
Nexus Between Employees' Retention and Organisational Sustainability Among Health Workers in Ondo State, Nigeria

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.0525>

Published March 17, 2026

Citation: Akintan A.A., Ayantunji I.O., Odebode A.S. (2026) Nexus Between Employees' Retention and Organisational Sustainability Among Health Workers in Ondo State, Nigeria, *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies*,7(2),59-67

Abstract: *Employee retention is not just about keeping the competent staff; it also promotes continuity of workers to ensure services delivery and working environment is sustained. However, the study evaluated relationship between employees' retention and organisational sustainability among health workers in Ondo State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaire. The study adopted simple random sampling techniques to choose respondents for the study. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the socio-demographic information of the respondents while inferential was used to analyse the stated hypothesis. Specifically, pearson correlation was used to analyse the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The result of the study revealed that there was significant relationship between employees' retention and organisational sustainability among health workers in Ondo State, Nigeria { $r(307) = -.231^{**}$, $p < .01$ }. The study concluded that employees' retention significantly relates to organisational sustainability among health workers in Ondo State. Therefore, it was recommended that selected health institution should regularly review the remuneration of their health workers to meet the competitive global standard.*

Keywords: employee, employee retention, organisational sustainability, health workers

INTRODUCTION

The health sector in Nigeria faces pronounced challenges of human resource retention, which are increasingly recognised as central to achieving organisational sustainability (Awolaja, 2023). The ability of an organisation to keep its employees and reduce turnover is what is regarded as employee retention. This is critical in health sector because high turnover rates erode institutional memory, increase recruitment and training costs, lower morale, and compromise service delivery (Falola & Ojebola, 2024). Organisational sustainability, in this context, refers not only to the financial viability of health institutions but also to their capacity to maintain and improve health service quality over time, through stable staffing, effective leadership, and the fostering of employee commitment. The relationship between Employee retention and organisational sustainability can be seen as retaining skilled healthcare workers helps ensure continuity of care, reduces the cost of replacing staff, and supports institutional learning and capacity. Also, high retention tends to foster stronger organisational culture, loyalty, and internal commitment elements that contribute to resilient health systems able to cope with stressors (e.g., disease outbreaks, economic shocks).

However, high turnover places strains on remaining staff which may lead to burnout, degrade service quality, and erode patient trust. Employee retention has remained a major concern for organizations around the world, given its nature as a valuable commodity and its vital role in ensuring sustainable working environment (Cryssa & Neneng, 2023). It involves motivating staffs to stay and put in the organisation for a prolong duration of time, in other to attain stability and fostering organizational growth (Awolaja, 2023). Employee retention is also seen as a system of reducing staff turnover (Fukofuka, 2014) and regarded as a key source of competitive advantage for any organization. A successful organisation benefits from keeping its skilled and seasoned workforce. Ma et al. (2018) opined that organisation devoid of exceptional workers struggle to accomplish their goals and intentions since poor staff retention plans has time and again lead to employee turnover, which can affect the effectiveness of the company as a whole. According to Ekhsan (2019), countless companies have lost lots of resources due to high staff turnover which has amplified expenses associated with acquiring the services of fresh employees, providing training and interfering with daily operations. Companies invest a lot of money in engaging an experienced staff in order to put an end to the negative trend occurrences (Singh, 2019).

James and Mathew (2012) claim that putting employee retention methods into practice will boost commitment and loyalty among staff members while lowering the expense of employee turnover and improving organisational performance. In order to give the company a competitive edge, low absenteeism and turnover rates, high productivity and higher profitability, it is critical to recruit, train

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK and maintain a productive workforce (Okafor et al., 2019). For some delicate organisations like the health sector organizations, employee retention is a crucial factor. Effective retention methods, according to Sushil (2013), help to increase the efficacy of service delivery in the health sector institutions that provide healthcare. It is critical to attract, develop, and keep a productive staff that will result into high productivity, reduced turnover and absenteeism, higher profitability and a competitive edge (Okafor et al., 2019).

In Nigeria's health sector, the implications are especially acute given existing shortages of health professionals, competing international migration pressures, and under-resourced infrastructure. Therefore, understanding how retention can be strengthened and how that in turn enhance the long-term sustainability of health organisations is both a policy priority and management imperative.

