

# SENIOR NON-TEACHING STAFF PERCEPTION OF TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examined senior non-teaching staff perception of talent management practices in public higher educational institutions in Delta State, Nigeria, with specific focus on talent attraction, talent development, and talent retention across a federal university, a state polytechnic, and a state college of education. A survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 2,749 staff drawn from seven public tertiary institutions, from which a sample was derived using the Krejcie and Morgan formula. For the purpose of this study, 74 clearly identifiable senior non-teaching staff from three selected institutions, constituted the effective sample. Data were collected using a structured five-point Likert questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics and one-way Analysis of Variance with Tukey post hoc test in SPSS version 23. The findings revealed that respondents generally perceived talent attraction, talent development, and talent retention practices positively across the three institutions. The federal university recorded the highest mean scores across the dimensions, while the state polytechnic recorded the lowest. The results further showed a statistically significant difference in perceptions of talent attraction across the institutions, specifically between the federal university and the state polytechnic, whereas no significant differences were found for talent development and talent retention. The study concludes that talent attraction constitutes the primary area of institutional variation in talent management practices and highlights the need for context-specific strategies to strengthen attraction mechanisms in public higher educational institutions.*

**Key words:** Senior Non-teaching, Perception, Talent Management Practices, Public Higher Educational Institutions,

## INTRODUCTION

The contemporary organizational environment has increasingly underscored the strategic importance of talent management as a critical driver of institutional effectiveness and sustainability. Talent management comprises deliberate and integrated practices through which organizations attract, develop, and retain employees whose competencies are required for the achievement of organizational goals (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Nijs et al., 2021). In higher educational institutions, where administrative efficiency, service delivery, and institutional continuity depend heavily on human capability, talent management assumes a particularly important role.

Public higher educational institutions operate within complex and demanding environments characterized by growing competition for skilled personnel, resource constraints, changing policy expectations, and increasing pressure for improved performance. Within these institutions, attention is often directed predominantly toward academic staff because of their teaching and research roles. However, senior non-teaching staff remain central to the effective functioning of the institution, as they provide administrative coordination, technical support, record management, regulatory compliance, and implementation of institutional policies. Their contribution is therefore indispensable to the stability and operational performance of public higher educational institutions (Omotunde & Alegbeleye, 2021).

Despite their strategic relevance, senior non-teaching staff have received comparatively limited attention in talent management literature within higher education. Much of the existing discourse has focused either on private-sector organizations or on academic personnel, thereby leaving the perceptions

and experiences of senior non-teaching staff insufficiently explored. This imbalance is significant because the effectiveness of talent management practices may vary across staff categories, depending on role expectations, career structures, and institutional support systems.

Within the broader talent management literature, three practices consistently emerge as core dimensions of organizational talent strategy: talent attraction, talent development, and talent retention (Collings et al., 2019; Behera, 2024). Talent attraction concerns the capacity of an institution to recruit and secure competent personnel whose knowledge and skills align with institutional needs. Talent development involves structured efforts to enhance employees' knowledge, capabilities, and career growth through training, mentoring, and other developmental interventions. Talent retention refers to deliberate organizational strategies aimed at keeping valuable employees, reducing avoidable turnover, and sustaining institutional memory. These dimensions are particularly relevant in public institutions where bureaucratic constraints, limited incentives, and uneven development opportunities may weaken workforce commitment and long-term stability (Musakuro, 2022; Hoque & Tshutsha, 2022).

Empirical studies have shown that effective talent management practices positively influence employee performance, engagement, and retention across different sectors and institutional contexts (Abdullahi et al., 2022; Abubakar et al., 2022; Menezes et al., 2025). In the African and Nigerian contexts especially, the ability of institutions to attract, nurture, and retain competent employees has become increasingly important in the face of staff mobility, weak succession pipelines, and growing organizational demands. Where talent management practices are weak, institutions may experience reduced morale, lower commitment, diminished service quality, and difficulty sustaining operational effectiveness.

