

## TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICE AND BRAIN DRAIN AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN THE NORTH- CENTRAL NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*Brain drain is undeniably a mounting issue in numerous developing and underdeveloped countries in Africa. This study investigates the influence of talent management practices on the brain drain of academic staff in federal universities within the North Central Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria. The research population comprised the entire workforce of 7,100 individuals across seven selected federal universities. Employing a descriptive survey research design, the research distributed questionnaires to 345 academic staff members from these universities, following the Krejcie and Morgan formula. The study used descriptive statistics to present participants' responses concerning talent management and its relationship to brain drain, while linear regression was employed to analyze the research hypotheses. The results from the regression analysis demonstrated that talent management variables, including talent compensation, exerted a significant influence ( $R^2=0.489$ ;  $P\text{-value}<0.005$ ) on decision-making related to brain drain. Furthermore, the findings from the second hypothesis revealed that learning and development positively influenced brain drain ( $R^2=0.188$ ,  $P\text{-value}<0.05$ ). The study concludes that talent management is a growing practice that has significantly impacted the rate of brain drain in Nigerian federal universities. As a recommendation, to reduce brain drain and enhance talent management in Nigerian universities, it is imperative to advance in offer competitive compensation packages, and learning and development programs that promote retention and career opportunities for academic staff of Nigerian federal universities.*

**Keywords:** Talent Management, Talent compensation, Learning and Development, and the Nigerian universities.

### Introduction

In any nation of the world, talent management has become one of the future-oriented practices that enhance efficacy both in the private and public institutions (Ganaie & Haque, 2017). Organizations now recognize and value the need for

highly skilled workers to succeed in the modern workplace. This is particularly pronounced within the academic sector where pursuit of advanced knowledge and critical research skills is paramount. Oyeneye (2016) noted that the modern academic world is dynamic and it requires

talented individuals equipped not only with conventional expertise. But also, with the ability to navigate research complexities with innovative ability and adapt swiftly to ever-shifting academic demands. It is therefore imperative for any academic institution seeking to compete and triumph in the modern parlance of knowledge to give adequate considerations to effectively talent management.

Abass and Cross (2018) noted that managing talent is a modern human resource practice that integrates highly skilled professionals into operation. Dhanabhakym and Sowmya (2015) refer to talent management as an old wine in a new bottle, as it is a novel HRM practice that also ensures managing people, but with a different approach. The process of hiring skilled employees and motivating them to realize their full potential in the workplace is known as talent management, and it is crucial to achieving organizational goals. It involves the process of attracting, integrating, developing, compensating, motivating, and retaining highly skilled human resources at work (Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen & Scullion, 2019). In the academic sector, the ever-increasing demand for new and improved knowledge has made talent management a necessary approach that administrators in the universities, must adopt to sustain and thrive in performance.

In the global community, universities are widely known as the fountain of knowledge. However, Espeland et al. (2016) report has shown that increased academic competition in line with the declining public funds had forced many public universities globally to adopt a

market orientation. The focus is now on talented academics who are highly skilled in delivering intensive lectures and teachings, undertaking quality research, and adequately serving the community. Engaging these sets of individuals in the university system can help schools to attract inquisitive students, versatile lecturers or instructors as well as potential investors in the public universities, more like the private universities. Meanwhile, in comparison with other universities in the Western world such as Harvard, Oxford, Yale, and Cambridge universities, universities in African countries are poorly rated in terms of performance and knowledge productivity (World University Rankings, T.H.E., 2022).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Today, it is disheartening that talent management has become a hard-to-find practice in Nigerian universities (Oyeneye, 2016) and reports have shown that it has affected Universities' performance over time. As noted by Olanrewaju, Akinjobi and Nelly (2022), most universities in Nigeria are finding it hard to acquire and retain talented workers due to declining compensation and weak development scheme. Specifically, over 54% of Nigerian academics were lost in past decades to other western countries across the world (Thisday, 2022; Ogunode, Ugochukwu & Jegede, 2022). Nevertheless, the already challenging condition of talent management was made evident through the COVID-19 pandemic that broke out in 2020. While academics in the Northern Nigeria, like all others across the nation did not quit their jobs, poor talent management has brought in discontent and loss of morale to the Nigerian academics. As a result, the future

of competitive academics in Nigeria is doubtful as high rate of federal universities reported a loss of commitment to work and prevalent demand for strikes which was the highest in over a decade (NEEDS, 2014; Olanrewaju, Akinjobi, & Nelly 2022).

