Recognition and Employee Retention in Nile University of Nigeria Abuja

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Abstract: *This study examined the effect of recognition on employee retention in Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja, using job satisfaction, benefits, and mentorship as key dimensions of recognition. The study was motivated by the growing challenge of staff turnover in private universities and the need to understand how recognition-related practices influence employee commitment and profitability. A survey research design was adopted, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to academic staff of the university. Using the Taro Yamane sampling technique, a sample size of 254 respondents was determined, out of which 224 valid responses were used for analysis. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were employed with the aid of SPSS version 20. The results revealed that job satisfaction had a positive and statistically significant effect on profitability. Similarly, employee benefits were found to significantly influence profitability, while mentorship also showed a strong positive effect on institutional performance. The regression model further confirmed that recognition dimensions jointly explained a substantial proportion of the variation in profitability. All the null hypotheses were rejected at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study demonstrate that recognition-related practices such as job satisfaction, welfare benefits, and mentorship are critical drivers of employee retention and organizational performance in private universities. The study therefore concludes that effective recognition strategies are essential for building employee loyalty, reducing turnover, and enhancing sustainable institutional growth. Recommendations were made for improved welfare systems, participatory management, and structured mentorship programmes.*
Keywords: Recognition, Employee Retention, Private Universities

INTRODUCTION

Employee recognition is a major aspect impacting employee retention, particularly in the academic field where motivation and loyalty are vital to organization's growth and continuity. Private universities in Nigeria are challenged with retaining academic staff largely due to poor salaries, lack of job satisfaction and career mobility, as well as lack of recognition (Adekola, 2020).

Employee recognition is defined as the formal and informal recognition of employees' contribution. Employee recognition has a political role in impacting employee job satisfaction, employee engagement, and retention (Ewool, Azinga & Kamil, 2021). Employee retention is one other eating and trending challenge faced by almost every industry, however, the challenge is significantly present in higher education; especially in Nigeria. Universities in Nigeria, especially private, are faced with high turnover rates among academic staff. This has impacts on overall academic performance, overall student satisfaction, as well as the competitiveness of the respective institution. Employee recognition is assumed to be a recognition of contribution and achievement and in some respects, a way to retain employees. In the context of private universities in Nigeria, where the competition for talent is fierce, it cannot be overlooked the importance of recognition in loyalty and commitment of academic staff. For business high and low globally it is an important aspect of increasing employee performance in today's uptight global business environment.

The international issue of retaining academic staff continues to be a challenge for educational institutions in terms of keeping an effective and stable workforce (Tadia, & Singh, 2020). Nigeria's private university system, which has increased competition for skilled academic staff, has made the intention to retain employees an imperative (Ogunyemi & Awolusi, 2021). Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, for example, are the types of strategies private universities frequently employ to impact employee retention strategies based on loyalty (Oluwaseun, & Fapohunda, 2022). Intrinsic returns can be categorized as career opportunities, job autonomy, and intellectual stimulation, while extrinsic returns can be labeled as financial incentives, promotion, and programs to provide recognition (Oluwaseun, & Fapohunda, 2022). Recognizing employees would allow employees to feel a sense of belonging to the organization, creating job satisfaction and reducing turnover rates (Chidi & Okafor, 2023). In this intense competitive environment, organizations are dependent on using productive employees who can take advantage of the changing organization environment while providing the organizations with a competitive source of profitability (Kariuki & Kiiru, 2021; Arifin, Binti, & Rahman et al., 2019). Employees' participation at all levels of a corporate distinction leads to completing the organization's goals and objectives (Hanai & Pallangyo, 2020). Thus, organizations need to search for, attract, and maintain quality employees utilizing effective recognition practices that encourage the individual to be as productive as possible (Chan & Hooi, 2023). From an international perspective, the management of an organization's disposal of human resources has a significant impact on the success of any commercial entity (Sidhu & Nizam, 2020). The most worthy resource for a university being successful even at the wrongful environment is humans, and the resources needed to grow in today's fast-paced world (Jyoti & Mohsin, 2020) To learn more about the performance of their human resources, almpost all cooptrate organizations have implemented a retention strategy (Khwae & Abdollah, 2021).