In Delta State, public higher educational institutions such as universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education perform vital educational and administrative functions under varying governance structures and resource conditions. These institutional differences may shape the way talent management practices are designed, implemented, and perceived by staff. Yet, available studies have not sufficiently examined whether senior non-teaching staff across these institutional categories perceive talent management practices in similar or different ways. This creates a contextual gap that requires empirical attention.

Against this backdrop, the present study examines senior non-teaching staff perception of talent management practices in public higher educational institutions in Delta State, Nigeria, with emphasis on talent attraction, talent development, and talent retention. By focusing specifically on senior non-teaching staff and by incorporating comparison across institutional types, the study seeks to provide context-sensitive evidence that can strengthen workforce management and policy formulation in the Nigerian higher education sector.

## **CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

### ***Concept of Talent Management***

Talent management has emerged as a strategic human resource management practice through which organizations deliberately attract, develop, and retain employees whose competencies are essential to the achievement of institutional goals. In contemporary organizations, human capital is widely recognized as a critical resource because employees' knowledge, skills, and capabilities shape productivity, innovation, service quality, and long-term competitiveness. For this reason, organizations increasingly adopt coordinated talent management practices to ensure that they possess and sustain the calibre of employees needed to achieve organizational objectives (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Nijis et al., 2021).

In knowledge-intensive sectors such as higher education, the significance of talent management becomes even more pronounced. Higher educational institutions depend not only on academic staff for teaching and research, but also on non-teaching personnel for administration, coordination, records management, technical support, and policy implementation. The effectiveness of these institutions therefore depends substantially on how well they are able to secure competent personnel, enhance staff

capability, and retain experienced employees who can sustain institutional continuity. In this regard, talent management serves as a strategic mechanism through which institutions strengthen both workforce quality and organizational performance (Behera, 2024).

Within the talent management literature, talent attraction, talent development, and talent retention are commonly identified as the core dimensions of the construct because they collectively explain how organizations acquire, improve, and sustain valuable human resources (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Nijs et al., 2021). For the present study, these dimensions are especially relevant because they reflect the main ways through which public higher educational institutions shape the work experiences and perceptions of senior non-teaching staff.

### ***Talent Attraction***

Talent attraction refers to the ability of an organization to recruit and secure individuals who possess the knowledge, skills, and capabilities required to achieve organizational objectives. It involves the policies, practices, and institutional conditions that make an organization appealing to competent employees. Such practices may include transparent recruitment procedures, favourable working conditions, competitive employment terms, institutional reputation, and visible opportunities for professional growth.

Research indicates that effective talent attraction strategies enable organizations to recruit competent employees who can contribute meaningfully to organizational productivity and performance (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). In the context of higher education, attraction is particularly important because tertiary institutions require capable administrative and technical personnel to support governance structures, service delivery, regulatory compliance, and day-to-day institutional operations. When attraction practices are weak, institutions may struggle to secure employees with the competencies needed to sustain effective administrative performance.

In Nigeria, studies have similarly emphasized the importance of attraction-related talent management practices in strengthening organizational effectiveness. For instance, Olufemi et al. (2020) found that talent management practices, including attraction-oriented measures, significantly influence workforce effectiveness and organizational performance in public sector institutions. Likewise, Salau et al. (2018) reported that talent management practices significantly affect organizational outcomes in Nigerian institutions, suggesting that organizations that are able to attract competent employees are better positioned to achieve their strategic goals. For public higher educational institutions, this dimension is especially important because the ability to attract qualified senior non-teaching staff can shape institutional stability, administrative quality, and the overall efficiency of service delivery.

### ***Talent Development***

Talent development refers to deliberate organizational initiatives aimed at enhancing employees' knowledge, skills, professional competence, and long-term career capacity. It goes beyond initial recruitment by focusing on how institutions continuously build the capability of their workforce through training programmes, mentoring arrangements, career development opportunities, coaching, and other professional development interventions.

Scholars have consistently emphasized that talent development plays a vital role in strengthening employee capability and improving organizational performance. According to Nijs et al. (2021), organizations that invest in employee development are better positioned to enhance workforce competence and improve institutional effectiveness. Development practices help employees refine their professional skills, adapt to changing work demands, and align their competencies with organizational expectations and strategic objectives.