With regards to Universities in the Northern Nigeria, findings have shown that the performance of these universities is so deprived that none of the North Central Universities (whether private or public) appeared in the rank of the top thousands in the world (Oyeneye, 2016). Notwithstanding, it is important to note that long before now, Nigerian universities had badged a great history of exceptional remarks and rankings globally. Precisely, Agarwal and Marouf (2017) decried that the Nigerian educational system of today was unlike before. When the first-generation universities were established in Nigeria (1960-1970), these universities operated with highly skilled manpower who attracted talented foreigners and numerous international students from every corner of the world due to their indestructible standards and effective research efforts.

The outcomes of those Universities were academic scholars like Prof. Wole Soyinka, Prof. Chinua Achebe, Philip Emeagwali, and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala who represent talents in Nigerian academics to the world. It is in view of the persistent exits of such talented academics without evident replacements that informed the present research investigation of the significance of talent management on academic brain drain in Nigerian Universities with peculiar focus on academics in the North Central Nigeria.

### Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the influence of talent management on reducing brain drain among academic staff of federal universities in the North-Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to;

- (i) Ascertain the extent to which compensation affects the brain drain of academic staff in Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria.
- (ii) Examine the influence of learning and development on the brain drain of academic staff in Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria.

### Review of Literature

#### Talent Management

Talent management can be viewed as the integrated process of acquiring skilled individuals and motivating them to achieve full capabilities at work (Urme, 2023). In their study, Nwoke and Iyiola (2021) identified the process involved in the management of talents to include attraction, development, compensation management, retention, and succession planning for effective performance. In the same vein, Sakka, Ghadi and Goldman (2022) defined talent management as an extension of contemporary human resource practice that incorporates an advanced strategy of recruitment and development process for prospective employees who are capable enough to efficiently meet the future needs of the organization. Despite the invaluable essence of talent management in the workplace, Kaushik and Gaur (2022) findings posited that recent organizations

development that is used to keep the organization stable and productive. This aligns with the view of Urme (2023) that the survival of firms heavily relies on operational development, product and talent growth. Therefore, talent development becomes a crucial strategy since organizations compete with fewer human resources, especially in the non-governmental field (Kaushik & Gaur, 2022).

### **Brain Drain in the Nigerian Academic Sector**

Brain drains, the emigration of skilled and talented individuals from their home country, remains a persistent challenge for many developing nations, including Nigeria. Within the context of the academic sector, Gregory, Eseyin and Setiel (2023) noted that the departure of highly qualified educators and researchers poses significant challenges that impact the quality of education, research output, and institutional development. Numerous studies have examined the severity of brain drain in Nigerian academia, including Ahaotu and Ogunode (2021) and Basil et al. (2013). Low pay, insufficient financing for research, and little possibilities for career growth are the main economic factors that lead academics to look for work elsewhere, according to study by Amina (2017). Beyond monetary incentives, the problem of subpar working circumstances, a dearth of cutting-edge research equipment, and a lack of institutional support plays a major role in academics' decision to go overseas in quest of better settings. However, Daniel et al. (2019) noted that a sustained brain drain causes Nigerian institutions' educational standards to decline, which in

turn causes a scarcity of qualified teachers and a decrease in the range of viewpoints that students may choose from. Gregory et al. (2023) also pointed out that brain drain reduces the nation's ability for innovation and research production, which lowers its competitiveness in the international academic community.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The adopted theory in this study is the Talent Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) theory. Propounded by Shrvanthi and Sumanth in 2008, this theory premised on the notion that individuals possess a unique and inherent set of talents in their DNA which corporate managers should seek to achieve sustainable performance. The theory defined employees as resources with varied talents in their DNA. These talents according to Jha, Awasthi and Paul (2014) includes valuable skills, attributes, and strengths which organizations could benefit from. As a defined academic framework, talent DNA theory provides a theoretical framework to explain why various firms conduct talent management techniques differently. Thus, the framework created a background for precisely evaluating the talent present in an organization's workforce about the procedures involved in spotting, developing, and keeping talent in personnel. Unfortunately, a lot of businesses frequently suffer in this area since they don't have a suitable framework in place for analyzing and appraising their talent pool (Faith & Makau, 2017).

are facing challenges in incorporating effective talent management into practice. This aligns with Kumar and Jain (2022) claim that the absence of a well-defined plan provides challenges in talent management, hindering the successful identification, recruitment, training, and retention of exceptionally skilled workforce.

