

# TALENT MANAGEMENT AS CORRELATE OF EMPLOYEE PLACEMENT AND RETENTION IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8334464>

Published Date: 11-September-2023

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**Abstract:** This study talent as a correlate of employee placement and retention in public universities (federal and state) in South East Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was employed for the study. The population consisted of 819 senior university non-teaching staff. A sample of 249 senior non-teaching staff of public universities in South-east Nigeria was used for the study. The 249 staff were sampled using proportionate stratified sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire divided into Sections 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' contains demographic information of respondents while Section 'B' was categorized into nine clusters to cover the seven components of talent management, Employee placement and Employee Retention. The instruments were validated using the opinions of experts and their reliability coefficients were 0.824 for learning motivation, 0.621 for performance management and 0.705 for strategic employee planning, these were realized using Cronbach alpha. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) to answer the research questions and Multivariate Simple Linear Regression (MSLR) with Fisher-Z test to test the hypotheses. Data analysis revealed that talent management; learning and motivation, performance management and strategic employee planning correlate employee placement and retention. The result also revealed that the ownership of the universities (Federal or State) determined staff responses based on the three components discussed in this study. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the universities managements should provide adequate and appropriate in service trainings to develop and channel the talents of staff towards the attainment of institutions' goals, also that public university authorities should establish standard performance management policies to access employee activities from time to time as it will act a feedback mechanism to rate their performance and discover employees with multiple talents.

**Keywords:** Talent Management, Learning, motivation, performance management, strategic planning, Employee Placement and Employee Retention.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The work environment today is characterized by outsourcing, increasing mobility, looser psychological contracts between organizations and their employees, less predictable and more fluid career paths and more focus on self-directed learning. From the organizations perspective, these new workplace characteristics lead to a new challenges in securing retention of

the most valuable and unique employees. Organizations are striving hard to achieve success by gaining competitive advantage, and one of the most valuable resources that can help their cause is the human resource they employ. Attracting and retaining talented individuals are important issues in the workplace, and talent management is a top priority for many organizations because at its essence, talent management is purported to create value (Sparrow and Makram, 2015). Schiemann (2014) defined talent management as a unique function that integrates all activities and responsibilities related to talent lifecycle management regardless of geographic location—from attracting and acquiring talents to developing and retaining them.

Baqutayan (2014) held that talent management is of importance to employees and should be of importance to organizations as well because it can lead to competitive advantage to all employees. It is usually seen as activities and processes that involve the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of those talents that are of key value (Dries, 2013). Talent management is all about how employers recruit and develop a workforce that is as productive as possible and likely to stay with their organization long term. When implemented strategically, this process can help improve the overall performance of businesses and ensure that they remain competitive. Talent management therefore has become almost an inevitable management process in modern days.

Under the umbrella of talent management, there are a string of elements and sub-processes that need to work in unison to ensure the success of the organization. For example, analyzing the right talent gaps for the present and the future, identifying the right talent pools and best-fit candidates, getting them to join (placement) and then optimizing their existing skills and strengths while helping them grow are touch-points that are all equally important. Those elements support each other and the whole structure would crumble even if one sub-process fell out of sync: In other words, all these elements and sub-processes listed under the umbrella of talent management are all equally important, because they support each other and the whole structure would crumble if one sub-process falls out of sync. For example, when a candidate is selected for a particular post and he reports to duty, the organization has to place him in the job for which he is selected which is being done through placement. According to Pigors and Myers (2019), placement is the determination of the job to which an accepted candidate is to be assigned and his assignment to that job. According to Raina (2022) proper placement makes the employee happy and reduces absenteeism and builds a good relation with the employer, leads to increased production, improved quality of the product, regularity in work and attendance.

An organization's responsibility does not just stop at recruitment, selection and placement of the required employees but also creating attractive atmospheres and opportunities to ensure that these selected workforce are retained; this is called employee retention, which is simply an organization's ability to retain its workers.

According to Ulhas and Maharashtra (2019), employee retention is defined as the process in which human resources are encouraged and motivated to stay in the organization for a longer period of time for the sustainability of the organization. Employee Retention refers to the ability of the organisation to retain its employees and this is emerging as a big challenge to organisations. The employment and deployment of correct mix of talent in educational institutions depends on the level of talent management practices applied in the institutions. Therefore, Employee Retention refers to the ability of the organisation to retain its employees and it's emerging as a big challenge to organisations.

