

EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT IN BRIDGING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE.

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ABSTRACT

The progress of any organization significantly relies on the effectiveness of its human resources. In Bayelsa State, Nigeria, there are concerns regarding the underperformance of academic staff in state-owned tertiary institutions, which negatively impacts the overall success of these institutions. Drawing on the Human Capital Theory and Social Exchange Theory (SET), along with a comprehensive literature review, this study explores the potential mediating role of employee commitment in the link between talent management and the performance of academic staff. While previous research has examined these areas, there remains a limited understanding of how employee commitment specifically mediates this relationship. To address this gap, the research investigates the mediating effect of employee commitment on academic staff performance within Bayelsa State's state-owned tertiary institutions. Using proportionate stratified sampling, 485 questionnaires were distributed, and data analysis was conducted on 408 completed responses using PLS-SEM path modeling in SMARTPLS2. The findings revealed a strong, positive correlation between talent attraction, development, retention, and academic staff performance. Significantly, the analysis showed that employee commitment mediates the relationship between talent retention and academic staff performance. Based on these results, the study recommends that administrators in Bayelsa State's tertiary institutions focus on attracting the right talent, fostering ongoing development, and enhancing retention strategies to boost staff performance.

Keywords: Employee Commitment, Employee Performance, Talent Attraction, Talent Development, Talent Retention.

INTRODUCTION

The performance of employees in various sectors is a key indicator of their effectiveness in fulfilling organizational roles and responsibilities. In educational institutions, academic staffs are essential in shaping students and contributing to societal development. However, there are signs of underperformance among academic staffs in Nigerian tertiary institutions, including poor global rankings and low graduate employability (Molefe, 2010). Notably, no Nigerian tertiary institution was listed in the 2018 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings, and Nigerian institutions

have consistently underperformed in global assessments (The Times Higher Education World University Ranking, 2017). This persistent underachievement is concerning, and one contributing factor is the insufficient performance of academic staff (Molefe, 2010).

Scholars have argued that the success of students in tertiary education is closely tied to the performance of the academic staffs. Effective interactions between educators and students should lead to positive academic outcomes, and when improvement is lacking, it may indicate an issue with the educator's performance (Owolabi & Adebayo, 2012). Academic staffs are vital to the success of any

educational system, shaping the quality and potential of the institution (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). This view is supported by Bonney et al. (2015), who emphasize the relationship between the performance of academic staff and the success of students in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Reports on the employability of Nigerian graduates frequently highlight their lack of workforce preparedness, resulting in a preference for graduates from foreign institutions by local and international companies (Roy, 2014). Bongo (2017) points to the high unemployment rate among Nigerian graduates, which is largely due to a poorly qualified workforce. The subpar performance of educators in public tertiary institutions contributes to this issue and requires immediate attention.

Employee performance is closely connected to talent management (Mangusho et al., 2015) and employee commitment (Karuri, 2015). Talent management, which focuses on human capital, underscores the value of people, knowledge, and skills (Onwuka et al., 2015). It is typically assessed through three key dimensions: talent attraction, development, and retention (Koltapeh et al., 2015; Oladapo, 2014; Shirkhani & Nazari, 2014). High levels of talent attraction, rapid talent development, strong talent retention, and employee commitment are linked to improved performance (Kaleem, 2019; Knott, 2016; Akinremi & Adedeji, 2019; Karuri, 2015). In contrast, poor talent management and low employee commitment often lead to diminished performance.

Employee commitment is a critical predictor of performance, as committed employees tend to be more motivated and dedicated to organizational goals (Hunjra et al., 2010). Factors such as talent attraction, development, and retention are key drivers of employee commitment (Irefin & Mechanic, 2014). These factors are seen as essential for fostering employee commitment, which in turn serves as an indicator of enhanced performance.

Although employee commitment may serve as an intermediary between talent management and employee performance, much of the prior

research has primarily focused on the direct relationships between these variables, often overlooking potential indirect effects. To address this gap, this study investigates whether employee commitment mediates the connection between talent management practices and employee performance. Specifically, it assesses the role of employee commitment in mediating the relationships between talent attraction, talent development, talent retention, and the performance of academic staff in state-owned tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

To achieve the objectives of this research, the following questions will be examined:

1. How does talent attraction affect the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State?
2. How does talent development influence the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State?
3. How does talent retention impact the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State?
4. In what way does employee commitment affect the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State?
5. To what extent does employee commitment significantly mediate the relationship between talent attraction and the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State?
6. To what degree does employee commitment significantly mediate the relationship between talent development and the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State?
7. To what extent does employee commitment significantly mediate the relationship between talent retention and the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State?

Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Hypothesis 1: Talent Attraction (TA) does not significantly predict the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.
2. Hypothesis 2: Talent Development (TD) does not significantly predict the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.
3. Hypothesis 3: Talent Retention (TR) does not significantly affect the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.
4. Hypothesis 4: Employee Commitment (EC) is not significantly associated with the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.
5. Hypothesis 5: Employee commitment does not mediate the relationship between talent attraction and the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.
6. Hypothesis 6: Employee commitment does not mediate the relationship between talent development and the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.
7. Hypothesis 7: Employee commitment does not mediate the relationship between talent retention and the performance of academic staff in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Performance

Bello and Adebajo (2014) define employee performance as the completion of tasks related to a job. Mathis and Jackson (2009) highlight its multifaceted nature by assessing it through metrics such as productivity, efficiency, timeliness, engagement, and effectiveness. Dorcas et al. (2014) view employee performance as work behaviors aimed at achieving specific goals. Essentially, it reflects

the ability to meet organizational objectives effectively and efficiently, demonstrating the impact of employees' actions in fulfilling their roles. Mubbsher and Maryam (2013) state that employee performance involves both productivity and efficiency, indicating potential for growth. Expectations for employee performance are shaped by organizational standards (Samar et al., 2015). This implies that successful performance results from a combination of effort, skill, and guidance, contributing to the achievement of organizational goals. Peter (2014) emphasizes the importance of employee performance as a key factor in determining an organization's success or failure (Mubbsher & Maryam, 2013).

Talent Management

The significance of talent management has led to extensive discussion across various sectors, including management, engineering, and both social and natural sciences, highlighting its crucial role in organizational success (Edeh & Mlanga, 2019). Evolving from basic administrative tasks to complex strategic functions in the 1980s and 1990s, talent management now plays an essential role in human resource management (Gardner, 2002). Faced with global talent shortages, organizations encounter challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled individuals to meet their objectives. Cappelli and Keller (2014) define talent management as a strategic process that involves attracting, motivating, deploying, retaining, and leading individuals to address organizational needs. Talent management has become a critical challenge in achieving organizational goals (Gupta & Aggarwal, 2012). Previous studies emphasize that key components of talent management include the attraction, development, and retention of talent (Koltapeh et al., 2015; Oladapo, 2014; Shirkhaani & Nazari, 2014).

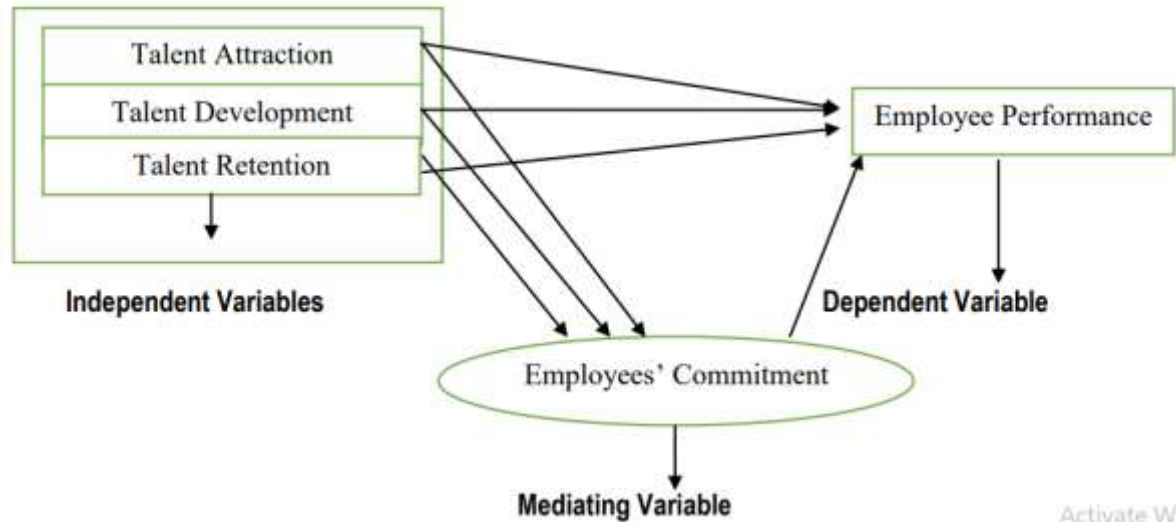
Theoretical Review

This study is based on Becker's (1964) Human Capital Theory, which highlights human capital as a critical element influencing employee performance. Additionally, Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) offers insights into workplace behavior,

focusing on the reciprocal interactions between talent management, employee

commitment, and performance (as shown in Figure 1).