### **Components of Talent Management**

As noted by Faith and Makau (2017), talent compensation and talent development are integral components of talent management that contribute significantly to attracting, retaining, and nurturing a skilled workforce. While, offering competitive salaries and benefits is crucial to attract top talent. Ogunode (2020) argued that providing avenues for continuous learning, such as training programs, workshops, mentoring, and access to educational resources, encourages skill development and career growth among employees.

### **Talent Compensation**

Talent compensation refers to all benefits that employees receive as a result of their employment (Cabanas et al., 2020). Talent Compensation is the remuneration or monetary payment that an employee receives for rendering services to their employer. It is commonly determined by wages, salaries, incentives, or bonuses. In addition, compensation is essential for the company to attract, motivate, and retain exceptional workers. To obtain a strategic advantage, new or existing processes can be modified with the help of the workforce's knowledge, talents, and skills (Reza and Faisal-E-Alam 2022). Yeswa and Ombui (2019) opined that talent compensation is a retention strategy that refers to a firm

ability to maintain the activities of its human capital through pay and non-pay system. Ibidunni et al. (2016) considered talent compensation as a process by which an organization sets aside certain factors to attract, retain and develop employees and direct their abilities in performing activities that are useful to the organization. This connotes the efforts of corporate entities to maintain an operational atmosphere that breeds firm loyalty and employee engagement toward retaining positions in the company. Thus, talent compensation is an essential part of any talent management and retention strategy. Lyria, Namusonge and Karanja (2017) highlighted a range of demographic considerations that could warrant employee retrenchment of talented employees as a higher career pursuit, pay and compensation, employment condition, age, gender and the background of talented staff.

### **Talent Development**

The development of talents or talented human capital can be referred to as a mechanism or system of enhancing and upgrading the knowledge and ability of staff, partners, and classes of individuals within an organization through planned and unscheduled programs toward sustainable edge for the organization (Davis et al., 2007). Talent development can be viewed also as a premeditated process of improving employees' skills and attitudes toward personal development, and in turn organizational growth. It is also the managerial process of assuring consistency in the performance of talented and professional individuals. Nwoke and Iyiola (2021) opined that talent mobility is a lengthy, systematic mechanism of talent

### **Assessment of Talent Management Practice and Brain Drain in Nigerian Academic Sector**

The prevalence and scarcity of talented individuals in the Nigeria have attracted a large inflow of scholarly interest regarding the consequence of the level of talent immigration also known as brain drain not only in the academic sector, but the entire workspace in Nigeria. With peculiar insights from the academic sector, Hussin, Ale, Ghinwa and Zakaa, Ale, Ghinwa and Zakaa (2016) noted that there is an evident scarcity in the level of highly skilled workers due to persistent emigration and rampant will of many Nigerians to emigrate. This is however a growing trend which () referred to as talent drain locally referred to as “japa” will not only affect the affect its academic competitive strength but also its sustainability in the long run. Countries like Canada, America, Germany and the United Kingdom have continuously gained world prominence in knowledge due to increasing gains in talented academics. However, the consequences of the drain in Nigerian academic sector are overtly pronounced as Abdul Maleek (2020) identified issues of reduction in organizational productivity, poor industrial relations as well as an increment in the rate of workforce turnover and turnover intention.

Today, the majority of educational institutions suffers talent attrition in Nigeria and they are unable to achieve higher productivity and large market share compared to those that have effective talent management in practice (Yeswa & Ombui, 2019). Due to the issue of talent attrition, most universities are now suffering from

declining productivity and poor quality of service delivery in this ever-demanding world of knowledge (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021). Aside from productivity, firms in the global academic world today are facing a continuous increment in the rate of lectures and even students fleeing abroad in the cause of education. This was broadly emphasized by Wobodo, Konya, and Nwaeke (2020) that academic workers in today’s world are fraught in societies due to poor compensation, unfavorable terms and conditions of employment, underemployment as well as inconducive workplace environment. All of these cumulates in poor performance and a dearth of various succeeding organizations in the long run.