The employment and deployment of correct mix of talent in educational institutions depends on the level of talent management practices applied in the institutions. What constitutes the best and high level talent management practices has continued to top the list of critical topics for discussion and research by human resources management professionals (Bandura, 2014). Talented employees refers to the caliber of employees possessing distinguishable capacity and potential to deliver jobs in an exceptionally successful manner. Since the last two decades, such employees are now considered as the most valuable assets of the organization. Universities are expected to attract the most talented and skilled workers available and create a brand that could attract potential talents but the reverse appears to be case as empirical evidence has revealed that in recent years there has been a serious decline in the succession and retention rate of its employees and this has led to poor institutional outcomes. The cause of these poor outcomes could be that the employees in the universities were been selected and recruited through improper approaches that might not have considered talent planning.

Hence, could talent management determine the level of staff placement and retention in universities? Therefore, the study seeks to establish the relationship between talent management dimensions and employee placement and retention in public (federal and State) in South-East Nigeria.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher will adopt two (2) components out of the seven

(7) key components of Talent Management proposed by Solanki (2022). These are;

1. Learning and motivation,
2. Performance management,
3. Strategic employee planning

Learning is and should be an essential component of any employee's life. It is the responsibility of the HR to yield that knowledge and experience, implement learning programme that include activities and tasks that not only advance the employee but also support the organization's culture and initiatives, (Solanki, 2022). Motivation drives learners in reaching learning goals (Filgona, Sakiyo, Gwany and Okoronka, 2020). Learning is an active process that needs to be motivated and guided toward desirable ends. Motivation is a process of interaction between the learner and the environment, which is marked by selection, initiation, increase or persistence of goal-directed behaviour. It has been thought of variously as a quality of the individual, the situation or the activity in which the individual is engaged. Motivation is not only important in its own right. It is also an important predictor of learning and achievement.

Rastgoo, (2016) carried out a study on the relationship of talent management and organizational development with job motivation of employees. The purpose of the study was to find out the relationship between talent management and organizational development and job motivation of the employees in educational, research, students, and cultural deputies of Bushehr University of medical sciences and health services. The research findings indicated that there was a positive and significant relationship between talent management and organizational development and job motivation of teachers. Rastgoo's study centered on employees' motivation and job satisfaction which is one of the major factors that encourage retention.

According to Anupom (2020), performance management is a strategic and integrated approach in delivering sustained success to organisations by improving performance of people by developing the capabilities of teams and individuals. Performance management is a strategic tool since it is concerned with achievement of long-term organizational goals and effective functioning of organisations in its external environment. Performance management effects four types of integrations namely, vertical, functional, human resource and goals. Therefore, Performance management is much more than the annual performance review meeting. Performance management is a continuous process of planning, coaching and reviewing employee performance. It is a communication process by which managers and employees work together to plan, monitor and review an employee's work objectives and overall contributions to the organization.

Over more than three decades, there has been a sustained interest from both academics and professionals in strategic planning in the public sector (Auka and Chepngeno 2016). Strategic Employee Planning can be seen in the public sector in the form of noteworthy management innovations which benefit from a highly structured, future-oriented management technique imported from the best practices of the private sector (Aldehayyat and Al Khattab 2013). Muma, Nzulwa, Ombui and Odhiambo (2018) carried out a study on the Influence of human resource planning strategies on retention of employees in University of Kenya. The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of human resource planning strategy on retention of employees in the universities in Kenya. The main finding from the study indicated that Human Resource Planning Strategies influenced retention of employees in universities in Kenya. The study discussed strategic planning and retention.

The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between talent management and employee placement and retention in the Universities in South East Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined:

1. how learning and motivation in talent management relates to employee placement and retention in public universities (Federal and State) in South-East Nigeria,

## International Journal of Novel Research in Education and Learning

Vol. 10, Issue 5, pp: (29-37), Month: September - October 2023, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

2. how performance management in talent relates to employee placement and retention in public universities (Federal and State) in South-East Nigeria,

3. how strategic planning and development in talent management relates to employee placement and retention in universities (Federal and State) in South-East Nigeria.

#### 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do learning and motivation relate to employee placement and retention in public universities (Federal and State) in South-East Nigeria?

2. How does performance management relate to employee placement and retention in public universities (Federal and State) in South-East Nigeria?

5 How does strategic employee planning relate to employee placement and retention in public universities (Federal and State) in South-East Nigeria?

#### HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between learning and motivation and employee placement and retention in public universities (Federal and State) in South-East Nigeria.

2. There is no significant relationship between performance management and employee placement and retention in public universities (Federal and State) in South-East Nigeria.

