

## Corporate Development Practices and Service Delivery of Non-Teaching Personnel in Private Universities in Southwest, Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*The paper examines the influence of corporate development practices on service delivery of non-teaching personnel in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria. Two research questions were used to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was employed. The population of the study consists of 2,896 non-academic staff of 37 private universities in the six (6) Southwest states of Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select four hundred and ninety four (494) respondents for the study. One self-developed instrument titled Corporate Development Practices and Service Delivery of Non-Teaching Personnel Questionnaire (CDPSDNTPO) ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ) were used to collect data. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results showed that the level of non-academic service delivery is high ( $x = 3.45$ ;  $SD = 0.580$ ) and the level of corporate development practices is moderate ( $x = 2.97$ ;  $SD = 0.812$ ) in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria. The study concludes that enhancing corporate development practices can significantly improve service delivery in private universities, ultimately contributing to institutional effectiveness and student satisfaction. It was therefore recommended amongst others that private universities in Southwest Nigeria should invest in comprehensive training and development programmes for non-academic personnel, promote staff recognition initiatives to reward outstanding performance and instil service excellence as a culture.*

**Keywords:** Corporate Development Practices, Service Delivery, Non-Teaching Personnel, Private Universities, Southwest Nigeria.

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## Introduction

Non-teaching personnel in universities play an essential role in the efficient operation and service delivery of higher education institutions. In private universities in Nigeria, non-teaching staff comprising administrative, technical, and support staff serve as the backbone of institutional functions, ensuring that students, faculty, and stakeholders have access to the resources and infrastructure needed for a conducive academic environment. As private universities continue to grow and compete in a challenging educational landscape, the effectiveness of non-teaching personnel in service delivery has become increasingly crucial (Adewumi & Adetunji, 2016). Non-teaching staff in private universities encompass a broad range of roles, including administrative officers, librarians, Information Technology (IT) support staff, human resource personnel, bursary staff, janitors, security personnel, and student affairs officers. These staff members are vital in ensuring that day-to-day activities in the university run smoothly, thus facilitating academic activities (Oyewole & Ademola, 2019). Administrative personnel, for example, manage admissions, student records, and other essential functions such as communication between departments and external stakeholders. Library staff ensures that students and faculty have access to academic resources, while IT staff provide the technical support necessary for modern digital learning environments. Furthermore, support staff like cleaners and security personnel contribute to creating a clean, safe and conducive environment for learning, which is critical for maintaining the reputation and appeal of private universities (Oludayo et al., 2018).

Non-teaching personnel play an indispensable role in the service delivery of private universities in Nigeria. Their contributions ensure the smooth running of administrative and operational functions, which are critical to the overall success of the university. While challenges such as inadequate training, heavy workloads, and lack of recognition exist, addressing these issues through professional development, improved staffing, and employee recognition can significantly enhance service delivery. By improving the efficiency and satisfaction of non-teaching personnel, private universities can not only improve student experiences but also bolster their reputations as providers of quality higher education (Oladipo & Adeola, 2020).

The quality of service delivery by non-teaching staff is pivotal in ensuring a positive student experience and the smooth operation of university activities. In private universities, where students often pay higher fees compared to public universities, there is an expectation of higher service quality. As such, non-teaching personnel must meet these expectations through efficient, professional, and reliable service delivery (Okojie, 2017). Effective service delivery in areas such as student registration, academic advising, and facility maintenance not only contributes to the satisfaction of students and staff but also enhances the overall reputation of the institution. When non-teaching staff perform their duties effectively, students are able to focus on their academic work without distractions caused by administrative inefficiencies or inadequate support services (Adeyemi, 2019).