Statement of the Problem

Despite being critical to achieving universal health coverage and delivering quality care, the Nigerian health sector is grappling with high rates of turnover among healthcare workers, which threaten organisational sustainability (Awolaja, 2023). In recent years, a growing brain-drain of medical practitioners (notably doctors and nurses) from Nigeria to developed countries has intensified shortages in hospitals and clinics, undermining service delivery and institutional stability (Falola & Ojebola, 2024). This is as a result of failure to retain competent hands. However, many healthcare institutions in Nigeria suffer from poor working conditions, inadequate and delayed remuneration, limited opportunities for professional growth, outdated or insufficient medical equipment, and weak organisational support systems (Odebode et al., 2024). These factors are frequently cited as primary causes for low retention of health workers in Nigeria (Okafor et al., 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Employee Retention

Employees in any organisation are the most valuable assets; likewise, today's competitive organisations' pressing issue is employees' retention (Singh, 2019; Ma et al., 2018). As new technologies are discovered, and to guide such a challenging and frantic environment where change is almost alleged daily, it will take actual skill and knowledge. Therefore, products and services are ensured through frequent outputs because of top employees' retention (Kossivi et al., 2016). Also, retention becomes crucial for every organization. Padhi et al. (2020) found that employee retention tends to increase organisational performance. Current employees are also encouraged by retention to hold on to their job in the organisation. For effectiveness and efficiency of employees in their different job duties, they have been in the service for a long. Again, they know very well how is to be job done.

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People-Management Magazine (2006) retention also saves several costs such as hiring, replacement, training, efficiency, and productivity. There are several benefits in terms of employee retention but many disadvantages regarding employees' turnovers. So, it is worthy to note that a silent but significant profit killer is turnover. So, a mental pathway must be clearly established through high performance, achievements and rewards obtainable.

Concept of Organisational Sustainability

Sustainability means continuation. For an organization, it means that it has the elements necessary to carry on and constantly enhance its activities in pursuit of a defined mission. It thus has both a defined mission and some combination of goals and objectives, the attainment of which ensures the successful pursuit of the mission (Joseph, 2002). Sustainable organizations are not necessarily financially self-sufficient entities. Most organizations will never be able to carry out their missions with their own income. However, sustainable organizations are financially self-reliant (Sunnyjoe & Tantua, 2018). The concept of organizational sustainability has been widely discussed in the literature by various scholars across the endeavors as the capacity of an entity, whether it be a business, non-profit organization, or government agency, to endure and thrive over the long term while responsibly managing its economic, social, and environmental impacts (Hosain et al. 2020; Mujtaba & Mubarik, 2022; Burawat, 2023). However, Olusola (2020) added that the idea that organizations should not only be economically viable but also contribute positively to society and minimize their negative environmental footprint. Hence, achieving organizational sustainability requires a holistic and integrated approach that considers economic, social, and environmental factors in decision-making processes (Johnson & Lee, 2015).

Theoretical Review

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory is a strategic management framework that focuses on the internal resources and capabilities of a firm as key determinants of competitive advantage and superior performance. The theory was developed by Barney (2001), which suggests that sustainable competitive advantage arises from a firm's unique and valuable resources that are difficult to imitate or substitute. These resources can include tangible assets like state-of-the-art technology or valuable real estate, as well as intangible assets like a strong brand, organizational culture, or intellectual property. The theory emphasizes the heterogeneity of resources among firms, suggesting that differences in resource endowments lead to variations in performance outcomes (Barney, 2001; Wernerfelt, 2016).

According to RBV, for a resource to be a source of sustained competitive advantage, it must meet specific criteria known as VRIN: it must be Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, and Non-substitutable (Barney, 2001). For example, the concept of valuable resources contribute to the firm's competitive

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advantage, rarity ensures that not every competitor possesses the same resource, inimitability means it is difficult for others to replicate or imitate, and non-substitutability implies that there are no equivalent alternatives (Garcia, 2013).

By leveraging these resources effectively, firms can create a competitive advantage that allows them to outperform rivals in the long term. RBV has been influential in shaping strategic management thinking and has practical implications for firms seeking to enhance their competitive position (Kim & Park, 2019). Indeed, Hernandez and Garcia (2018) argued that the theory meant to encourage organizations to conduct internal audits to identify and leverage their unique resources and capabilities. Additionally, Wang and Chen (2017) suggests that firms should continually develop and renew their resource base to adapt to changing environments and sustain a competitive advantage over time. They added that RBV theory provides valuable insights for managers aiming to build and sustain a strong competitive position in their respective industries.

Empirical Review

Osaremwinda et al. (2024) evaluated employee retention and performance of university of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) in Edo State, Nigeria. Cross sectional survey was conducted on a sample of three hundred and one 301 clinical staff of UBTH using a well structure questionnaire. Data were collected and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Specifically, ANOVA and ordinary least square regression. The result of the study revealed dimensions of retention significantly and positively related to performance of UBTH. The study concluded thatdetermined workforce need to be developed in order to uphold organizational success.

Awolaja (2023) investigated the relationship between the tactics of retaining employees and academic staff performance of selected private owned universities in OsunState. Survey research techniques was adopted for the study. The instrument adopted for the study for collection of data from respondents was structured questionnaire out of which three hundred and eighty-seven was sampled for the study. Ordinary least square (OLS) was used to test the hypothesis. The result of the study showed that retaining employees significantly and positively related to the performance of academic staff.