Employee recognition is a critical component of retention strategy that has generally received little attention in private universities in Nigeria. Research shows that a number of institutions focus on monetary incentives while not recognizing non-monetary incentives such as verbal recognition, awards, and recognizing performance (Adebayo & Adeyemi, 2023). Employees who do not feel recognized and valued will leave to find employment elsewhere which may result in substantial employee turnover, and this may, in turn, have a destabilizing impact on the institution, while also

affecting academic excellence (Niskala et al., 2020). As private universities are increasingly competitive, the intent of this study is to empirically analyze the role of recognition on employee retention at Nile University of Nigeria in Nigeria. The study also includes suggestions of recognition strategies that will be beneficial to policymakers, administrators, and human resource professionals concerned with retention and the sustainability of institutions, as it relates to people. The university system requires skilled, motivated, and healthy individuals with adequate training to achieve successful research outcomes in a university scholar. However, this study investigates the influence of employees' recognition on their retention of from Nile University of Nigeria in Abuja, Nigeria.

This study seeks to address critical gaps in the understanding of how recognition influences employee retention in Nile University of Nigeria in Abuja. By analyzing recognition proxies such as job satisfaction benefit and mentorship. This research aims to provide positive insight that can shape more balanced and effective recognition policies at private Universities. This insights are essential for stringing employee retention boosting organization resilience and supporting the sustainable growth of the cooperation. The specific objectives of the study are to examine the effect of job satisfaction, benefits and mentorship and profitability in Nile University of Nigeria in Abuja.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarification

Recognition

Recognition refers to both formal and informal acknowledgment of an employee's efforts, and contributions. Recognition can take many forms, including verbal praise, awards, promotions, and other forms of acknowledgment. Previous studies have established that recognition positively impacts employee motivation, job satisfaction, and retention (Nnubia, 2020). Recognition fulfills the human need for appreciation and contributes to a sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization (Olubunmi & Rauf, 2023). Recognition, as defined by Ewool et al. (2021), encompasses acknowledging and appreciating employees' successes, efforts, and unique qualities. It serves as a vital component of organizational culture, fostering an environment of appreciation and excellence (Adebayo & Adeyemi,2023). Recent research underscores the significance of tailored recognition programs that align with organizational values and objectives, thereby enhancing employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance (Smith & Jones, 2023). Furthermore, the advent of remote work and virtual teams has spurred innovation in recognition practices, with organizations leveraging technology platforms and social media to amplify recognition efforts across geographically dispersed teams (Brown, Smith, & Jones, 2024).

Academics seek not only financial rewards but also acknowledgment of their intellectual contributions (Noko & Nwuzor, 2021). In private universities in Nigeria, where financial resources may be limited, recognition can serve as an essential non-monetary incentive to retain key talent (Oni, 2019). Workers want attractive pay and benefits, but they also expect their efforts to be recognized, valued, and treated fairly. Recognition is a reward that is mostly perceived

symbolically; however, it can also have monetary, practical, or emotional value, according to Afolabi, Essien & Ogunsola (2022). Ajibade (2020) asserts that providing employees with sufficient recognition may increase their motivation and output, both of which contribute to the success of a firm. Recognizing employees through programs demonstrates that they are valued. A meaningful, thoughtful employee appreciation program is built on the basis of respecting employees for who they are and what they do while recognizing their accomplishments (Hart, 2011). According to Long and Shields (2010), recognition can be categorized as formal or informal, monetary or noncash, individual or collective.

According to Okon et al. (2023), who looked at recognition practices in Nigeria, rewarding employees for their work has a big influence on their dedication and general output. According to the study, creating a work environment where peers freely recognize an employee's accomplishments can inspire higher performance. Moreover, Dlamini et al.'s study from 2022, which was carried out in South Africa, highlights the important influence that manager-employee relationships have on productivity and performance. According to Saritha and Sunitha (2023), employee turnover in microfinance institutions in Tanzania is a result of a lack of acknowledgment, underscoring the necessity of recognition programs in HRM procedures. The influence of non-monetary awards on employees' performance at Mount Meru Referral Hospital was examined by Okereke and Asha (2022), who found that employee freedom, training, development, and flexible work schedules are examples of non-monetary benefits that have a beneficial effect on performance.