Corporate development practices in private universities refer to strategic activities aimed at ensuring institutional growth, sustainability, and competitiveness. In the context of private universities in Nigeria, these practices are critical in addressing the unique challenges of maintaining financial health, academic excellence, and infrastructural development in a rapidly evolving higher education landscape. Unlike public universities, which are often subsidized by the government, private universities rely heavily on tuition fees, donations, and strategic partnerships to finance their operations. As such, corporate development practices have become increasingly important for these institutions to thrive (Okojie, 2017). One of the core components of corporate development practices in private universities is financial sustainability. Since private universities in Nigeria are predominantly funded through tuition fees and private donations, the ability to generate and manage financial resources effectively is crucial for their survival and growth. These universities engage in various strategies to diversify their income streams beyond student fees, such as fundraising initiatives, alumni contributions, partnerships with industries, and grants from international organizations (Adepoju & Olanrewaju, 2020).

Training is a key aspect of corporate development practices which states the extent to which the management of universities engages in proactive processes at ensuring the growth of members of staff so as to enhance their skills and productivity as well as attainment of organizational goals. Personnel training is one of the most successful methods for enhancing employee productivity and making the best use of their individual and group strengths in order to meet organizational goals (Adaobi & Snr, 2022). It is also important to note that every modern organization desires to have competitive advantage over their competitors and various scholars have come to a consensus that human capital is the most important factor or asset of any organization. In fact, personnel are seen as the single most important factor for business performance (Otoo, Kuar & Otoo, 2022). Therefore, for universities to ensure optimum service delivery to relevant stakeholders, it is not out of place for its personnel to be adequately trained. It is pertinent to also note that the current perceived drop in service delivery in universities could be as a result of non-challant attitude of administrators of the Ivory tower towards qualitative training for academic and non-academic personnel. Pradhan & Shrestha (2022) opined that delegating, training and development, job rotation, and equitable advancement possibilities are known forms of personnel development. Also Fendi, Kusmaningtyas, & Nugroho (2022) noted that; coaching, training, empowerment, participation and delegation are potent strategies management can use to develop their personnel capabilities and improve performance.

Employee recognition also appears to be a potent tool of corporate development practices. It has been identified as a powerful motivational tool that helps employees channel their energies toward achieving organizational goals and objectives (Yang, Jiang & Cheng, 2022). The attainment of critical roles of Universities in today's highly competitive era may be undermined if employees' exceptional contributions are not acknowledged, embraced and recognized to serve as a motivating tool to continuously give their best. Praising employees for their good works in terms of verbal and written commendation, promotion, special privileges such as special parking space or showcasing recipient picture at strategic places on campus,

awards, gifts, monetary and other non-monetary rewarding strategies could be effective ways of recognizing employees' efforts of exceeding benchmark service expectation and perhaps ensure effective service delivery.

Job security is also identified as one of credible indices of corporate development practices. It refers to assurance of being in the employment of an organization for a relatively assured period of time. It could also be referred to as protection against undue job loss. The fear of getting relieved of staff employment will definitely make them not to offer their best service. It is observed that some long serving members of staff are yet to be confirmed or accorded tenure status while some are being deprived of some basic employment rights in Nigerian private universities. Therefore, universities employees may see the need to engage in other self-benefiting services like inside trading during office hours. Some non-academic staff will be selling telecommunication recharge cards, refreshment items, clothing materials, home appliances and so on during work hours when they are not sure of job security and they need secured means of survival (Ali, Munir, Permana & Kurniady, 2020). Even, academic members of staff engage in personal rewarding business activities at work when they are not adequately sure of job retention. This seems to be more rampant in private universities where there are no retirement benefits or somewhere any employee could be relieved of his or her duties without due process. Employees could likely engage in sharp practices such as examination malpractices, budget padding, inflating contracts or expenditures or unduly diverting institutional resources for personal use if they are not sufficiently secured on their jobs. This in turn will affect their commitment, performance and effective service delivery to the university.