3. There is no significant relationship between strategic employee planning and employee placement and retention in public owned universities (Federal and State) in South-East Nigeria.

## 2. METHODS

This study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 819 senior administrative staff of universities which were made up of Assistant Registrars (ARs), Senior Assistant Registrars (SARs), Principal Assistant Registrars (PARs), Deputy

Registrars (DRs), and Registrars in all public (Federal and State) universities in south-east Nigeria. The sample size of this study was 249 senior administrative staff of the public universities (Federal and State) in South-east Nigeria who were drawn using proportionate stratified sampling technique. The questionnaire-titled "Talent Management Questionnaire (TMQ)", "Employee Placement Questionnaire (EPQ)" and "Employee Retention (ERQ)" which was gotten through records from the Personnel department of the Universities under the study, was developed by the researcher. Talent Management Questionnaire (TMQ) was adapted from Talent Management Instrument by Yener, Gurbuz and Acar (2017). The rest of the two (EPQ and ERQ) were researcher-constructed from literature.

Face validity of the instrument was established using the opinions of experts. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the various sections of the instruments which gave 0.824 for learning motivation, 0.621 for performance management, 0.705 for strategic employee planning and employee placement 0.744. The researcher, with the help of eight research assistants administered and recovered 249 copies of the questionnaire to the senior administrative staff of the public universities (federal and State) in South east Nigeria. It took the respondents two days to fill the questionnaires, Data on retention were got through an instrument accompanied by a letter addressed to the Personnel department.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) to answer the research questions and Multivariate Simple Linear Regression (MSLR) with Fisher-Z test for testing the null hypotheses. This implies that if P is less than or equal to 0.05, a hypothesis was rejected, otherwise it was accepted.

3. RESULTS

Research Question 3. In what ways does learning relate to employee placement and retention in public universities (federal and state) in South east Nigeria?

**Table I: Bivariate Correlation between Learning Motivation, Employee Placement, and Employee Retention based on Ownership of Institution**

	Federal Universities	State Universities	Overall
Variables	1 2 3	1 2 3	1
1.Learning Motivation	1	1	
2.Employee Placement	.191 <sup>o</sup> 1	.029	.135 <sup>o</sup>
3.Employee Retention	-.443 .296 1	.016	-.133

Table I depicts the correlation between learning motivation, employee placement and employee retention. Based on Federal universities, the Table reveals a positive low correlation between learning motivation and employee placement ( $r=.191$ ) but a negative moderate correlation between learning motivation and employee retention ( $r=-.443$ ). For the State universities, there is a low positive correlation between learning motivation and employee placement ( $r=.029$ ) and with employee retention ( $r=.016$ ).

Research Question II. In what ways does performance management relate to employee placement and retention in public universities (federal and state) in South east Nigeria?

**Table II: Bivariate Correlation between Performance Management, Employee Placement, and Employee Retention based on Ownership of Institution**

	Federal Universities	State Universities	Overall
Variables	1 2 3	1 2 3	1
1. Performance Management	1	1	
2.Employee Placement	-.442 <sup>o</sup> 1	-.036	.315"
3.Employee Retention	.296 1 .074.073 1	.060	

Data shown in Table II are the correlation between performance management, employee placement and employee retention. By Federal universities, the Table reveals a positively moderate correlation between performance management and employee placement ( $r = .442$ ) but a negatively moderate correlation with employee retention ( $r=-.576$ ). For the State universities, there is a low negative correlation between performance management and employee placement ( $r = -.036$ ) but a positive low correlation between performance management and employee retention ( $r = .07$ ).

Research Question III. In what ways does strategic employee planning relate to employee placement and retention in public universities (federal and state) in South east Nigeria?

**Table III: Bivariate Correlation between Strategic Planning, Employee Placement, and Employee Retention based on Ownership of Institution.**

	Federal Universities	State Universities	Overall
Variables	1 2 3	1 2 3	1
1.Strategic Planning	1	1	
2.Employee Placement	-.001	-.008	.052
3.Employee Retention	-.092 .296 1	-.293 .0731	-.209

Table III reveal the correlation between strategic employee planning, employee placement and employee retention. For the Federal universities, the Table shows negative low correlations between strategic employee planning and employee placement ( $r=-.001$ ) and with employee retention ( $r = -.092$ ). For the State universities, there is a very low negative correlation between strategic employee planning and employee placement ( $r=-.008$ ) and a low correlation between strategic employee planning and employee retention( $r= -.293$ ).

Hypothesis I. There is no significant relationship between learning and employee placement and retention in public universities (Federal and State) in south East Nigeria.