Lawrence and Koffi (2023) examined the effect of employee retention on organizational performance in selected manufacturing companies in Calabar, Cross-River State, Nigeria. Cross sectional research design was used as research design for the study with sample size of 329 employees. Structured questionnaire was adopted to collect data for the study. The study used correlation analysis to test the hypotheses at 0.01 significant. The result depicted that employee retention related to organizational performance in selected manufacturing companies in Calabar,

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Cross-River State, Nigeria. The study concluded that improved organizational performance depends on policy and practices tailored towards retaining top talented employees.

Gul (2023) investigated the impact of sustainable employee retention on employee performance in banking sector. The study utilizes a quantitative research design; data was collected using structure questionnaire. The study usef simple random sampling technique to ensure equal participation. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the bio data of the respondent while the inferential statistics was used to analyse the hypotheses postulated for the study. Specifically, correlation and regression were use as the statistical tool for analysing the results. all the hypotheses were analysed at 0.05 alpha level. The result of the study showed a positive significant influence of sustainable employee retention on employees' job performance.

Odebode et al., (2024) examined employee retention and the dimensions of organisational commitment in Oyo State, Nigeria. Data were collected by using structured questionnaire to collect data from respondents. The study employed ex post facto research design. Both inferential and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data collected. Interestingly, t-test for independent was used to analyse the stated hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. The result of the study revealed that employee retention had significant influence on the dimensions of organisational commitment in manufacturing company in Oyo State. It was concluded that employee retention is a great factor in promoting organisational commitment.

Gaps in Literature

Recently, studies on employee retention and organisational sustainability are scanty, majority of the study adopted organisational performance and employee retention as the influencing factors (Osaremwinda et al. 2024; Lawrence & Koffi, 2023). Also, majority of this study were carried out in manufacturing industry Odebode et al., (2024), banking sector and universities. However, this study was conducted in health sector to fill the gap.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive research design which was considered suitable for the study. The target population comprises of medical staff of UNIMED, Ondo State, Nigeria. The staff strength stood at six hundred and twenty-seven (627). This figure was gotten from the administrative department of the institution. The staff was selected using simple random sampling techniques. The total sampling size of the study was three hundred and fourteen (314). Data were collected using structured questionnaire which was divided into three parts namely; Sections A, B and C. Section A focused on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, the second section concentrated on information related to employees' retention developed by (Pradhan & Hati, 2019).

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This scale has five likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). While the third section of the questionnaire focused on information on organisational sustainability. This scale was developed by Baxter and Chipulu, (2006) with reliability coefficient Of 0.87 as reported by the author of the scale. Descriptive and inferential statistics was employed to analyse the data collected for the study. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the demographic characteristics of the respondents while inferential statistics was used to analyse the hypothesis. Specifically, correlation coefficient was used to analyse the hypothesis at 0.05 significant level.

RESULTS

Testing of Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between employee retention and organisational sustainability among health workers in Ondo State.

Table 1: A Summary Table Showing Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Illustrating the Relationship between Employee Retention and Organisational Sustainability

Correlations			
		Employee Retention	Organisational sustainability
Employee retention	Pearson Correlation	1	-.231**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	309	309
Organisational sustainability	Pearson Correlation	-.231**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	309	309

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: (Author's Fieldwork, 2025).

The result in the Table 1 above depicts significant negative correlation between employee retention and organisational sustainability $\{r(307) = -.231^{**}, p < .01\}$. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between employee retention and organisational sustainability among health workers in Ondo State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study evaluated the relationship between employee retention and organisational sustainability among health workers in Ondo State. The hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between employee retention and organisational sustainability among health workers in Ondo State. The result of this study showed that there was a negative relationship between employee retention

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK and organisational sustainability among health workers in Ondo State. The result of this study concur with the study of Osaremwinda et al. (2024) whose result also reflected a significant relationship between employee retention and organisational performance. Also, the study of Gul (2023) aligns with the result of this study. It was stated that sustainable employee retention significantly influenced organisational performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The result of the study has shown that employees' retention significantly had negative relationship to organisational sustainability. This calls for the awareness of the importance in retaining top talented employees most especially in the health sector in Nigeria where there are high rate of employee turnover. This sometimes caused by poor remuneration, lack of adequate equipment, limited career growth and unsatisfied working environment among others. It worthy to note that employee retention is not just about keeping the competent staff, it also enhanced continuity of health services delivery. However, it was recommended that the selected health institution should regularly review the remuneration of their health workers to meet the competitive global standard this will enhance sustainable working environment and never thought of leaving for greener pasture.

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