Private universities in Nigeria also focus on creating a positive working environment to attract and retain high-quality faculty. Competitive salary packages, performance-based incentives, and opportunities for career advancement are common strategies used by these institutions to retain their best staff. By investing in human capital, private universities can maintain high standards of teaching and research, which is critical for their reputation and long-term success (Adepoju & Olanrewaju, 2020). Infrastructural development is another critical area of corporate development in private universities. Many of these institutions prioritize the construction of modern facilities such as lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, and hostels to provide a conducive learning environment for students. For example, Afe Babalola University has invested significantly in state-of-the-art buildings and facilities that rival those of public universities (Oludayo et al., 2018). In addition to physical infrastructure, private universities in Nigeria have embraced technological innovation as part of their corporate development strategies. This includes the use of digital platforms for teaching, learning, and administrative processes. The adoption of e-learning tools and online platforms became particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic, as universities were forced to pivot to remote learning (Adepoju & Olanrewaju, 2020). By integrating technology into their operations, private universities are better positioned to offer flexible and innovative learning experiences.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the critical role that non-teaching personnel play in private universities, they face a range of challenges that can impede the quality of their service delivery. One of the key issues is inadequate training and professional development. In many cases, non-teaching staff in private universities do not receive the necessary training or opportunities for professional growth, limiting their ability to adopt new technologies or improve service efficiency (Oludayo et al., 2018). This is especially problematic in a fast-evolving educational landscape where universities are increasingly adopting digital tools and platforms. Also, given the often-limited budgets of private institutions, there may be a tendency to minimize costs by employing fewer staff members which often lead to overburdened employees who may struggle to deliver high-quality services consistently (Oladipo & Adeola, 2020). In some cases, non-teaching personnel are required to take on multiple roles, which can lead to inefficiencies and poor service delivery.

Additionally, non-teaching personnel may not always receive the same level of recognition or compensation as their teaching counterparts, which can affect morale and motivation. In many universities, the focus tends to be on academic staff, with less attention given to the contributions of non-teaching staff. This disparity can create a sense of undervaluation, impacting the overall effectiveness of service delivery (Adeyemi, 2019). Despite the progress made by private universities in Nigeria, they face several challenges that can hinder their operational efficiency. Students and other stakeholders who are the service recipients in private universities have consistently complained on delayed academic results, unresolved fees challenges inappropriate communication, customer relations and overall competency of non-academic personnel. These service gaps could be as a result of paying poor or no attention to corporate development practices by the management of these institutions hence, the need for this study.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of corporate development practices on service delivery of non-teaching personnel in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to:

- i. identify level of service delivery of Non-teaching personnel (customer relations, work habit, employee competence) in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria.
- ii. assess level of corporate development practices (training, employee recognition, job security) available in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria.

## **Research Questions**

- i. What is the level of service delivery of Non-teaching personnel (customer relations, work habit, employee competence) in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the level of corporate development practices (training, employee recognition, job security) in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria?

## Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study consists of 2,896 non-academic staff of 37 private universities in the six (6) Southwest States of Nigeria.

Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select sample for this study in which four hundred and ninety four (494) respondents were sampled for the study.

The research instrument used for this study was a self-designed four likert scale questionnaire titled **Corporate Development Practices and Services Delivery of Non-Teaching Personnel Questionnaire (CDPSDNTQP)**. The instrument was validated by experts to examine the face and content validity of the instrument and vetting the items' structuring, adequacy and content. The reliability of the instrument was determined by conducting a pilot study through administration of sample questionnaire to a group of 50 non-academic staff. Result was analyzed and cronbach's alpha coefficient  $r = 0.83$  was obtained. The Instrument was administered with the help of research assistants. The data collected were analysed using frequency, percentages and standard deviation for the research questions.

## Results

### Analysis of Research Questions

**Research Question One:** What is the level of non-academic service delivery (customer relations, work habit, employee competence) in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria?