Employees' Retention
Employee retention refers to the strategies and policies put in place by organizations to prevent employees from leaving. In the educational sector, particularly in private universities, retention is crucial for maintaining academic standards, fostering research, and providing continuity in teaching. Several studies have pointed out that factors influencing employee retention include remuneration, job satisfaction, working environment, and organizational culture (Abubakar et al., 2020). Employees' retention, as defined by Wickramasinghe and Sajeevani (2018), involves employing strategies to encourage talented individuals to remain with the organization for an extended period. While monetary incentives such as bonuses play a role, effective retention strategies extend beyond financial rewards to encompass holistic approaches that address employees' career aspirations, work-life balance, and sense of belonging (Lee & Kim, 2023). Research showed that organizations with robust retention programs not only retain top talent but also cultivate a loyal and engaged workforce, resulting in higher productivity and organizational performance (Chen, Wang, & Zhang, 2024). Emerging trends such as personalized career development plans and flexible work arrangements reflect the evolving nature of employees' retention practices in response to changing workforce dynamics (Garcia, Lopez, & Martinez, 2023). Employee retention is the ability of an organization to retain its employees over time. It is often viewed as the outcome of effective human resource practices that foster engagement, job satisfaction, and commitment. Retention is crucial for organizational success, as high turnover incurs significant costs, both financial and operational. Olubunmi & Rauf (2023) argues that one

of the major reasons employees leave an organization is dissatisfaction with non-monetary aspects, such as lack of recognition and appreciation.

Theoretical Review

There are so many theories on the study of recognition and employees' retention. More so, an extensive number of theories that explain the interactions between variables in this study were identified and adequately reviewed. The reviewed theories include motivational theory and social exchange theory.

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

The study is anchored on social exchange theory. Social exchange theory was introduced in 1958 by George Homans with the publication of his work "Social Behaviour as Exchange". Homans defined social exchange as the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons. Social exchange theory argues that obligations are generated through a series of interactions between parties who are in a state of reciprocal interdependence. A basic tenet of Social exchange theory is that relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments as long as the parties abide by certain 'rules' of exchange (Armstrong,2012). Such rules tend to involve reciprocity or repayment rules, so that the actions of one party lead to a response or actions by the other party. Employees' tenure is primarily decided by need; therefore, they might not be particularly motivated to go above and beyond what is necessary to maintain their membership in the company. Organizations need employees who are willing to skip their work and engage in conduct that goes beyond their role. The study adopted motivational theory to understand what drives employees and design effective recognition practices. It incorporated Social Exchange Theory to explore how recognition influences the reciprocal relationship between employees and the organization, impacting retention. These theories offer a comprehensive understanding and practical relevance for addressing recognition and retention in Nigerian private universities.

Motivational Theories

Motivational theories have played a pivotal role in shaping organizational leadership strategies, especially concerning recognition and employee retention within private universities in Nigeria. Introduced in 1959, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, proposed by Frederick Herzberg, offers valuable insights into the psychological processes underlying motivation in the workplace. Recognition, as a motivator, plays a crucial role in fostering employees' sense of accomplishment, contributing to higher retention rates. Kumari et al. (2021) highlight motivation as a multifaceted psychological process crucial for organizational revitalization, guidance, and moral persistence. Meanwhile, Horn et al. (2017) underscore the significance of motivational theories in elucidating work performance dynamics, suggesting that an understanding of these theories can inform effective leadership practices. Moreover, Posthuma et al. (2013) emphasize the link between motivational strategies and business performance, indicating that recognizing and fostering employee motivation directly impacts organizational outcomes. Given the unique socio-cultural and economic context of Nigeria, particularly within the private university sector, it is imperative

to explore how motivational theories align with the intricacies of employee recognition and retention strategies.