Empirical studies also support the importance of talent development within higher educational institutions. For example, research on talent management practices in higher education indicates that training and professional development programmes significantly enhance employee competence and institutional productivity (Behera, 2024). Studies conducted in African universities likewise show that staff development initiatives contribute positively to employee performance and organizational

effectiveness. This is especially relevant in contemporary higher educational institutions where administrative and professional staff are increasingly required to manage digital systems, academic planning processes, personnel administration, records management, and financial procedures.

Within Nigerian public higher educational institutions, talent development is particularly crucial for senior non-teaching staff because many of their responsibilities demand specialized and continually evolving competencies. Institutions that invest meaningfully in staff development are therefore better placed to improve administrative efficiency, strengthen employee confidence, and sustain institutional effectiveness over time. Conversely, weak development structures may limit staff growth, reduce commitment, and weaken the overall capacity of the institution to meet changing administrative demands.

### ***Talent Retention***

Talent retention refers to the organizational strategies and conditions put in place to maintain valuable employees and reduce the loss of critical human capital. It concerns the extent to which institutions are able to keep competent staff members by creating work environments that support commitment, satisfaction, career continuity, and organizational attachment. Retention practices commonly include supportive leadership, recognition systems, fair treatment, career advancement opportunities, favourable working conditions, and policies that promote employee well-being and commitment.

The importance of talent retention has been widely emphasized in human resource management literature because organizations incur substantial costs when experienced employees leave. Beyond the financial implications of turnover, the exit of capable employees may also result in the loss of institutional memory, reduced continuity, and weakened operational effectiveness. Studies indicate that organizations that implement effective talent management practices are more likely to retain competent employees and sustain organizational performance over time (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020).

Empirical evidence from African organizations also supports the importance of retention within talent management. For example, research on employee retention strategies indicates that organizations that provide opportunities for career development and supportive work environments are more successful in retaining skilled employees (Tsatsimpe, 2025). Similarly, studies conducted within Nigerian institutions suggest that retention-related practices such as training opportunities, career development, and supportive organizational policies contribute significantly to employee commitment and institutional stability (Salau et al., 2018).

Within higher educational institutions, retaining experienced administrative personnel is especially important because the departure of such employees may disrupt institutional operations, slow service delivery, and lead to the loss of valuable institutional knowledge. For senior non-teaching staff in public institutions, retention is therefore not merely an employment issue; it is also an institutional effectiveness issue. Where retention practices are strong, institutions are more likely to preserve administrative continuity and sustain quality service delivery. Where they are weak, instability and recurring skill gaps may undermine organizational performance.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

This study is anchored on the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory and Social Exchange Theory (SET), both of which provide complementary explanations for the relevance of talent management practices in shaping employee perceptions and organizational outcomes.

### ***Resource-Based View (RBV)***

The Resource-Based View (RBV) was originally advanced by Penrose (1959) and later developed by Barney (1991). The theory posits that organizations achieve sustained competitive advantage through the acquisition, development, and effective utilization of valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources. Within this framework, human capital is considered one of the most critical strategic resources because employees' knowledge, skills, and competencies significantly influence organizational performance and long-term success (Collings et al., 2019).

In the context of talent management, RBV emphasizes the importance of systematically attracting, developing, and retaining employees who possess unique capabilities that are difficult for competitors to replicate. Talent attraction ensures that organizations acquire individuals with the required competencies, while talent development enhances these competencies over time. Talent retention, in turn, helps organizations preserve valuable human capital and sustain institutional memory.

For public higher educational institutions, particularly in developing contexts, the RBV perspective highlights the need to treat senior non-teaching staff as strategic assets rather than merely operational personnel. Their administrative expertise, institutional knowledge, and technical competencies contribute significantly to organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, institutions that effectively manage these human resources through structured talent management practices are more likely to achieve improved performance and sustainability.

### ***Social Exchange Theory (SET)***

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is rooted in the works of Homans (1958) and further developed by Blau (1964). The theory provides a relational perspective on employee behaviour by explaining how interactions between employees and organizations are governed by reciprocal exchanges. According to SET, when employees perceive that their organization values their contributions and invests in their well-being, they are more likely to respond with positive attitudes, commitment, and supportive behaviours (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

In relation to talent management, SET suggests that practices such as fair recruitment processes, opportunities for professional development, and supportive retention strategies signal organizational support to employees. When such practices are perceived positively, employees are likely to reciprocate through increased engagement, loyalty, and willingness to contribute to organizational goals.