Talent Management



Empirical Review

Khaleem (2019) examined how talent attraction affects employee performance in public sector graduate institutions in the United Arab Emirates. The study utilized 200 questionnaires distributed through stratified sampling for in-depth analysis. The results indicated a significant impact of talent attraction on employee performance. In a similar study, Rita et al. (2017) explored the effect of talent attraction on organizational success in companies listed on the Nairobi Securities Exchange. Using descriptive and correlational survey methods, they targeted 534 senior managers from these companies, with a sample size of 224 respondents. The findings revealed that talent attraction is pivotal for organizational success.

Rita et al. (2017) also concluded that talent attraction is crucial for organizational success. Likewise, Najm and Manasrah (2017) investigated the impact of talent management on organizational performance within Jordanian banks. Their research identified four essential aspects of talent management: aligning talent management with organizational strategy, maintaining talent, developing talent, and attracting and renewing talent. The study revealed a positive

relationship between talent attraction and the performance of all six banks in their sample.

Akinremi and Adedeji (2019) studied the connection between talent management and employee performance in banks in Akure, Ondo State. Using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, they found that effective talent retention is strongly linked to improved employee performance. Similarly, Masri and Suliman (2019) assessed the effects of talent management on employee achievement in research institutions, concluding that talent management has a positive influence on employee success.

Khaleem (2019) also explored the effects of talent development on employee performance in public sector graduate schools in the UAE. The study, involving 200 questionnaires, found that employees who view their professional development positively tend to perform better. Hitu and Baroda (2018) examined the impact of talent management practices on employee performance in private sector banks. Their study demonstrated that talent attraction has a significant influence on employee performance.

Salau et al. (2018) analyzed the link between talent management practices and innovation among academic staff at a tech-driven private

graduate school in Nigeria. Using structural equation modeling for their quantitative survey, they found that talent development strategies are essential for promoting innovation. Ndolo (2017) studied the relationship between talent management and employee performance in commercial state corporations in Kenya, finding that talent development significantly boosts employee performance.

Mkamburi (2017) assessed the impact of talent management on employee performance at the United Nations, specifically focusing on the World Food Programme in Kenya. The study concluded that talent retention has a significant effect on employee performance at the United Nations. Singh and Pooja (2017) explored how talent management practices impact employee performance, focusing on private banks and insurance companies. Their research revealed a strong correlation between talent retention and employee performance.

Udu and Ameh (2016) examined how employee commitment influences organizational success, focusing on First Bank Nigeria, PLC, Enugu Zone offices. The study found that higher employee commitment leads to better organizational outcomes. Ahmad and Shahrul (2016) investigated the role of organizational commitment in mediating the relationship between training and job performance in private graduate schools in Syria. They determined that employee commitment mediates the impact of training on job performance.

Tutei et al. (2017) analyzed the relationship between continuance commitment and employee performance at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton in Kenya. Their findings showed a weak negative correlation, suggesting that continuance commitment does not significantly affect employee performance at this institution. Similarly, Andrew (2017) assessed the influence of employee commitment on organizational success, revealing a positive relationship between employee commitment and organizational achievements.

METHODOLOGY

This research utilized a cross-sectional design to collect data from participants at a single point in time through a structured questionnaire, which was adapted from various sources. The study measured talent attraction, talent development, and talent retention using items derived from the Human Capital Institute (2008). Employee (academic staff) commitment was assessed using the framework created by Meyer and Allen (1997). To evaluate the performance of academic staff, the study referenced the work of Koopman et al. (2014). The target population for this study consisted of all seven state-owned tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State.