Empirical Review

Employee recognition in Ghana was examined by Olubunmi and & Rauf (2023) in connection to performance results. The impact of reward and recognition on employees' motivation—which included engagement metrics—was investigated by the researchers in this study. They used a quantitative research technique in their investigation. Staff members of private tertiary institutions in Ghana made up the study's population, and participants were chosen using the stratified sampling technique. Questionnaires were used to gather data, and SPSS was used to analyze the results. Descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (P-VALUE), and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used to display the results. The researchers discovered that employee participation in organizational activities, motivation, and satisfaction were all positively correlated with recognition.

Otieno, Waiganjo, & Njeru (2015) examined the effect of employee engagement on organization performance in Kenya's horticultural sector. Cross sectional survey research design and stratified sampling technique was used for the study. Questionnaires were used as instrument for data collection. Inferential statistics such as correlation and regression analysis were used to test the relationship that existed between the variables under study. Findings from the study revealed that employee engagement is significant. The study concluded that employee engagement is a major determinant of organisation performance in the horticultural sector in Kenya. Agoi (2015) examined the effect of work engagement on employee turnover intention in Kenya public Sector. The study was anchored on theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behaviour. Explanatory research design was used for the study. The target population were managers from public institutions. Questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection, and data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Pearson correlations and multiple regressions were used in testing the formulated hypotheses. Findings of the study indicated a negative significant effect of dedication and absorption on turnover intention.

Nwinyokpugi (2015) carried out a research on employee engagement and work place Harmony in Rivers state civil service. From 10 ministries in the Rivers State Civil Service, Nigeria, 400 employees were randomly selected. Structured questionnaire was used for the purpose of data collection and data collected were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that a significant relationship exist between the variables of employee engagement on workplace harmony in the studied sector. Paluku (2016) carried out a study on Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance of Retails Enterprises in Wobulenzi-Luweero City, Uganda. The study measured employee engagement in relation with organizational performance focusing on non-financial factors. Correlational research design and purposive sampling technique was used. For the purpose of data collection, questionnaire was used and data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Person-product moment correlation coefficient was used in testing the formulated hypothesis. Findings revealed that retail employee engagement and job satisfaction were very high in the selected retailing enterprises.

Rees et al (2013) examined employee voice and engagement: connections and consequences in selected UK service sectors-support services partner and recycling and waste management company. The study was based on quantitative primary data collected from two UK service sector organisations during 2009. Reliability of the instrument was measured using cronabch alpha, and regression analysis was used in analysing the data. Analysis of data from the two organisations revealed that perceptions of voice behaviour and engagement were mediated by both employee trust in senior management and the employee–line manager relationship. Adebayo and Adeyemi (2023) examined the effect of reward systems on the productivity of healthcare staff and found that monetary rewards improved productivity. This shows that financial rewards have a favorable impact on performance and that rewards or payments that vary based on performance help retain employees. Similar research was done in India by Oluwaseun and Adebayo (2023), who looked at the relationship between motivation, reward, and recognition. In the context of the study, the researchers used a quantitative design. 50 employees of private industrial companies made up the sample, which was chosen via convenience sampling. Descriptive statistics, the Pearson's correlation test, and linear regression analysis were used to display the results. The study discovered that employee engagement, contentment, and general motivation were all directly correlated with employee recognition. Employees' organizational involvement rises as their level of recognition.

Literature Gap

Despite a lot of research on employee recognition and retention, important gaps still exist, especially among private universities in Abuja. Most studies have focused on broader factors affecting retention, like pay, work environment, and organizational culture (Abubakar et al., 2020). While these factors matter, work that looks specifically at recognition as a key, structured factor influencing retention in Nigerian private universities is lacking. Many studies discuss recognition as part of motivation (Nnubia, 2020; Olubunmi & Rauf, 2023), but few examine its direct links to retention, job satisfaction, or mentorship in the Nigerian higher education system. A significant conceptual gap exists because past research has mainly concentrated on monetary incentives as the main retention tools. Adebayo and Adeyemi (2023) highlight the role of financial rewards in boosting productivity, but they also note that non-monetary recognition has not been fully explored in academic settings. Additionally, studies from Ghana, South Africa, and Tanzania address recognition broadly but not in the specific context of Nigerian private universities (Okon et al., 2023; Dlamini et al., 2022; Saritha & Sunitha, 2023). This creates a geographical and sector-specific gap because private universities in Abuja face unique challenges like competition for talent, financial issues, and academic mobility.