Moreover, the prevalence of talent attrition in the Nigerian academic sector has certainly contributed to poor avenues of employee relations and industrial relations in many university institutions. According to Wobodo, Konya, and Nwaeke (2020), in any university institution where talent management is weak, star employees will have issues or internal problems with their co-workers. Kehinde (2012) in his assertion noted that many star workers are no longer in the workplace only because they were referred to as stars. He argued that people at times hate to see others ahead of them and will work constructively to drag down the star, thereby drawing back the organization and hindering its achievement of goals and success. Lastly, attrition of talented workers will result in resilience to change or creativity in the workplace, specifically in the academic sector (Bradley, 2016). Unlike regular employees, talented employees pursue new ways of doing things and

thereby make work easier and faster through innovation and creativity at work. However, for the organization facing the above challenges to survive and enhance effective talent management, it is advised that several practices must be engaged some of which include the creation of overt opportunities and consideration for employee’s career growth without any form of discrimination.

**Methodology**

The research employed a descriptive survey research design, chosen for its purpose of

providing a precise overview of individuals or situations (Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). The study encompassed the entire staff of the selected universities situated in the seven states within the North Central Geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The total staff strength in these institutions, as obtained from the Establishment Units within the respective Senate bodies of the schools, amounted to a total of 7,100 academic staff members, which includes both junior and senior staff. The breakdown of the population as elicited from the organization was presented in the table below;

**Table 3.0: Population of the Academic Staff in North Central Nigeria**

University Institutions	Junior Staff	Senior Staff	Total
University of Ilorin, Ilorin	818	731	1,549
Federal University of Technology, Minna	489	731	1,220
University of Abuja, Gwagwalada	128	384	512
Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi	483	351	834
Federal University, Lokoja	112	51	163
Federal University, Lafia	265	164	429
The University of Jos, Plateau	1,601	1,103	2,704
<b>Total</b>			7,100

Source: *Estab Unit, The Universities Senate (2023)*

In order to collect a data representative of the entire population of the study, a sample size determination formular was utilized. Using Krejcie and Morgan Formular, the size of the sample of this research was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination formula presented as thus;

$$s = \frac{X^2NP(1 - P)}{e^2(N - 1) + X^2P(1 - P)}$$

Where;

X<sup>2</sup> depicts the table of the chi-square for 1-degree f freedom at significant level of 0.05% (3.841).

N represents the population size, which in this case is 7,100.

P stands for the degree of accuracy, expressed as a proportion, with the assumption that 0.5 is the proportion of the population, as this provides the maximum sample size.

e signifies the degree of accuracy, also known as alpha or the significance level, which equals 0.05.

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) suggested the utilization of 0.50 as an estimate for the population proportion to maximize variance, thus resulting in the largest possible sample size. Consequently, at a 95% confidence level, P = 0.5, and (1 - P) ≈ 1.

$$s = \frac{3.841 \times 7,100 \times 0.5 (1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2(7,100 - 1) + 3.841 \times 0.5 (1 - 0.5)}$$

$$s = \frac{27,271.1 \times 0.25}{17.7475 + 0.96025}$$

$$s = \frac{6,817.775}{18.70775}$$

$$s = \frac{6,817.775}{18.70775} = 364.435$$

For this study, a total of 364 questionnaire were distributed using stratified sampling technique. This is consistent with the viewpoint expressed by Hill, Brierlely, and MacDougall (2003), who have pointed out that a sample size of 100 or greater is sufficient to provide clear and strong research results, providing a reliable representation of the population being studied, be it in an organization or any other particular area.

**Data Analysis and Presentation of Results**

This study utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics. According to Smith

(2020), descriptive statistics are employed to define the fundamental characteristics of the data in the study, providing concise summaries of the sample and measurements. The descriptive statistics in this research included calculations for total, mean, and standard deviation, which served as the foundation for addressing the research questions related to quantitative data.

While the initial target sample size for this research was 364, the actual research analysis was conducted with a reduced sample size of 293 due to participant involvement.