**Table IV: Summary of Multivariate and Fisher-Z Test of Relationship between Learning Motivation, Employee Placement and Retention based Ownership of Universities**

	Empl	oyee P	laceme	nt		Employee Retention				
Ownersh	p R	R2	F	Zcal	Ztab	R	R2	F	Zcal	Ztab
Federal	.191	.316	.808	-2.15	-1.96	.029	.501	1.759	.08	1.96
State	.443	.271	1.207			.016	.073	.255		
Note.dfl=4,7,df2=4,13,N1=Federl=123N=Stt=119										

Note.dfl=4,7,df2=4,13,N1=Federal=123,N2=State=119

between performance management and employee retention for federal universities, $R2=.609$ ,  $F(3,8)=4.160$ , $(.8)=4.160$ ,and state universities, $R2=.021$ , $F(2,15)=.163$ .Thehe Fisher-Z testt ( $Zcal=-1.46$ ) for employee placement is less than the critical Z-value of 1.96. Hence,federal and state universities do not differ in the relationship between performance management and employee placement. Similarly, the Fisher-Z test ( $Zcal=-0.23$ ) for employee retention is less than the critical Z-value of 1.96. Therefore, federal and state universities do not differ in the relationship between performance management and employee retention.

Hypothesis. III. There is no significant relationship between strategic employee planning and employee placement and retention in public owned universities (Federal and State) in South East Nigeria.

**Table V: Summary of Multivariate and Fisher-Z Test of Relationship between Strategic Employee Planning,Employee Placement and Retention based Ownership of Universities**

	Emp	oyee P	lacem	ent		Empl	oyee	Retenti	on	
ownership	R	R	F	Zcal	Ztab	R	R	F	Zcal	Ztab
Federal	.00	1.760	8.42	7 -.62	-1.96	.008	.183	.590	-	1.96
1.68										
-2 .293 .114 .419										
Noted=3,8,d24,23,N1=Federal=123,N2=State=119										

Table V shows the multivariate regression between strategic employee planning and employee placement for federal universities, $R2=.760$ , $F(3,8)=8.427$ , and state universities, $R2=.442$ , $F(4,13)=2.5715$ .The Table also shows the multivariate regression between strategic employee planning and employee retention for federal universities, $R2= F(5,6)=.590$ ,,and state universities, $R2=.114$ , $F(4,13)=.419$ .Thehe Fisher-Z test( $Zcal$

Table VI shows the multivariate regression between learning motivation and employee placement for federal universities, $R2=.316$ , $F(4,7)=.808$ ,,and state universities, $R2=.271$ ,  $F(4, 13)=1.207$ .TheThe Table also shows the multivariate regression between learning motivation and employee retention for federal universities, $R2=.501$ , $F(4,7)=1.759$ ,and state universities, $R2=.071$ , $F(4,13)=.073$ .The er-Z test ( $Zcal = -2.15$ )for employee placement is greater than the critical Z-value of 1.96. Hence, federal and state universities differ in the relationship between learning motivation and employee placement. Conversely, the Fisher-Z test ( $Zc(Zcal=0.08)8$ ) for employee retention is less than the critical Z-value of 1.96. Therefore, federal and state universities do not differ in the relationship between learning motivation and employee retention.

Hypothesis II. There is no significant relationship between performance management and employee placement and retention in public universities (Federal and State) in South East Nigeria.

**Table VI: Summary of Multivariate and Fisher-Z Test of Relationship between Performance Management, Employee Placement and Retention based Ownership of Universities**

	Employee P	lacement		Employee R	etention
ownership	R R2	F Zcal	Ztab	R R2	F Zcal Ztab
Federal	.442.365	1.535 -1.46	-1.96	.036 .609	4.160 -.23 1.96
State	.576 .250	2.500		.074 .021	.163
Note.dfl=3,8,df2=2,15,N1=Federal=123,N2=State=119.					

Table VI shows the multivariate regression between performance management and employee placement for federal universities,  $R^2=.365, F(3,8)=1.535$ , and state universities,  $R^2=.250, F(2,15)=2.500$ . The Table also shows the multivariate regression

$=-0.62$ ) for employee placement is less than the critical Z-value of 1.96. Hence, federal and state universities do not differ in the relationship between strategic employee planning and employee placement. Similarly, the Fisher-Z test ( $Zcal = -1.68$ ) for employee retention is less than the critical Z-value of 1.96. Therefore, federal and state universities do not differ in the relationship between strategic employee planning and employee retention.

