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# EFFECT OF BRAND PERSONALITY ON EMPLOYEES' RETENTION: EVIDENCE FROM SELECTED HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH WEST NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*It is pertinent for employees to comprehend their organisational brand personality because of its impacts on their thought patterns, daily actions, commitment, engagement, and most especially their level of retention. The Nigerian University system suffered the worst hit from the consistent brain drain of its proficient faculty and staff members, as the system is unable to retain sufficient faculties, due to lack of identifiable and good brand personality. This study examines the effect of brand personality on employee retention in selected higher educational institutions in South-West Nigeria. Three hundred and fifty-six (356) copies of questionnaire were administered to faculties and staff of the selected private and Federal University in South-West Nigeria. A total of 334 questionnaires were returned, correctly filled, and analyzed which represents a 93.82% response rate. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) particularly correlation analysis was used to analyze the data collected. Findings revealed that brand personality has a positive relationship with employees' retention. This study recommends to the management of the selected higher institutions to be mindful and ensure to build the right brand image by building the right brand personality in order to achieve high-quality employee retention.*

Keywords: Employees Retention, Higher Educational Institutions, Organisational Brand Personality, South-West Nigeria

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Recently, notable attention has been given to branding leading to extensive research findings in the field of corporate identity, and this study has its tentacle spread across a wide range of disciplines. As it were, the recognition of this brand has brought businesses into limelight, appealing to customers, as well as giving the business a peculiarity in its services, and products from other competitors. In the same vein, Da Silveira, Lages, and Simões (2013), also identified the significant role of brand as an indispensable instrument that distinguishes, and gives one an edge above all other competitors. According to Munajjed and Sulaiman (2015), organisation conveys its personality by using this important concept of brand personality not only as to values its employees and customers, but most importantly to sharpen people's way of victualing the organisation.

Brand creates reliability and credibility in the minds of the consumers, by relying specific organisational values in clear communication, and by classifying the identity as the viewpoints of an organisation, which the product is unable to do. (Obasan, 2012). Dogan (2017) stated that, for businesses to compete in an ever-changing business environment, they must be innovative in their approach to gain competitive

advantage, while this could be achieved by brand. It was further explained that, organisation overtime, builds, expands and maintains large market share that increases their profit margins through brand, the product and service have to offer.

Moreover, as employers are striving to build brand, it is pertinent to also build to develop their employees for a long-time retention. Employee retention as it were, is all-encompassing starting from attracting skill employees, to employing them, all leading to keeping them as long as the organisation desires (Nasir & Mahmood, 2018). As having to retain skilled employees gives the organisation performance such as; growth in market share, customer satisfaction and, even serves as an improvement on its brand (Mathimaran & Kumar, 2017). It is a clear fact that suitable working environment and well structure organisational settings are among the prerequisite that should foster the commitment of employees (Falola, Salau, Olokundun, Oyafunke-Omoniyi, Ibidunni, Oludayo, 2018). However, brain drain or academic flight in Nigeria is at increase and seems to affect every sector of the economy. According to Joshua, Olanrewaju and Ebiri (2014) most developing nations experiences this mobility of human capital, to which Nigeria accounts for one of the highest numbers of this migration in Africa. But the Nigerian University system suffered the worst hit from this consistent brain drain of its proficient faculty, and staff. Aibinu (2015) reported that, an estimate of 23,000 lecturers leaves Africa annually, and from this record, Nigeria accounts for the highest number of the migrants.

Several studies accounts on various factors responsible for this drift. There are reports of those seeking for further more qualitative academics studies (Mbah & Ekeopara, 2012; Joshua, Olanrewaju & Ebiri, 2014). Chimenya and Qi (2015) found that unsatisfactory present working conditions could make employees to seek for a better working environment. Most employees are either under-employed or poor remunerated (Adebayo, 2011). While majority finds the lucrative job offers irresistible, hence the surge for the move (Adefusika, 2010). Consequently, this has done much harm to the academia because; it is different from previous shortages, which only involves young graduates, but now, seasoned professionals are also involved in the mobility.