Within public higher educational institutions, senior non-teaching staff are likely to interpret talent management practices as indicators of how much the institution values their role and contribution. Where these practices are perceived as fair, supportive, and beneficial, employees may develop stronger organizational attachment and demonstrate higher levels of commitment. Conversely, weak or inconsistent talent management practices may lead to negative perceptions, reduced motivation, and lower commitment.

### ***Integration of RBV and SET with the Present Study***

The integration of RBV and SET provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the relevance of talent management practices in this study. RBV explains why talent management practices are strategically important to organizations, emphasizing the role of human capital as a key resource for achieving institutional effectiveness. SET, on the other hand, explains how employees interpret and respond to these practices based on perceived organizational support and reciprocity.

In the present study, talent attraction, talent development, and talent retention represent key organizational strategies through which institutions manage their human resources. From an RBV perspective, these practices contribute to building and sustaining valuable human capital within public tertiary institutions. From an SET perspective, the way these practices are implemented and experienced shapes the perceptions of senior non-teaching staff.

By combining these theoretical perspectives, the study explains both the strategic importance of talent management practices and the perceptual responses of employees. This dual perspective is particularly relevant for examining how senior non-teaching staff in a federal university, a state polytechnic, and a state college of education perceive talent management practices across different institutional contexts.

### ***Empirical Review***

Empirical scholarship has consistently shown that talent management practices are associated with improved employee and organizational outcomes across different sectors and institutional settings. Recent review-based and empirical studies indicate broad agreement that talent management is most

effective when it is treated as an integrated system of attraction, development, and retention rather than as isolated human resource activities (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Nijs et al., 2021). This integrated perspective is particularly relevant to higher educational institutions, where organizational effectiveness depends heavily on the quality, stability, and continued development of human capital.

Evidence from higher education supports this position. Musakuro and de Klerk (2021) reported that talent management within the South African higher education sector is constrained by structural and managerial challenges, yet remains essential for strengthening institutional capacity. In a related study, Musakuro (2022) found that talent management practices in a selected South African higher education institution were important for sustaining workforce capability and institutional performance. Similarly, Behera (2024), through a bibliometric analysis, affirmed the growing strategic importance of talent management in higher educational institutions, particularly as these institutions increasingly depend on competent and adaptable employees to meet changing organizational demands.

Studies focusing specifically on talent attraction within higher educational institutions have produced similar findings. Hoque and Tshutsha (2022) found that attraction and retention of academic employees at the Durban University of Technology were influenced by organizational conditions such as work environment, support systems, and institutional appeal. Abiwu and Martins (2024) likewise emphasized that the ability of institutions to attract talent contributes meaningfully to organizational sustainability, especially where learning and competence development are central to long-term performance. Although these studies provide useful insight into attraction-related practices, they focus largely on academic or general institutional employees and therefore provide only indirect understanding of how senior non-teaching staff perceive such practices.

Empirical studies examining talent development also indicate that employee development practices significantly enhance workforce competence and organizational effectiveness. Abdullahi et al. (2022) found that talent management practices positively influenced employee performance in higher educational institutions, with employee engagement playing a mediating role in this relationship. In a related context, Pomaranik and Kludacz-Alessandri (2024) reported that talent management practices and related organizational factors significantly affect employee performance in the public healthcare sector, further reinforcing the importance of development-oriented support for employee effectiveness. More broadly, Smagina and Stich (2025) argued that talent development remains central to institutional capacity building in higher education, especially where organizations seek to align employee capability with long-term strategic goals.

Studies on talent retention further confirm the importance of talent management practices in maintaining workforce stability and institutional continuity. Leontes (2024) found that talent management contributes significantly to employee retention in the South African higher education landscape, while Marozva et al. (2024) identified key factors affecting the retention of millennial academics, emphasizing the role of supportive organizational environments. Tsatsimpe and Pelsler (2025) also reported that specific talent management dimensions enhance the retention of lecturers in technical and vocational education settings. Although these studies strengthen understanding of retention, their principal emphasis remains on academic staff rather than senior non-teaching personnel.