The empirical literature also shows a methodological gap. Most existing studies focus on general organizational contexts like public sectors, healthcare, or industrial firms (Agoi, 2015; Oluwaseun & Adebayo, 2023). As a result, there is no context-specific empirical evidence linking recognition with certain factors like job satisfaction, benefits, and mentorship in academic environments. No study has thoroughly investigated how these elements interact to affect profitability or stability in private universities. A theoretical gap is also clear. Although motivational theories and Social

Exchange Theory have been mentioned, few researchers have combined these theories to explain how recognition leads to reciprocal employee behaviors that promote long-term retention in universities (Armstrong, 2012; Herzberg, 1959). This limits our understanding of how recognition encourages commitment and reduces turnover.   This study aims to fill these gaps by providing empirical evidence on how recognition affects employee retention, using job satisfaction, benefits, and mentorship as mediating factors in selected private universities in Abuja. It offers context-specific insights that prior literature has not adequately covered.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a survey research design strategy because it made collecting data for the analyses easier by using a standardized research instrument. The justification for the adoption of research design was anchored on the assumption that it creates opportunities for researchers to select the group of the population under study and collect data without exercising control or manipulating the variables. The target study population was comprised of 698 full-time academic staff in Nile University of Nigeria. The sampling technique used in this investigation was a combination of purposive and stratified sampling techniques. Initially, purposive sampling was utilized to select the participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objective. Stratified sampling was employed to ensure adequate representation of each subgroup within the population. The sampling technique adopted for this study was the purposive sampling technique. Therefore, using the Taro Yamane (Yamane, 1973) method, the sample size for the questionnaire respondents was calculated with a 95% confidence level. The total population of academic staff of Nile University of Nigeria is 698 and the sample size for study was determine using Taro Yamane Formula to get 254 total sample for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data for this study. The questionnaire for obtaining data was organized into three main sections to deal with the probable scope of the research problems. The questionnaire was administered using Google form link to 254 full-time academic staff ranked as assistant lecturers or above from Nile University of Nigeria. Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the data from the single-ministered questionnaire for the demographic section and all of the items pertaining to each construct. In the inferential statistics, however, a linear regression analysis was used to predict the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The study was conducted using the 20th edition of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Model Specification

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$

Where: Y = Profitability; X1 = Job Satisfaction; X2 = Benefits, X3 = Mentorship

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on Job Satisfaction

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	I feel satisfied with my current job in this university.	70 (31.25%)	65 (29.02%)	30 (13.39%)	29 (12.95%)	30 (13.39%)
2	Job satisfaction encourages me to put in my best performance at work.	75 (33.48%)	60 (26.79%)	28 (12.50%)	30 (13.39%)	31 (13.84%)
3	When employees are satisfied, the university becomes more profitable.	80 (35.71%)	58 (25.89%)	25 (11.16%)	30 (13.39%)	31 (13.84%)
4	My level of job satisfaction affects how productive I am at work.	78 (34.82%)	62 (27.68%)	24 (10.71%)	29 (12.95%)	31 (13.84%)
5	Satisfied employees are more committed to achieving institutional goals.	82 (36.61%)	60 (26.79%)	22 (9.82%)	28 (12.50%)	32 (14.29%)

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The data in Table 1 indicate that the majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they are satisfied with their jobs and that job satisfaction positively influences their productivity, commitment, and the overall profitability of the university. The dominance of positive responses suggests that employees generally perceive their work environment and conditions as favorable. This implies that job satisfaction plays a critical role in enhancing employee performance and organizational effectiveness. The relatively small proportion of undecided and negative responses indicates that dissatisfaction is minimal, though still present and deserving of managerial attention.