<b>Table 1: Effect of Compensation on Brain Drain</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
We are being paid meager compensation compared to our colleagues in other countries.	293	4.4691	.86727
Our salary as teachers is sufficient to cover our expenses.	293	1.5432	1.1116
The Nigerian government is unwilling to increase our salary, and it adversely affects us as workers.	293	4.5802	.68673
Unlike other institutions, our own schools rarely recognize and provide incentives for extra efforts by their workers.	293	4.6049	.73619



We receive minimal fringe benefits in addition to the base pay required for teachers.	293	4.7037	.60093
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Source: Authors' Computation, 2023

The result of the descriptive statistics in Table 1 above showed that on a 5-point Likert scale response, the majority of the respondents (4.4691) agreed to the notion that lecturers in the universities are poorly remunerated with meager salaries compared to counterparts in other institutions abroad. This result aligns with the findings of Fawole (2020) that Nigerian lecturers are one of the most poorly paid academicians in Africa. Also, the question of whether or not university teachers are sufficient or not was widely negated by workers with the assertion that their salaries are inadequate

which was strongly disagreed at a mean (1.54) and was largely argued amongst the respondents. The result also showed that the respondents also believed that the Nigerian government is not helping the situation (4.5) while a larger fraction also agreed strongly that, unlike other countries, Nigerian schools rarely recognize and provide incentives for extra efforts by their workers (4.7) strongly agreed that the workers receive minimal fringe benefits in addition to the base pay required for teachers.

Table 2: Learning and Development on Brain drain

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Workers receive adequate training and development in the Nigerian universities which is not different from neighboring countries	293	4.6667	.57009
Mentorship and coaching system are competitive edge unlike in other countries	293	4.4691	.86727
There is room for career advancement in Nigerian universities	293	4.7407	.44096
The Nigeria University system is best at training workers best	293	4.5802	.68673
Nigerian certificates are well recognized and valued just like other countries	293	4.6049	.73619

Source: Authors' Computation, 2023

The result in the descriptive statistics above showed that majority of the respondents have a strong view on the notion that training and development is not the main reason for brain drain in Nigeria since there is adequate training and development in the Nigerian universities as presented by the mean value of (4.6667) which was less argued with the std deviation of (0.057).

Also, the assertion that mentorship and coaching system are competitive edge in Nigeria was strongly supported with mean value of (4.4691), while a larger proportion with a mean value of (4.7407) in the respondents also agreed that there is room for career advancement in Nigerian universities as it depicted a 4.5 mean value which indicates a general support by

majority. Finally, the outcome of the fifth statement showed that, there Nigerian certificates are well recognized and valued comparably to other countries, which was strongly supported by majority of the

respondents with a mean value of 4.6 and a very low std deviation value of 0.7 indicating that many people shared this same view.

**Test of Research Hypotheses**

H<sub>01</sub>: Compensation does not have a significant effect on brain drain of academic staff in Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria

<b>Table 3 Least Square Regression Model</b>						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.699 <sup>a</sup>	.489	.476		.65763	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Base pay, Reward system						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regressi on	32.267	2	16.134	37.305	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	33.733	78	.432		
	Total	66.000	80			
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.839	.687		1.222	.225
	Base pay	.054	.117	.037	.462	.045
	Reward system	.771	.089	.699	8.635	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Brain drains						

Source: Authors' Computation, 2023

Interpretation: The regression model's statistical significance is indicated by the statistics in Table 3, which show that the R coefficient is 0.699, the R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.489, and the Adjusted R Square is 0.476. The correlation between the salary and reward structure at selected federal universities and the emigration of lecturers is relatively significant, as indicated by the R coefficient of 0.699. According to the R<sup>2</sup> value, the base pay and reward system accounts for

48% of the choices expressed about the brain drain of lecturers from Nigerian universities, with other unaccounted-for variables or factors inside the model influencing the remaining 42% of the decisions. In addition, the model's presentation shows that the model's validity is indicated by the P value being smaller than the significance level (0.05).

The results implied that in the regression model  $Y = f(\beta + 0.05x_1 + 0.77x_2)$ , the variation in the dependent variable (brain drain) is explained by the coefficient of the independent variables (compensation). This suggests that while basic pay is minimal and receives only 0.05% consideration, brain drain can be influenced by 77% of the reward system in the seven federal colleges that were chosen. The alternative

hypothesis that there is a considerable impact of employee compensation on brain drain among academic staff in Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria is hereby accepted, and the null hypothesis is consequently rejected.