#### 4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed the correlation between learning motivations, employee placement and employee retention in public universities. The results revealed that at the Federal universities, there was a positive relationship between learning motivation and employee placement and a negative relationship between learning motivation and employee retention. At the State universities, however, the results revealed that there was a positive relationship between learning motivation and employee placement and retention. The corresponding hypothesis 3 showed that federal and state universities differ in the relationship between learning motivation and employee placement, conversely, federal and state universities do not differ in the relationship between learning motivation and employee retention.

This finding is in consonance with Bajpai (2015) who studied employee satisfaction of a super-specialty hospital in India. The findings of the study revealed that employee dissatisfaction tended to create an adverse environment in front of management and that employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction were two opposite points of a pillar, which have different directions and are far from each other. The study also emphasized that only a satisfied employee would stay in the work place for a long time. What this implies is that maximized employee satisfaction leads to minimized employee turnover and vice versa.

Collaborating the above findings, Abba (2018) in a study on the Effects of Training and Development on Employee Retention in Bauchi State Metropolis Banks, Nigeria, found that a positive relationship existed between training and development and employees' retention. This implies that the more training and development are given to employees, the higher the chances of the employees being retained. This means that a dissatisfied employee cannot work effectively to achieve set organizational goals. Therefore management of public universities should ensure maximum satisfaction of employees by applying some motivational programmes that will not only motivate employees but ensure that positive learnings take place amongst them by ensuring appropriate staff placement that will lead to retention.

The findings of this study revealed the correlation between performance management, employee placement and employee retention in public universities in South East Nigeria. The results revealed that at the Federal universities, there was a positive correlation between performance management and employee placement and a negative correlation with retention. While for the State universities there was a negative correlation between performance management and employee placement and a positive correlation between performance management and employee retention. The corresponding hypothesis 4 also did not indicate any significant difference in relationship between compensation planning and employee placement and retention.

These findings for the Federal universities is in consonance with Sang (2013) who studied employee retention strategies and employee performance in a tea industry: James Finlay Kenya Limited, Kenya. The findings of the study revealed that James Finlay did not have clear policies in place for promoting employees. Although the study revealed that the introduction of the use of technology has led to an improvement in the level of performance management due to increased efficiency, which when applied to the present study will also lead to efficiency and employee retention.

Supporting the above, Mbugua, Waiganjo and Njeru (2015) studied the relationship between strategic performance management and employee retention in commercial banks in Kenya. The findings of the study revealed that organisations made use of strategic performance management through clear action value plans, target setting, setting of realistic budgets, forecasting, performance measurements and review and finally compensation based performance to retain its employees. It is believed that performance management when applied to the public universities in south east Nigeria will have same effect as the above study.

The findings of the study revealed the correlation between strategic employee planning, employee placement and employee retention. For the Federal universities, it was revealed that there was a negative relationship between strategic employee planning and employee placement and also with employee retention. For the State universities, there was a negative correlation between strategic employee planning and employee placement and a positive correlation between strategic employee planning and employee retention. The corresponding hypothesis 5 showed that federal and state universities do not differ in the relationship between strategic employee planning and employee placement and retention.

Supporting the above, Muma, Nzulwa, Ombui and Odhiambo (2018) studied the influence of human resource planning strategies on the retention of employees in universities in Kenya. The findings of the study revealed that human resource planning strategies influenced retention of employees in universities in Kenya. It is believed that the application of human resource planning by public universities in south east will have similar effects.

In corroboration with the above findings, Aslam, Habib, Aslam and Ali (2014) in a study on human resource planning practice in managing human resource, found that human resource planning was a vital and foremost practice of human resource management and that human resource planning plays a strategic role in managing organizations. This study focused on human resource planning models, frameworks and processes of retaining and motivating employed workforce which happens to be on the same track as the present study. Therefore, application of the above mentioned models, frameworks by public universities in south east Nigeria would ensure retention of employees.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study, led to the conclusion that retention of talented workers can be achieved if these three components- Employee learning and motivation, performance management and strategic employee planning are imbedded into management policies of universities and that appropriate placement rules and procedures exist. It is also concluded that employees in Federal and state owned universities differ in the way they programme or strategize these components for employees.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. The National Universities Commission (NUC) should lay emphasis on appropriate placement of employees as this is the unseen force behind employee learning, motivation and retention.
2. Public university authorities should establish standard performance management policies to assess employee activities from time to time as it will serve as a feedback mechanism to rate their performance and discover employees with multiple talents.
3. Management of public universities should ensure that they apply strategic employee planning as this will assist in ensuring succession and retention.

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