The Nigerian Universities are unable to retain sufficient faculties, which constitutes for the foundation and growth of any nation's economy, as well as in world of the academia. This is also challenging to achieving optimal proficiency and effectiveness in the core of areas of world class Universities which are; teaching, research and community services. Moreover, the basic factors that facilitates for this mass exodus of workforce can be built and developed as a brand into the nation's University system, in reducing to the barest minimum, this threat to the knowledge economy. Hence, these necessitate the research of brand personality and employee retention among the faculties and staff of the selected higher educational institutions in South-west, Nigeria.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Brand Personality**

Malik and Nareem (2013) defined brand personality as human personality as related with a brand. For organizations to remain relevant in the fiercely competitive environment, they have to not only get the attention of their consumers, but are to establish a relationship among the product, the brand, service (Kang & Sharma 2012). In agreement with Watkins and Gonzenbach (2013), applying brand personality to higher education literature, facilitate institutions to create brand with a uniqueness that is distinct. Moreover, in the opinion of Fetscherin and Heinrich, (2015) brands are given human identity to give an expression of how consumers can relate their rationale. For Rauschnabel, Krey, Babin, and Ivens (2016) it was suggested for long standing brands to be more effective, brand personality plays the role of influencing the outcome

variables. Definitely, brands do have personality Mindrut, Manolica, and Roman (2015) linked the emotional dimensional aspect of buying process to the brand personality impact.

## 2.2 Employees Retention

Employee plays a prominent role in the survival of any organisation as Adeniji, Osibanjo, Salau, Falola, Igbinoba, Ohunakin, Ogueyungbo (2019) recognises their crucial contribution towards the development of the organisation. Although, the organisation is endowed with technologies, financial and material resources, it takes the human resources to ensure these factors of production are appropriately implemented. Employee retention is the ability of organisation to enjoy the service of the employees for a reasonable maximum period of time (Msengeti & Obwogi, 2015). The employees are bound to keep doing what is expected of them in rendering their service, while as long as the organisation is able to keep its terms and condition in the operating policies. However, from the study of Kossivi, Xu, and Kalgora (2016), a single reason cannot be identified to be responsible for the employees' flight, which means several factors are responsible.

## 2.3 Higher Educational Institutions as Corporate Brands

University branding is the systematically planning and implementation process of creating an auspicious and unique identity for the university (Balaji, Roy, & Sadeque, 2016). Due to the multiplicities of various stakeholders that engages with university as a service industry, they are considered as corporate brands established with distinctness, which gives it a high preference at organisational level, other than at individual (Rutter, Roper, & Lettice, 2016). The inimitableness of this sector accounts for countless research findings, and in an attempt to rebrand the university, it has led to a high placement in the market place. The Higher Educational Institutions as corporate brands operate as a service brand, making its products as the students' ambassadors; by this they are offered a right sense of identification, or have a sense of belonging with the University (Wilkins, Butt, Kratochvil, & Balakrishnan, 2015).

Higher Educational Institutions can build up their brand corporate identity by maintaining the loyalty of their stakeholders (Valitov, 2014), and as for Erdoğan and Ergun, (2016) it was pointed out that, students are the major stakeholder, and Universities are to search for more effective and innovative ways to fascinate, maintain and foster stronger relationships with students, and to understand how a strong university brand is created in the minds of the students. In the view of Adebayo, Kehinde, Ogunnaike, Olaoye & Adesanya (2019) the point of focus for the management of these institutions should be on building brands that are relational as this leads to the bonding effect that long after the graduation, alumni thrives for good reminiscences.

## 2.4 Brand Personality and Employees' Retention

Brand personality gives a connectivity between the consumers and the brand, as they develop a strong bonding. Organizations are to consistently project a strong brand personality, which will do well to meet the customers' demands (Erdogmus & Budeyri-Turan, 2012). Watkins & Gonzenbach (2013) opined that the predisposition of a University to attach a brand personality to their institution, earns for more credibility. For instances, it is common to name a university after a hero, philanthropist, founding fathers e.g. Obafemi Awolowo University, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Ahmadu Bello University. These were named after Nigeria's political founding fathers for their role played towards Nigeria's independence. Another vivid example of consumers' identifying with brand personality was report by Obafemi (2012) in the case of former Nigeria's President Good luck Jonathan on the 29th of May, 2012 in celebration of the Nation's democracy day renames University of Lagos to Moshood Abiola University, but was met with resistances and protests by the students that led to court reversion of the order.

Organisations are to be mindful of the of the right brand image to build in building the right brand personality. In the management of a brand, university marketers are to account for several factors, among which are brand personality (Rauschnabel, *et al*, 2016). Furthermore, university marketing professionals carefully plan and implement strategic brand personality development in a perspective that integrates other issues, such as brand equity and overall marketing effectiveness.

