable internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales.

Table 2: Model Analysis

Items	Values	t-value	p-value
Constant		2.115	0.000
f-stat	14.561		
Df	239		
R	0.734		
R square	0.688		
Adjusted R square	0.612		
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.233		
Durbin-Watson	2.064		
Talent acquisition		3.243	0.002
Talent motivation		1.872	0.014
Talent development		2.782	0.001

Source: SPSS Output

The results of the multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 2. The model assessed the impact of talent acquisition, talent motivation, and talent development on the quality of service delivery among non-academic staff in government universities in Ondo State, Nigeria.

The R-value (0.734) indicates a strong positive correlation between the independent variables (talent acquisition, motivation, and development) and the dependent variable (quality of service delivery). The R² of 0.688 suggests that 68.8% of the variance in service quality can be explained by the predictors in the model, indicating a substantial level of explanatory power. The Adjusted R² of 0.612 reflects a good model fit after adjusting for the number of predictors.

The standard error of estimate (0.233) indicates a relatively low margin of prediction error, affirming the model's precision. Additionally, the Durbin-Watson statistic (2.064) falls within the acceptable range (1.5–2.5), suggesting no serious autocorrelation in the residuals.

Talent Acquisition (t = 3.243, p = 0.002) was found to have a significant positive effect on quality of service delivery. This result implies that strategic recruitment and selection processes contribute meaningfully to staff commitment and productivity.

Talent Motivation (t = 1.872, p = 0.014) also demonstrated a statistically significant positive influence, indicating that intrinsic and extrinsic motivational practices enhance job satisfaction and service efficiency among non-academic staff.

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Talent Development (t = 2.782, p = 0.001) significantly predicts service quality, highlighting the importance of continuous learning, training, and professional development as critical to institutional performance.

These findings corroborate previous studies (Ogogo, 2024; Roba et al., 2024; Okeke, Beni & Yus, 2023; Tantua, 2023) which established a positive link between effective talent management and improved organizational performance in public institutions.

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on Human Capital Theory by empirically validating its assumptions in the context of public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Specifically, it reinforces the theory's assertion that strategic investment in human talent through recruitment, motivation, and development translates into measurable institutional outcomes such as enhanced service delivery. The focus on non-academic staff, a relatively underexplored group in HRM literature, adds a novel dimension to existing theory.

The results offer several practical implications for university administrators, HR professionals, and policymakers:

Talent acquisition strategies should be more structured and aligned with long-term institutional goals. Motivational mechanisms, including recognition, performance-based incentives, and career advancement opportunities, should be expanded. Talent development programs must be regularly updated to match changing skill demands and global best practices.

Investing in these areas not only boosts staff morale and productivity but also contributes to improved institutional reputation, retention, and global competitiveness.

The regression results show that a 1% improvement in talent management practices yields approximately 2.1% increase in the quality of service delivery, affirming the strategic importance of effective human capital practices in Nigerian public universities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the impact of talent management on the quality of service delivery among non-academic staff in government-owned universities in Ondo State, Nigeria. The findings provide empirical evidence that talent acquisition, talent motivation, and talent development significantly and positively influence service quality, thereby enhancing overall organizational performance. The study concludes that talent management is a strategic driver of service excellence in public tertiary institutions. Non-academic staff, often serving as the operational backbone of universities, benefit from well-structured human capital practices that foster competence, engagement, and productivity. The effectiveness of these practices is reflected in the improved service delivery metrics across the sampled institutions.

The positive association between talent management and performance reinforces the relevance of Human Capital Theory, which posits that systematic investments in people yield tangible

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institutional returns. Thus, for public universities striving to remain competitive and efficient amidst financial constraints and brain drain challenges, prioritizing talent management is not merely a best practice it is a necessity.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Government universities in Ondo State should implement structured and localized succession planning frameworks. By investing in internal talent pools and aligning recruitment strategies with long-term institutional needs, universities can ensure continuity, reduce onboarding costs, and improve role fit particularly among non-academic staff.
- iii. Institutions should design and implement robust performance-based recognition and reward systems. Both intrinsic (e.g., recognition, career progression) and extrinsic (bonuses, benefits) motivational levers should be utilized to foster a culture of appreciation, boost morale, and reduce turnover.
- iv. Regular training, capacity-building workshops, mentorship programs, and professional development initiatives should be institutionalized. These interventions will enhance the knowledge, skills, and adaptability of non-academic staff, equipping them to meet evolving institutional demands and service standards.
- v. Talent management practices should not function in isolation but rather be embedded in the broader strategic plans of universities. A dedicated talent management policy unit should be established to coordinate recruitment, training, appraisal, and retention efforts systematically.
- vi. Relevant educational authorities and government agencies should provide targeted funding and policy support to enable universities to implement and sustain effective talent management systems, recognizing their critical role in achieving national education and development goals.

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