Broader organizational research likewise supports the relationship between talent management and employee retention. Mokoena et al. (2022) developed a framework linking talent management, organizational commitment, and turnover intention in a South African government department, demonstrating that effective talent management can reduce employees' intention to leave. Menezes et al. (2025) further showed that talent management enhances employee retention, with psychological empowerment serving as an important mediating mechanism. These findings are important because they suggest that employee retention is influenced not only by formal organizational policies but also by the extent to which employees feel valued, supported, and developed within the institution.

Empirical studies conducted in Nigeria provide additional evidence on the importance of talent management practices. Salau et al. (2018) reported that talent management practices were positively associated with innovation performance among academic staff in a technology-driven private

university. Olufemi et al. (2020) similarly found that talent management practices significantly influenced workforce performance in public sector organizations. Abubakar et al. (2022) further demonstrated that human capital development positively affected employee retention in Nigerian universities, while Oyalabu et al. (2023) showed that human capital development contributed to academic staff retention in private universities in Southwest Nigeria. These studies collectively suggest that Nigerian institutions benefit when they invest in practices that strengthen staff capability and continuity.

More recent Nigerian research focusing on non-academic or administrative staff remains relatively limited, though emerging studies point to the relevance of this area. Etobro and Eromafuru (2024) reported that talent management strategies significantly influenced the performance of university non-academic staff in Delta State. Dada et al. (2025) also found that talent management was associated with organizational performance among non-academic staff of government universities in Ondo State, Nigeria. In a related but profession-specific study, Omotunde and Alegbeleye (2021) found that talent management practices positively influenced the job performance of librarians in university libraries in Nigeria. While these studies move closer to the present research focus, they either concentrate on a single category of institution, a profession-specific subgroup, or a broad organizational outcome, rather than comparatively examining senior non-teaching staff perceptions across multiple public higher educational institution types.

Taken together, the reviewed studies establish that talent management practices are important for attracting competent employees, developing their capabilities, and retaining them for sustained organizational effectiveness. However, the empirical literature still shows a notable imbalance. Most available studies have concentrated on academic staff, private organizations, or single institutional settings, with comparatively little emphasis on senior non-teaching staff in public tertiary institutions. In addition, existing studies rarely compare how talent management practices are perceived across different categories of public higher educational institutions. This leaves limited empirical understanding of whether staff in a federal university, a state polytechnic, and a state college of education experience talent management practices in similar or different ways. It is this population-specific and contextual gap that the present study addresses.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a survey research design to examine the perception of talent management practices among senior non-teaching staff in selected public tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised 2,749 staff drawn from seven public tertiary institutions, from which a larger sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan formula. For the specific purpose of this study, a subsample of 74 clearly identifiable senior non-teaching staff was utilized. The respondents were drawn from three public tertiary institutions representing distinct institutional categories, namely a federal university, a state polytechnic, and a state college of education. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale, comprising sections on respondents' demographic characteristics and items measuring the key dimensions of talent management practices, namely talent attraction, talent development, and talent retention.

To ensure the quality of the instrument, content validity was established through expert review to ascertain the clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the items, while reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with all constructs recording values above the acceptable threshold of 0.70. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and describe their perceptions of talent management practices. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences in perceptions across the selected institutions, while Tukey's post hoc test was applied to identify the specific sources of variation where significant differences were observed. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

**Table 1:** Distribution of Respondents by Biodata Characteristics (N = 74)

Variable	Category	frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	33	44.6
	Female	41	55.4
Marital status	Single	10	13.5
	Married	59	79.7
	Widowed	3	4.1
	Missing	2	2.7
Level of education	NCE/ND	4	5.4
	HND	12	16.2
	Bachelor's degree	38	51.4
	Master's degree	20	27.0
Age	21–30 years	8	10.8
	31–40 years	23	31.1
	41–50 years	35	47.3
	51–60 years	7	9.5
	Missing	1	1.4
Institution type	Federal university	31	41.9
	State polytechnic	27	36.5
	State college of education	16	21.6
Years in service	0–5 years	16	21.6
	6–10 years	18	24.3
	11–15 years	22	29.7
	16–20 years	14	18.9
	Above 20 years	4	5.4