**Table 6: Level of Non-Academic Staff Service Delivery (Customer Relations, Work Habit & Employee Competence)**

S/N	I;	Always (4)	Often (3)	Rarely (2)	Never (1)	$\bar{x}$	Std
1.	respect students and other clients when expressing their opinions by listening raptly without mobile phone or other distractions	357 (76.9%)	107 (23.1%)	00	00	3.77	0.422
2.	communicate clearly with students by ask right questions and giving timely feedback	310 (66.8%)	154 (33.2%)	00	00	3.67	0.471
3.	make all my contacts have lasting memory of my service excellence	393 (84.7%)	66 (14.2%)	5 (1.1%)	00	3.54	0.499
4.	make myself available at my duty post and show care for the needs of students, parents and clients	393 (84.7%)	66 (14.2%)	5 (1.1%)	00	3.84	0.399

5.	maintain daily/weekly report of my achievements and errors	202 (43.5%)	200 (43.1%)	37 (8.0%)	25 (5.4%)	3.25	0.819
6.	engage in private business during official hours to supplement my earnings	80 (17.2%)	62 (13.4%)	126 (27.2%)	196 (42.2%)	2.06	1.116
7.	do anticipate likely issues and report to my superiors before they become problems to the university	272 (58.6%)	177 (38.1%)	15 (3.2%)	00	3.55	0.559
8.	have mastery of my job details and prioritize daily tasks	278 (59.9%)	181 (39.0%)	05 (1.1%)	00	3.59	0.514
9.	adhere to university policies and use initiatives when necessary	378 (81.5%)	81 (17.5%)	05 (1.1%)	00	3.80	0.424
<b>Weighted/Std</b>						<b>3.45</b>	<b>0.580</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2024

**Threshold:** Mean < 1.50 is low, 1.50 – 3.00 is Moderate and > 3.00 is high

Table 1 revealed the respondents mean rating and standard deviation of the level of non-academic service delivery (customer relations, work habit, employee competence) in private universities in Southwest Nigeria. The responses of item one to nine in the questionnaire were analyzed and the study revealed that the level of non-academic service delivery is high ( $x = 3.45$ ;  $SD = 0.580$ ) in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria

**Research Question Two:** What is the level of corporate development practices (training, employee recognition, job security) in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria.

**Table 2: Level of Corporate Development Practices (training, employee recognition, job security) in Private Universities in Southwest, Nigeria.**

S/N	Item	Always (4)	Often (3)	Rarely (2)	Never (1)	$\bar{x}$	Std
1.	Induction and orientation programme is organized for all new employees in my university	150 (32.3%)	96 (20.7%)	188 (40.5%)	30 (6.5%)	2.79	0.972
2.	Staff are scheduled for compulsory annual training	138 (29.7%)	271 (58.4%)	35 (7.5%)	20 (4.3%)	3.14	0.727
3.	Management makes policies encouraging training participation in my university	258 (55.6%)	154 (33.2%)	47 (10.1%)	05 (1.1%)	3.43	0.717
4.	My university is responsible for payment of workshops and seminars attended	244 (52.6%)	163 (35.1%)	42 (9.1%)	15 (3.2%)	3.37	0.781
5.	University personnel are issued commendation letter for outstanding performance	114 (24.6%)	124 (26.7%)	132 (28.4%)	94 (20.3%)	2.56	1.070
6.	My university do organize end of session awards to celebrate exceptional staff's productivity	100 (21.6%)	104 (22.4%)	124 (26.7%)	136 (29.3%)	2.36	1.118
7.	Special parking space is decorated for staff with high performance in my university	74 (15.9%)	44 (9.5%)	68 (14.7%)	278 (59.9%)	1.81	1.140
8.	Official news bulletin in my university features employee with superior service delivery	56 (12.1%)	76 (16.4%)	170 (36.6%)	162 (34.9%)	2.06	0.997
9.	Employees are punished or relieved of their duties without fair hearing in my university	94 (20.3%)	56 (12.1%)	112 (24.1%)	202 (43.5%)	2.09	1.167