Table 2: descriptive statistics on Benefits

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	The benefits I receive motivate me to work harder.	85 (37.95%)	60 (26.79%)	24 (10.71%)	25 (11.16%)	30 (13.39%)
2	Staff benefits improve employee performance in this university.	78 (34.82%)	65 (29.02%)	26 (11.61%)	25 (11.16%)	30 (13.39%)
3	Adequate benefits reduce employee turnover in this university.	80 (35.71%)	62 (27.68%)	25 (11.16%)	27 (12.05%)	30 (13.39%)
4	Benefits such as allowances and bonuses improve institutional profitability.	83 (37.05%)	60 (26.79%)	26 (11.61%)	25 (11.16%)	30 (13.39%)
5	Employees perform better when they feel adequately rewarded.	88 (39.29%)	58 (25.89%)	24 (10.71%)	24 (10.71%)	30 (13.39%)

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2: The results presented in Table 2 show that a large majority of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that benefits such as salaries, allowances, and bonuses significantly motivate them to work harder and improve their overall performance. The dominance of positive responses suggests

that the university's benefit structure is largely perceived as adequate and effective in reducing employee turnover and enhancing institutional profitability.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics Mentorship

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Mentorship programmes improve employee work performance.	72 (32.14%)	64 (28.57%)	28 (12.50%)	30 (13.39%)	30 (13.39%)
2	Senior staff provide adequate guidance to junior staff in this university.	74 (33.04%)	62 (27.68%)	25 (11.16%)	31 (13.84%)	32 (14.29%)
3	Mentorship enhances staff efficiency and productivity.	76 (33.93%)	60 (26.79%)	28 (12.50%)	30 (13.39%)	30 (13.39%)
4	Effective mentorship contributes to the profitability of the university.	79 (35.27%)	59 (26.34%)	26 (11.61%)	28 (12.50%)	32 (14.29%)
5	I have benefited professionally from mentorship in this university.	73 (32.59%)	61 (27.23%)	29 (12.95%)	30 (13.39%)	31 (13.84%)

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 3 reveals that most respondents strongly agreed and agreed that mentorship programmes improve employee performance, efficiency, and professional development. The strong positive responses indicate that mentorship plays a significant role in enhancing staff competence and productivity within the university. This suggests that effective mentorship contributes not only to individual career growth but also to the long-term profitability and sustainability of the institution.

Table 4: Regression Results

R	**0.682**
R Square	0.465
Adjusted R Square	0.465
Std. Error of the Estimate	2.918

Source: Authors' Computation, 2026

The model summary shows a correlation coefficient (R = 0.682), which indicates a strong positive relationship between job satisfaction, benefits, mentorship, and profitability. The R Square value of 0.465 implies that 46.5% of the variation in profitability is jointly explained by job satisfaction, benefits, and mentorship. The remaining 53.5% is attributable to other factors not included in the model. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.456 confirms the reliability and stability of the model. This result demonstrates that the independent variables significantly explain changes in profitability in Nile University of Nigeria.

Table 5: ANOVA

Model		df	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1	3,220	0.00
	Residual	223		
	Total	224		

Since p < 0.05, the model is statistically significant.

Source: Authors' Computation, 2026.

The ANOVA result indicates that the regression model is statistically significant with $p < 0.05$. This confirms that the joint effect of job satisfaction, benefits, and mentorship on profitability is not due to chance. The F-statistic confirms the overall goodness of fit of the model. This implies that, collectively, the independent variables are effective predictors of profitability in the university.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.
Constant	8.214	0.712	11.532	0.0
Job Satisfaction	0.341	0.062	5.5	0.0
Benefits	0.298	0.057	5.228	0.0
Mentorship	0.265	0.06	4.417	0.0

Source: Authors' Computation, 2026

The regression coefficients provide insight into the individual contribution of each independent variable to profitability.

From the regression coefficients table, job satisfaction recorded a beta coefficient (β) of 0.341, a t-value of 5.500, and a significance value (p) of 0.000. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that job satisfaction has a positive and statistically significant effect on profitability in Nile University of Nigeria. An increase in job satisfaction among employees leads to a corresponding increase in institutional profitability.

The regression result shows that benefits have a beta coefficient (β) of 0.298, a t-value of 5.228, and a significance value (p) of 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This indicates that employee benefits have a positive and significant effect on profitability in Nile University of Nigeria. Adequate welfare packages, allowances, and incentives motivate employees and improve their performance, which enhances profitability.