Source: Author's field data (2025) analysed with SPSS version 23

The biodata results indicate a slight female predominance among respondents (55.4%), with males accounting for 44.6%, suggesting a fairly balanced gender distribution among senior non-teaching staff. Majority of the respondents were married (79.7%), while smaller proportions were single (13.5%) or widowed (4.1%). This reflects a largely stable and mature workforce. In terms of educational qualification, most respondents possessed at least a bachelor's degree (51.4%), with a substantial proportion holding master's degrees (27.0%), indicating a relatively well-qualified administrative workforce.

The age distribution shows that respondents were predominantly within the 41–50 years (47.3%) and 31–40 years (31.1%) categories, suggesting a mature and experienced staff base.

Across institutional categories, respondents were drawn from the federal university (41.9%), state polytechnic (36.5%), and state college of education (21.6%), confirming representation across the three selected institution types.

With respect to years in service, most respondents had between 6 and 15 years of experience (54.0%), while similar patterns were observed for years in organisation. This indicates that the majority of respondents had sufficient institutional exposure to provide informed perceptions.

Overall, the respondents can be described as relatively mature, educated, and experienced senior non-teaching staff, making them suitable for assessing talent management practices across the selected institutions.

**Table 2:** Talent Attraction (TA) for the three Institutions

Institution	Mean (TA)	Std. Deviation
Federal University	4.17	0.79
State Polytechnic	3.55	0.68
State College of Education	3.70	0.47

Source: Author's analysis via SPSS version 23

Result in the above table 2 show that senior non-teaching staff in the federal university reported the highest perception of talent attraction (M = 4.17, SD = 0.79), followed by the state college of education (M = 3.70, SD = 0.47), while the state polytechnic recorded the lowest mean score (M = 3.55, SD = 0.68). Overall, talent attraction is perceived more positively in the federal university, whereas comparatively lower mean scores in the state polytechnic suggest weaker attraction practices. The standard deviations indicate moderate variability in responses across the institutions.

**Table 3:** Talent Development (TD) for the three institutions

Institution	Mean (TD)	Std. Deviation
Federal University	4.05	0.68
State Polytechnic	3.77	0.86
State College of Education	4.02	0.57

Source: Author’s analysis via SPSS version 23

The results in table 3 above, indicate that senior non-teaching staff in the federal university reported the highest perception of talent development (M = 4.05, SD = 0.68), followed by the state polytechnic (M = 3.77, SD = 0.86) and the state college of education (M = 4.02, SD = 0.57). This suggests that talent development practices were perceived more favourably in the federal university than in the other two institutions. Although the mean scores across the three institutions are above the midpoint of the scale, the comparatively lower mean for the state polytechnic indicates a weaker perception of development-related practices in that institution. The standard deviations show moderate variation in responses, with the state polytechnic exhibiting the greatest dispersion.

**Table 4:** Talent Retention (TR) for the three Institutions

Institution	Mean (TR)	Std. Deviation
Federal University	3.59	1.04
State Polytechnic	3.50	0.72
State College of Education	3.55	0.57

Source: Author’s analysis via SPSS version 23

A comparison of the composite scores above, shows that perceptions of talent retention differ somewhat across the institutions. The federal university recorded the highest mean score (M = 3.59, SD = 1.04), indicating that respondents in this institution generally view retention-related practices more positively. The state college of education followed with a mean score of 3.55 (SD = 0.57), suggesting a fairly favourable but slightly lower perception. In contrast, the state polytechnic recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.50, SD = 0.72), reflecting comparatively less favourable views regarding retention practices.

The differences in mean scores across the institutions are relatively small. The state polytechnic recorded the lowest mean score, while the federal university recorded the highest. The standard deviation values indicate variation in responses across the institutions.