Table 1 Population and Sample Size

Name of Institution	Target Population	Sample Size
Federal University <u>Otuke</u> (FUO)	1193	251
Niger Delta University(NDU)	485	105
Federal Polytechnic <u>Ekeowe</u>	97	20
University of Africa <u>Toru Orua</u>	121	25
Bayelsa State School of Nursing, Tombia	95	20
Isaac <u>Adaka Boro</u> College of Education	230	48
Bayelsa State Medical University (BMI)	86	18

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 2: *Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity*

Construct	Item	Loadings	AVE	CR
Talent Attraction	TA1	0.76	0.63	0.90
	TA2	0.83		
	TA3	0.79		
	TA4	0.83		
	TA5	0.73		
Employee's Performance	EP1	0.82	0.71	0.92
	EP2	0.81		
	EP3	0.85		
	EP4	0.86		
	EP5	0.86		
Talent Developing	TD1	0.84	0.75	0.92
	TD2	0.89		
	TD3	0.89		
	TD4	0.84		
Talent Retaining	TR1	0.74	0.59	0.70
	TR2	0.79		

	TR3	0.81		
	TR4	0.82		
Employee's Commitment	EC1	0.77	0.65	0.92
	EC2	0.79		
	EC3	0.79		
	EC4	0.83		
	EC5	0.82		
	EC6	0.86		

Table 3: Measurement Model: Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Lacker Criterion)

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Employee's Commitment	0.81				
2	Employee's Performance	0.64	0.84			
3	Talent Attraction	0.64	0.63	0.79		
4	Talent Development	0.66	0.64	0.58	0.87	
5	Talent Retention	0.66	0.64	0.57	0.58	0.77

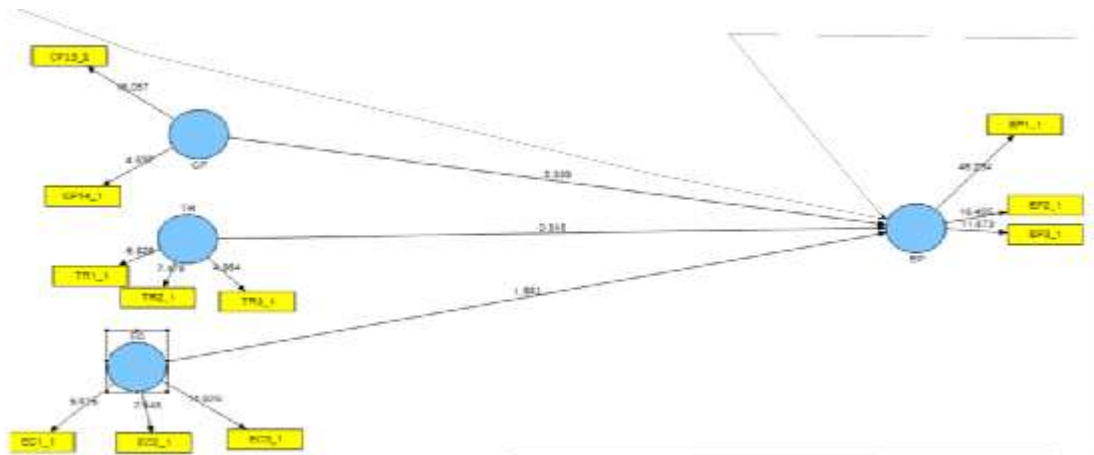


Figure 2: Structural Analysis

Table 4

Examination of Hypothesis for Direct Relationship

Structural Model Examination of Significance for Direct Relationship

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	SE	T	P Value	Decision
Statistics						
H ₀₁	TA-EP	0.24	0.03	4.87	0.00	Rejected
H ₀₂	TD-EP	0.25	0.06	4.01	0.00	Rejected
H ₀₃	TR-EP	0.25	0.05	5.08	0.00	Rejected
H ₀₄	EC-EP	0.16	0.08	2.14	0.03	Rejected
R Square	58%					

*** $p < 0.001$; ** 0.05 ; * $p < 0.10$

Table 5

Appraisal of the Effect Size for Direct Relationships: F-Square

Talent Attraction	Included R ²	Excluded R ²	F	Effect Size
Talent Attraction	0.58	0.55	0.07	Medium
Talent	0.58	0.55	0.07	Small
Developing				
Talent Retention	0.58	0.55	0.07	Small
Employee's	0.58	0.56	0.05	Small
Commitment				

Table6

Predictive Relevance for Direct Relationship: Q-Square

Construct	SSO	SSE	1-SSE/SSO
Performance	2210.0000	1314.6702	0.41

Note: SSO Represents the Sum of squared observed omitted values; SSE represents the sum of the Squared Error