From the regression coefficients table, mentorship recorded a beta coefficient (β) of 0.265, a t-value of 4.417, and a significance value (p) of 0.000. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that mentorship has a positive and statistically significant effect on profitability in Nile University of Nigeria. Effective mentorship enhances employee skills, efficiency, and commitment, which contributes to improved institutional performance.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed that job satisfaction, benefits, and mentorship have significant positive influence on employee performance and institutional profitability at Nile University of Nigeria. The dominance of Strongly Agree and Agree responses across all the studied variables confirms that employees perceive these factors as critical drivers of their productivity, commitment, and organizational effectiveness. This outcome reinforces the importance of human resource management practices in achieving sustainable institutional success.

With respect to job satisfaction, the study revealed that the majority of respondents agreed that satisfaction with their job enhances productivity, commitment, and contribution to the university's profitability. This finding is consistent with the work of Adewale (2020), who found that job satisfaction significantly improves employee efficiency and organizational performance in Nigerian institutions. Similarly, Ogunyemi and Agboola (2022) established that satisfied employees demonstrate higher levels of commitment, reduced absenteeism, and improved service delivery. The result also aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which explains that favorable work conditions and recognition serve as strong motivators that enhance performance. The strong level of agreement in this study confirms that employees of Nile University are positively motivated by their work environment and institutional policies.

The findings on benefits indicated that salaries, allowances, bonuses, and welfare packages significantly motivate employees to work harder and perform better. This result agrees with Adebayo and Adeyemi (2021), who reported that employee benefits have a strong positive effect on performance and organizational profitability. Likewise, Fapohunda (2022) confirmed that competitive reward systems enhance job commitment and reduce staff turnover in private organizations. The positive perception of benefits observed in this study suggests that Nile University's reward structure plays a crucial role in sustaining employee motivation, loyalty, and long-term productivity.

Findings related to mentorship showed that the majority of respondents agreed that mentorship programmes improve employee competence, efficiency, and professional development. This outcome supports the study of Nwoye and Okafor (2021), who found that mentorship enhances knowledge transfer, skill development, and leadership capacity in higher institutions. Similarly, Akinwale and George (2023) observed that effective mentorship leads to increased employee confidence, innovation, and productivity. The positive assessment of mentorship in this study confirms that existing mentorship programmes at Nile University contribute significantly to staff development and overall institutional performance.

The findings of this study are consistent with the Social Exchange Theory, which posits that when employees receive organizational support through satisfaction, fair rewards, and professional development opportunities, they reciprocate with higher commitment and improved performance (Blau, 1964). This study therefore confirms that job satisfaction, benefits, and mentorship are strong predictors of employee performance and institutional profitability in private universities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the effect of job satisfaction, benefits, and mentorship on profitability in Nile University of Nigeria. The findings clearly established that all three variables have significant positive influences on profitability. Job satisfaction was found to enhance employee productivity and commitment, benefits were shown to motivate employees and improve performance, while mentorship strengthened employees' professional growth and efficiency. These results demonstrate that employee welfare and development are critical drivers of organizational success. The study therefore concludes that profitability in private universities is not solely dependent on financial or infrastructural resources, but largely on how well employees are motivated, rewarded, and guided. By prioritizing staff satisfaction, welfare, and mentorship, university management can achieve sustainable growth, improved service delivery, and enhanced institutional performance.

Based on the results obtained it is therefore recommended that;

1. Management should sustain and further strengthen the existing good working conditions in the university by consistently providing a supportive work environment, adequate facilities, and favorable employment policies. This will help to maintain the high level of job satisfaction already recorded among staff and further enhance their commitment and productivity.
2. Management should keep reviewing and strengthening the benefits and welfare packages to ensure they remain competitive, fair, and responsive to the changing needs of employees. Continuous improvement in salaries, allowances, and other incentives will help to sustain staff motivation, reduce turnover, and improve overall institutional performance.
3. Management should continue to support and enhance the already existing mentorship programmes by making them more structured, regularly monitored, and inclusive across all departments. This will ensure sustained professional development, effective knowledge transfer, and leadership grooming for long-term institutional success

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