**Differences in Perceptions Across Institutions**

**Table 5:** Mean and Standard Deviation of Talent Management Dimensions by Institution

Institution	TA Mean	TA SD	TD Mean	TD SD	TR Mean	TR SD
Federal University	4.17	0.79	4.05	0.68	3.59	1.04
State College of Education	3.7	0.47	4.02	0.57	3.55	0.57
State Polytechnic	3.55	0.68	3.77	0.86	3.5	0.72

**Table 6:** ANOVA Results for Differences Across Institutions

Variable	F	df Between	df Within	p-value
Talent Attraction	6.218	2	71	0.003

Talent Development	1.168	2	71	0.317
Talent Retention	0.079	2	71	0.924

Source: Author's analysis via SPSS version 23

The descriptive results in table 5 show that the federal university recorded the highest mean scores for talent attraction, talent development, and talent retention, while the state polytechnic consistently recorded the lowest mean values across the three dimensions. The state college of education showed intermediate mean values, particularly for talent development and retention.

The ANOVA results in table 6 indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions of talent attraction across the institutions,  $F(2, 71) = 6.218, p = 0.003$ . However, no statistically significant differences were observed for talent development,  $F(2, 71) = 1.168, p = 0.317$ , and talent retention,  $F(2, 71) = 0.079, p = 0.924$ .

These results show that institutional differences are evident in talent attraction, whereas perceptions of talent development and talent retention are relatively consistent across the three institutions.

**Table 7: Tukey Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons for Talent Attraction**

Group 1	Group 2	Mean Difference	p-value	95%CI Lower	95%CI Upper	Decision
Federal University	State College of Education	-0.47	0.081	-0.98	0.05	Not significant
Federal University	State Polytechnic	-0.62	0.003	-1.06	-0.19	Significant
State College of Education	State Polytechnic	-0.16	0.755	-0.68	0.37	Not significant

Source: Author's analysis via SPSS version 23

The Tukey post hoc results show that the statistically significant difference in talent attraction was found between the federal university and the state polytechnic (mean difference = -0.62,  $p = 0.003$ ). This indicates that senior non-teaching staff in the federal university and the state polytechnic differed significantly in their perceptions of talent attraction.

By contrast, the difference between the federal university and the state college of education was not statistically significant (mean difference = -0.47,  $p = 0.081$ ). Similarly, the difference between the state college of education and the state polytechnic was not statistically significant (mean difference = -0.16,  $p = 0.755$ ).

Overall, the post hoc analysis indicates that the significant ANOVA result for talent attraction was attributable specifically to the difference between the federal university and the state polytechnic, while the other pairwise comparisons did not differ significantly.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study show that senior non-teaching staff in the three selected public higher educational institutions generally perceived talent attraction practices positively, with the federal university recording the highest mean score, followed by the state college of education and the state polytechnic. This suggests that attraction-related practices are more favourably perceived in the federal university than in the other institutions.

This finding is consistent with the broader talent management literature which emphasizes that effective attraction practices enhance an institution's ability to secure competent employees and strengthen organizational effectiveness (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Abiwu & Martins, 2024). It also aligns with Nigerian evidence that attraction-oriented talent management practices contribute to workforce effectiveness and organizational performance (Olufemi et al., 2020; Salau et al., 2018). The relatively

stronger attraction perception in the federal university may reflect more favourable organizational conditions, greater institutional appeal, or more structured recruitment practices, which is in line with Hoque and Tshutsha's (2022) position that institutional conditions shape how attraction and retention practices are experienced.

With respect to talent development, the results indicate that senior non-teaching staff across the three institutions generally reported favourable perceptions, with the federal university and the state college of education showing slightly higher mean scores than the state polytechnic. This suggests that development-related practices are present across the institutions, even though the degree of positivity differs slightly. The finding supports the view that talent development remains central to building employee competence and institutional capacity in higher educational settings (Nijs et al., 2021; Smagina & Stich, 2025). It is also consistent with Abdullahi et al. (2022), who found that talent management practices positively influenced employee performance in higher educational institutions, and with Behera (2024), who underscored the strategic importance of development-oriented practices in higher education. The result further reinforces Abubakar et al. (2022), whose Nigerian study showed that human capital development contributes positively to employee retention in universities. The implication is that investment in employee development is relevant not only to academic staff but also to senior non-teaching personnel whose functions support institutional effectiveness.

