

Tackling Talent Retention Challenges in Nigeria's IT Sector: Problems and Prospects

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Abstract

The Information Technology industry in Nigeria is experiencing rapid growth and development yet faces significant challenges in talent retention. This article explores the key problems and prospects associated with attracting and retaining skilled IT professionals in Nigeria. Through a comprehensive review of data from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics and industry case studies, this study identifies several critical issues, including a shortage of skilled professionals, and inadequate infrastructure. Using case studies of Andela Nigeria, Jumia Nigeria, and Workstation Nigeria to examine how they navigated the IT talent retention challenges in Nigeria. These studies also exemplify effective talent management strategies focusing on brand building, community engagement, and strategic partnerships. Using the Social Exchange Theory the article examines potential solutions and prospects for addressing these challenges, such as improved leadership and management, advocating for positive government policies, enhanced collaboration among stakeholders, and effective crisis management. The study recommended a competitive compensation strategy, a healthy Work-life balance, an employee recognition and reward program, and a strong organizational culture that fosters a positive and inclusive culture that values diversity, teamwork, and innovation as some strategies to retain a vibrant workforce. By addressing these challenges, Nigeria's IT sector can better position itself for sustained growth and competitiveness in the global market.

Keywords – Compensation and benefits, Diversity and inclusion, Employee engagement, Job satisfaction, Talent retention, Workplace culture

Introduction

Nigeria's Information Technology (IT) sector has emerged as a critical driver of economic growth and innovation, playing a pivotal role in the country's digital transformation journey. With a rapidly expanding digital economy and increasing global demand for IT services, Nigeria's IT sector holds immense potential for job creation, wealth generation, and technological advancement. However, amidst the promising prospects lie significant challenges related to talent retention, which threaten to hinder the sector's growth and sustainability.

Nigeria has experienced significant growth in its Information Technology (IT) sector in recent years, attributed to a youthful population, increased internet connectivity, and rising demand for digital services (Agri & Sunny, 2023). This growth has resulted in the establishment of thriving tech hubs in major cities such as Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, positioning Nigeria as a significant player in the global tech landscape. The Nigerian government's dedication to fostering the tech sector is evident through initiatives like the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and digital innovation policies. By leveraging Nigeria's entrepreneurial culture, NITDA has facilitated the emergence of numerous tech startups across various sectors, including fintech, e-commerce, health tech, and agritech (Olorundare et al., 2022). Despite these advancements, the IT sector in Nigeria still faces several challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, regulatory hurdles, and cybersecurity risks (Agri & Sunny, 2023). Tackling challenges is crucial for sustaining the sector's growth and maximizing its potential contribution to Nigeria's economy. By prioritizing talent development and retention, Nigeria can establish itself as a hub for IT innovation and drive sustainable economic growth.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the critical challenges facing talent retention in Nigeria's IT sector and to examine potential strategies and prospects for addressing these challenges. As the sector continues to expand and evolve, attracting and retaining skilled IT professionals has become a pressing concern for organizations seeking to remain competitive in the global market. Key challenges identified include skills shortages, brain drain, limited career advancement opportunities, and stiff competition for talent from multinational corporations. These challenges are exacerbated by systemic issues such as inadequate investment in education and training, weak institutional support, and socio-economic factors driving the emigration of skilled professionals. Despite these challenges, there are promising prospects and opportunities for addressing talent retention issues in Nigeria's IT sector (Amori & Becky, 2020). This paper will delve into potential solutions, including strengthening STEM education and training programs, enhancing employee engagement and workplace satisfaction, promoting knowledge transfer and skill development initiatives, and fostering collaboration between industry, academia, and government stakeholders.

By examining the problems and prospects of talent retention in Nigeria's IT sector, this paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play and to provide actionable insights for policymakers, industry leaders, and other stakeholders. Ultimately, addressing these challenges is essential for unlocking the full potential of Nigeria's IT sector and driving sustainable economic development in the digital age.

Talent and Talent Development

Talent is a critical element of organizational strategy, and its management is central to human resources management. Talent is a multi-faceted set of skills, capabilities, intelligence, attitudes, character traits, innate impulses, and the ability to learn and self-improve. Skilled IT professionals drive innovation, streamline processes, improve productivity, and reduce costs through automation and optimization (Michaels & Axelrod, 2001). They ensure high-quality work, leading to robust

and reliable software, systems, and services. Companies with top talent have a competitive edge, delivering better products faster and more efficiently than their competitors. In today's dynamic business environment, the creation and preservation of knowledge are crucial for enhancing organizational capabilities and competitiveness. However, talent management remains a significant challenge globally due to talent scarcity and intense competition for skilled individuals (Nosike & Okeke, 2022). Talented professionals can quickly adapt to new technologies and trends, keeping their organizations ahead of the curve. Effective talent management practices are essential to attract, identify, develop, retain, and deploy employees with high potential to add value to the organization (Malukani & Paranjape, 2023),