H<sub>02</sub>: Learning and development does not have any significant influence on brain drain academic staff in Federal Universities in North-Central Nigeria

Table 4 Least Square Regression Model						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.433 <sup>a</sup>	.188	.167		.82901	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Learning and Development						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.394	2	6.197	9.017	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	53.606	78	.687		
	Total	66.000	80			
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.798	.726		2.476	.015
	Learning	.115	.146	.087	.789	.432
	Development	.484	.136	.392	3.547	.001
a. Dependent Variable: Brain drains						

Interpretation: The outcome of the regression model in Table 4 showed that the R-value is (0.433), the R<sup>2</sup> value is (0.188) and the value of Adjusted R Square is (0.167). This implies that the regression model is statistically significant. The value

of R (.433) showed that learning and development have a low significant effect on brain drain in Nigeria's academic environment. Specifically, the R<sup>2</sup> value showed that the rate of academic decisions on brain drain is influenced by 18% of

learning and development issues, while, the remaining 72% is explained by other variables not presented in the model. This implies that the rate of academics that emigrate to foreign lands based on improving their learning or academic development is minimal compared to those going to work or hustle. This is supported by the report of Paseda (2012) with strong emphasis on the notion that the Nigerian academic environment is not financially enticing and would be less capable of attracting foreigners, while also losing its academics to foreign lands as well.

Furthermore, it was presented in the model that the P value is less than the significant level (0.05) indicating that the result is a good model. The result showed that the variations in brain drain made in the selected federal universities is dependent on issues of education such as development and learning as presented in the regression model  $Y = f(\beta + 0.11x_1 + 0.48x_2)$ . Although, the result showed a very low level of significance (18%), however, it was evident that the issue of learning contributes 11%, while development contributes 48% influence on brain drain in the academic environment. It is on this basis that the null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted that learning and development have a significant impact on the brain drain in the federal universities in the North Central Region in Nigeria.

### **Discussion Of Findings**

The result of the study showed that there is certainly a significant relationship between talent management and brain drain in Nigerian federal universities. Specifically,

the result shows that while the base pay and reward system of academic workers in the Northern region of Nigeria shows a high positive influence on workers' brain drain, the yearning for learning and development shows a weak significant influence on academic emigration to countries abroad. This result corroborates with empirical findings and was strongly supported by the likes of Yeswa and Ombui (2019), AbdulMaleek (2020), and Urme (2023) who collectively emphasize the crucial role of talent management in relation to employee retention and its impact on brain drain in Nigerian work environment. Kaushik and Gaur (2022) research underscores that intrinsic and extrinsic talent management including pay and self-development significantly affect employee retention, highlighting that motivated employees who feel supported by their organization are more inclined to remain.

The result of the study further aligns with the significant perspective of Najib et al. (2019) which centered on the notion that fostering talent management among professionals can be instrumental in addressing the challenge of brain drain. Kaleem (2019) corroborates the importance of talent management, particularly among millennials, in the context of healthcare employee retention. Their study reaffirms that both intrinsic and extrinsic talent management factors play a pivotal role in influencing employee retention. As the academic sector in Nigeria strives to retain young talent, comprehending and implementing talent management strategies emerge as critical elements (Abdulmaleek, 2020). The outcome also aligns with the perception of Fahed Al-

Serhan (2020) who underscores the profound significance of employee retention, extending beyond cost savings to encompass the preservation of talented individuals and uninterrupted customer services.

### Conclusion And Recommendations

Brain drain is one of the growing challenges in many developing and underdeveloped nations in Africa. The research therefore examined the issue of brain drain in the Nigerian university system. Focusing on the academic staff in the North Central Geopolitical Zone, the study surveyed the effect of talent management practice on the brain drain of staff in seven federal universities in North-Central Nigeria. In light of the collective findings, there is a reinforced argument that bolstering talent management can significantly enhance employee retention and consequently control the aggravating level of brain drain in Nigerian society. The

research therefore concluded that talent management is a growing practice that has significantly influenced the rate of brain drain of academic staff in the Nigerian federal universities.

The following recommendations were provided to enhance talent management practice in Nigeria and control the rate of brain drain of academic staff in Nigerian federal universities;

1. Federal universities should reevaluate their compensation and benefits packages to ensure they are competitive with global standards. Adequate salary structures, performance-based incentives, and attractive benefits can motivate academic staff to stay and contribute their expertise.

2. The Nigerian government should endeavor to invest in the academic sector by prioritizing talent learning and development programs that focus on enhancing the skills and knowledge of academic staff federal universities.

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