The findings on talent retention reveal that perceptions were fairly similar across the three institutions, although the federal university recorded a slightly higher mean score than the state college of education and the state polytechnic. This indicates that retention practices are moderately perceived across the institutions, but without marked institutional disparity. This finding is broadly in agreement with prior studies which establish that retention practices help preserve institutional continuity and reduce the loss of experienced staff (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; Leontes, 2024; Menezes et al., 2025). It also resonates with Marozva et al. (2024) and Tsatsimpe and Pelser (2025), who found that supportive organizational environments and specific talent management dimensions are important for staff retention.

In the Nigerian context, the result is consistent with Oyalabu et al. (2023) and Salau et al. (2018), which suggest that development opportunities and supportive organizational policies contribute to continuity and commitment. The relative closeness of the retention means across institutions suggests that senior non-teaching staff may experience similar retention conditions despite institutional differences.

The comparative analysis provides an additional layer of insight. The ANOVA results show that perceptions of talent attraction differed significantly across the three institutions, whereas no significant differences were found for talent development and talent retention. The post hoc test further revealed that the significant difference in talent attraction was specifically between the federal university and the state polytechnic. This means that the observed variation in attraction practices is driven mainly by these two institutional categories. This finding supports the argument that higher educational institutions should not be treated as homogeneous entities in talent management research, since governance structure, institutional profile, and administrative conditions may shape staff perceptions differently (Musakuro & de Klerk, 2021; Musakuro, 2022).

At the same time, the absence of significant differences in talent development and retention suggests that these two dimensions may be relatively similar across the three public institution types. In this regard, the study extends the existing literature by showing that while institutional context matters for talent attraction, it appears to matter less for development and retention among senior non-teaching staff. This contribution is important because earlier studies largely focused on academic staff, single institutional contexts, or non-comparative settings (Etobro & Eromafuru, 2024; Dada et al., 2025; Omotunde & Alegbeleye, 2021).

Overall, the findings affirm the relevance of both the Resource-Based View and Social Exchange Theory to the study. From the RBV perspective, the generally positive perceptions of talent attraction, development, and retention support the idea that institutions recognize the strategic value of human capital and the need to manage it effectively (Collings et al., 2019). From the SET perspective, the

findings suggest that where staff perceive the institution's talent management practices positively, they are likely to interpret such practices as evidence of organizational support and value (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

The study therefore contributes to the literature by showing that talent management practices are not only strategically important in public higher educational institutions, but are also perceptually meaningful to senior non-teaching staff whose roles are central to institutional stability and administrative effectiveness.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that senior non-teaching staff across the federal university, state polytechnic, and state college of education generally perceive talent attraction, talent development, and talent retention practices positively, indicating the presence of functional talent management systems within these institutions. However, the findings further establish that significant institutional differences exist in talent attraction, with the federal university demonstrating stronger attraction practices compared to the state polytechnic, while perceptions of talent development and talent retention remain relatively uniform across the three institutional types.

These results suggest that although public higher educational institutions share similar approaches to staff development and retention, variations in attraction practices reflect differences in institutional capacity, structure, and appeal. Consequently, talent attraction emerges as the key dimension through which institutional disparities in talent management are most evident among senior non-teaching staff.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Public higher educational institutions, particularly state polytechnics, should strengthen their talent attraction strategies by improving recruitment transparency, institutional appeal, and employment conditions in order to attract and secure competent senior non-teaching staff.
2. Management of the three institutions should sustain and further enhance existing talent development practices by providing continuous training, career advancement opportunities, and professional support to ensure that senior non-teaching staff remain competent and adaptable.
3. Institutions should maintain and consolidate their talent retention strategies by ensuring supportive work environments, fair treatment, and policies that promote staff stability and continuity, given the generally positive and uniform perceptions observed across institutions.
4. Policy makers and institutional administrators should pay closer attention to institutional differences in talent attraction, and adopt context-specific strategies that address structural and administrative disparities across federal and state-owned institutions.

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