10.	Job tenure are unsecured as employees can be fired at anytime	90 (19.4%)	82 (17.7%)	128 (27.6%)	164 (35.3%)	2.21	1.124
11.	Confirmation of staff are done as and when due	148 (31.9%)	210 (45.3%)	86 (18.5%)	20 (4.3%)	3.05	0.822
12.	Any slight misunderstanding between any staff and the proprietor, his family members and friends causes staff disengagement	46 (9.9%)	12 (2.6%)	166 (35.8%)	240 (51.7%)	1.71	0.925
<b>Weighted/Std</b>						<b>2.55</b>	<b>0.963</b>

**Source;** Field survey, 2024

**Threshold;** Mean < 1.50 is low, 1.50 – 3.00 is Moderate and > 3.00 is high

Table 2 revealed the respondents mean rating and standard deviation of the level of corporate development practices (training, employee recognition, job security) in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria. The responses of item one to twelve in the questionnaire were analysed and the study revealed that the level of corporate development practices (training, employee recognition, job security) is moderate ( $x = 2.55$ ;  $SD = 0.963$ ) in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria.

## Discussion

With reference to research question one which sought to establish the level of non-academic service delivery (customer relations, work habit, employee competence) in private universities in Southwest, Nigeria. It was revealed that service delivery level was at a high level in respect of the private university. This aligns with the research of Adeoye & Elegunde (2014) and Oyeniya (2016) suggesting that employee development strategies are crucial for enhancing organizational outcomes. They argued that organizations that foster a culture of collaboration and mutual respect tend to experience higher levels of service delivery. Their study revealed that investing in employee development not only improves individual employee outcomes but also enhances overall service delivery. The findings also corroborated the study of Yusuf (2023) which equally found a high level of service delivery among non-academic staff in private universities, mirroring our findings. This correspondence suggests that dedication and effectiveness among non-academic staff might be common characteristics transcending regional boundaries. However, a contrasting perspective emerges from a study which explored non-academic staff service delivery in public universities within Southwest Nigeria. The research reported a moderate level of service delivery among non-academic staff, indicating a discrepancy with our results (Idubur & Adekunle, 2022). This distinction might be influenced by inherent differences in organizational contexts, resource

allocation, or management practices between private and public universities.

The findings of research question two which revealed that the level of corporate development practices on employee performance in private university is at a moderate level.

This aligns with previous research suggesting that employee development strategies are crucial for enhancing organizational outcomes (Adeoye & Elegunde, 2014; Oyeniyi, 2016).

This finding is consistent with past studies on the influence of corporate development practices on employee performance. Adeoye and Elegunde (2014) found a positive and significant relationship between employee training and organizational performance in Nigerian universities. Similarly, Oyeniyi (2016) examined the role of employee recognition in boosting job satisfaction and performance in private institutions and concluded that recognition serves as a motivational tool that fosters higher performance levels among non-academic staff.

In addition, the role of training in enhancing service delivery also reflects findings from previous studies. Adeyemi and Ige (2020) found that continuous training and development programs are critical for improving employee skills and, subsequently, service delivery in educational institutions. They emphasized that training enables employees to keep up with evolving organizational demands, thereby enhancing their efficiency and the overall service quality. This supports the present finding that training significantly influences non-academic service delivery, placing it among the top three factors affecting performance.

## **Conclusion**

The study conclusively demonstrates that non-academic staff in private universities in Southwest Nigeria exhibits a high level of service delivery and also exhibits a moderate level of the corporate development practices, specifically training, employee recognition, and job security on the service delivery in private university.

## **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are thereby made:

1. Private universities in Southwest Nigeria should invest in comprehensive training and development programmes for non-academic staff. These programmes should focus on improving effective communication, report management, and overall service excellence.
2. Institutions should establish employee recognition programmes to acknowledge and reward outstanding performance. Recognizing employees' contributions can increase job satisfaction and motivation, leading to improved service delivery.
3. Universities should work towards providing a secure work environment for employees. Offering stable employment contracts and job security can reduce anxiety among staff and contribute to better service delivery.
4. There is a need for periodic evaluations of service delivery to identify areas for improvement. This can be achieved through students and clients feedback mechanisms, as well as internal assessments. Feedback should be used to develop action plans for enhancing service quality.

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