### 3. Methodology

This research work examined the effect of brand personality on employee's retention among the faculty from selected higher educational institutions in south west Nigeria. The secondary data were obtained from related studies, while copies of questionnaire were used to obtain the primary data. The information gathered in the literature review contributes toward the development, and adaptation of the questionnaire which was employed in the empirical part of the study. The location for the understudy is in South-western part of Nigeria. This is on the premise that this geo-political region accounts for about 31% of the entire six (6) geo-political regions of the country (Mogaji, 2019).

#### 3.1 Research Instruments

As a result of literature review, the study considered brand personality as the independent variable, while employee retention played the role as dependent variable, A survey research method was adopted for this study, as respondents were sought among the faculties and staff of the institutions, with a study population of three hundred and fifty-six (356), while three hundred and thirty-four (334) copies were ascertained as valid for the study, and this gives 93.82% response rate as satisfactory. The descriptive statistic was used to find out the demographic's characteristics of the participants. Of the three hundred and thirty-four (334) that participated in the survey, 170 were male making (50.9%) of the study, while 164 female accounts for (49.1%). The majority of the employees are between 31-40 years (40.7%), as well were married (60.5%) with first degree qualification (42.8%) and have 6-10 years' work experience (36.8%). Correlation test was used to validate the relationship between the dependent variable (employee retention), and the independent variable (brand personality).

**Correlations Matrix between Brand Personality and Employee Retention**

		ET	ET	ET	ET	ET	ET
BP	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	334					
BP	Pearson Correlation	.605**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
	N	334	334				
BP	Pearson Correlation	.668**	.669**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000				
	N	334	334	334			
BP	Pearson Correlation	.648**	.565**	.627**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000			
	N	334	334	334	334		

BP	Pearson Correlation	.614**	.690**	.645**	.660**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000			
	N	334	334	334	334	334		
BP	Pearson Correlation	.834**	.838**	.858**	.830**	.858**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
	N	334	334	334	334	334	334	
BP	Pearson Correlation	.619**	.624**	.619**	.533**	.611**	.713**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	334	334	334	334	334	334	334

Source: Researcher's Field Survey Result, (2019)

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

### 3.2 Data Analysis

H<sub>0</sub>: Brand personality does not have a positive relationship with employees' retention.

Correlation (r) value ranges between 0 and 1. When r value is greater than 0.5, then there is a strong correlation (relationship), but when the r value is less than 0.5 then there's weak correlation (relationship). However, when the value falls within the region of 0.5, then there is moderate correlation (relationship). The sign +/- associated with the r-value determines, if there is positive or negative correlation.

### 3.3 Interpretation of the Results

The correlation coefficient matrix table revealed the nature of relationship that exists between Brand personality (BP) and employees' retention (ER). This result reveals that there is a direct positive relationship between the two variables, as the overall relationship between Brand Personality (BP) and Employee Retention (ES) is (r=0.713 @0.0001). It was further observed from the table that the items from the two variables have significant positive correlations with each other and are significantly related. All the correlation values (r) are high and positive indicating the fact that there is a strong, positive relationship.

The decision rule based on the results, null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. The implication is that there is a direct, significant and strong positive relationship between brand personality and employees' retention.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The indispensability of brand management in organisations cannot be overemphasize, as brand becomes centre of focus for organisations, and they have also placed it as one of the topmost priorities in achieving performance. To resolve this menace, Universities in Nigeria have to build a brand for themselves. This can be achieved by putting in place the structure that will not only attract personnel, but retain them, and ultimately, meeting their expectations which will prone them to look inwards rather than elsewhere. This study establishes that brand personality and employees' retention have positive correlations, as employers can use their brand power to attract and retain workers. Also, organisations with known brand can influence the decisions of its employees as to when to leave or stay. This influence of brand personality can attract

prospective employees, by the perceived social value and personal development value that can add value to them while in the organisation.

Employees definitely have a stake in the performance of the organisation. However, a focus-based brand personality should be integrated in the organisation to foster the bonds between the employees and the organisation, and consequently their satisfaction and retention. Finally, this study recommends that management should make policies that will promote effective employee retention, which in turn will enhance employee satisfaction and commitment to the organisation. It is of great importance that organisations give attention to their brand in creating employees' needs by designing training programs to develop the skills required to deepen their commitments. As a result, the organisation gains competitive edge through higher retention levels of its employee engagement in improving the performance of the organisation.

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