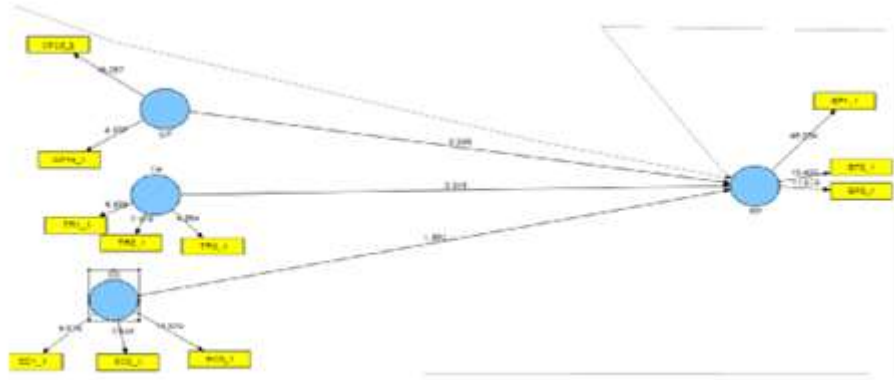


Figure 3: Structural Model of Mediating Relationships

Table 7

Structural Model: Bootstrapping outcome for Indirect Effect

Path	Beta	Path b	Beta	Indirect Effect (a*b)
TA->EC	0.28	EC->EP	0.16	0.04
TD->EC	0.31	EC->EP	0.16	0.05
TR->EC	0.32	EC->EP	0.16	0.05

Table: 8

Structural Model: Examination of Significance for Mediating Relationships

Hypothesis	Relationshi p	Beta	SE	T- Statistics	P- Value	Decision
H ⁰⁵	TA-EC-EP	0.04	0.03	1.33	0.18	Not Rejected
H ⁰⁶	TD-EC-EP	0.05	0.04	1.25	0.21	Not Rejected
H ⁰⁷	TR-EC-EP	0.05	0.02	2.50	0.01	Rejected

***p<0.01, **p<0.05; p<0.01

Table:9

Coefficient of Determination intended for Mediating Relationship : R-Squared

Construct	R-Squared
Employee's Performance	0.58
Employee's Commitment	0.60

Table 10

Appraisal of the Effect Size of the entire Relationships on Performances: F-Square

Construct	F2(EC)	Effect Size	F2(EP)	Effect Size
Talent Attraction	0.10	Small	0.07	Medium
Talent Developing	0.13	Small	0.10	Small
Talent Retention	0.15	Medium	0.07	None
Employee's Commitment	NA	NA	0.02	Small

NA refers to not applicable

Construct	F2(EC)	Effect Size	F2(EP)	Effect Size
Talent Attraction	0.10	Small	0.07	Medium
Talent Developing	0.13	Small	0.10	Small
Talent Retention	0.15	Medium	0.07	None
Employee's Commitment	NA	NA	0.02	Small

NA refers to not applicable

Table 11

Construct	SSO	SSE	1-SSE/SSO
Employee's Performance	2210.0000	1319.8748	0.40
Employee's Commitment	2652.0000	1614.6593	0.36

Discussion

This study examines the complex relationships between talent management practices and the performance of academic staff in public graduate institutions in Bayelsa State. The findings reveal significant positive correlations between talent attraction, talent development, talent retention, employee commitment, and academic staff performance. These results emphasize the essential role these factors play in improving educational outcomes. The study aligns with previous research highlighting the importance of strategic talent management within academic environments (Mangusho et al., 2015; Karuri, 2015). The insights gained are particularly relevant to the Bayelsa State context and can inform improvements in management practices within the region's higher education institutions.

Furthermore, the study identifies employee commitment as a crucial mediator in the relationship between talent retention and academic staff performance. This indicates that retaining skilled staff not only directly influences performance but also enhances their commitment, thereby further improving their overall effectiveness. Based on these findings, institutional leaders are encouraged to adopt comprehensive talent management strategies that extend beyond just recruitment and include initiatives for staff development and retention. Addressing these areas is essential for maintaining a committed, high-performing academic workforce as the educational landscape in Bayelsa State continues to evolve.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study confirms a significant positive impact of talent attraction, development, retention, and employee commitment on academic staff performance in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. It further emphasizes that employee commitment plays a pivotal role in mediating the relationship between talent retention and academic staff performance.

1. **Structured Recruitment Processes:** Management at state-owned tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State should implement well-organized recruitment strategies to attract top-tier talent.
2. **Investment in Training and Development:** Continuous investment in comprehensive training and development programs is vital for enhancing talent development.
3. **Work Culture and Retention:** Fostering a supportive work environment that promotes staff retention is crucial. Managers should focus on cultivating a workplace culture that encourages academic staff to remain with their institutions.

While these recommendations provide practical guidance, it is important to note that the study's focus on a specific geographic region may limit the broader applicability of its findings. Future research should extend the investigation to a wider context to increase the generalizability of the results.

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