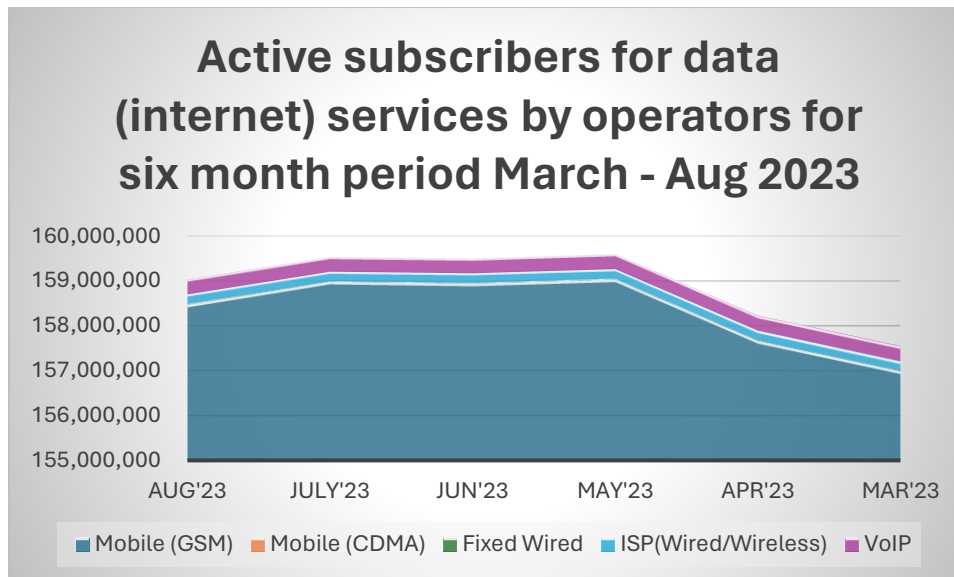
The need for talent management arises from the imperative for organizations to differentiate themselves in the face of new challenges and achieve a competitive advantage in the market. Investing in attracting and retaining the right employees is paramount, as these individuals possess traits, skills, values, and experiences that align with the organization's intellectual capital and contribute to its competitive edge. Failure to meet talent management needs can lead to adverse outcomes for employees and organizations. High turnover rates pose high costs to organizations, disrupting continuity and hampering succession planning efforts. Retaining talented employees enhances productivity and organizational performance (Abet et al., 2024). Effective talent management practices are essential for organizations to leverage human capital effectively and gain a competitive edge in the market. Investing in talent retention saves costs and ensures that the organization benefits from the best and brightest talent available.

Table 1: Showing Active Internet Users for a 6-month period in 2023

Active subscribers for data (internet) services by operators						
MONTH	Aug'23	July'23	Jun'23	May'23	Apr'23	Mar'23
Mobile (GSM)	158,475,341	158,982,962	158,944,660	159,038,028	157,667,708	156,989,223
Mobile (CDMA)						
Fixed Wired	17,157	17,098	16,897	16,690	16,531	16,457
ISP(Wired/Wireless)	208,612	208,612	208,612	208,612	208,612	204,810
VoIP	333,607	326,241	328,657	335,121	338,693	340,614
TOTAL	159,034,717	159,534,913	159,498,826	159,598,451	158,231,544	157,551,104

Source – Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

Fig 1: Graphical Representation of Internet users, a Product of the IT sector



Source – Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 2023

Study Objectives

- I. To analyze the current talent retention practices in Nigeria's IT sector.
- II. To identify the key challenges organizations face in managing talent in the IT sector.
- III. To explore the factors influencing job satisfaction and employee turnover in the IT sector in Nigeria and make recommendations for solutions to be employed in the IT Industry in Nigeria

Research Questions

- I. What are organizations' current talent retention strategies in Nigeria's IT sector?
- II. What are the main challenges faced by organizations in retaining talent in the IT sector?
- III. How do factors such as salary, job security, and career development opportunities influence job satisfaction and turnover in the Nigerian IT sector?

Significance of Study: This study provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing Nigeria's IT sector, highlighting the importance of talent retention for its sustained growth. The study offers actionable recommendations for stakeholders to address these challenges effectively by identifying key factors influencing talent management in the sector. Furthermore, by emphasizing the significance of talent retention for business performance and organizational success, the study underscores the need for strategic investments in human capital development. By implementing policies and initiatives to attract and retain top talent, Nigerian IT companies can enhance their competitiveness and contribute to the country's economic development.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore Nigeria's IT sector's talent retention challenges. Qualitative research is well-suited for this study as it allows for in-depth exploration and understanding of complex phenomena, such as human behavior, organizational dynamics, and socio-economic factors influencing talent management practices.

Research Design: This study's research design is qualitative and exploratory. It aims to uncover insights into the talent retention challenges faced by organizations in Nigeria's IT sector. The study will utilize multiple qualitative data collection methods to gather rich and nuanced data.

Sampling: The study will employ purposive sampling to select participants who have relevant experience and expertise in talent management within the Nigerian IT sector. Key informants will include HR managers, IT professionals, industry experts, and policymakers. Sampling criteria will ensure diversity in terms of organizational size, sector, and geographical location.

Data Collection:

Semi-Structured Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with key informants to explore their perspectives, experiences, and insights regarding talent retention challenges in the IT sector. Interviews will be audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Thematic Analysis:

Data from interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis will be analyzed thematically. Themes and patterns related to talent retention challenges, organizational practices, and potential solutions will be identified and coded systematically.

Case Studies: The methodology incorporates case studies of successful IT companies in Nigeria, leveraging available data to identify trends and patterns in talent retention. This data-driven approach enhances the understanding of the dynamics within the IT sector and informs the analysis of challenges and opportunities.

Theoretical Framework

Social Exchange Theory:

In Nigeria's IT sector, talent retention are critical challenge that can be addressed by applying the social exchange theory. The theory proposes that relationships are built on the exchange of resources, with individuals seeking to maximize benefits while minimizing costs (Blau, 1964). According to social exchange theory, employees engage in behaviors beneficial to the organization as part of an exchange relationship, wherein positive attitudes and efforts are exchanged for remuneration (Gould-Williams, 2007; Tsui et al., 1995).

Organizations can optimize these social exchanges to enhance employee loyalty and commitment. By offering commitment-based HR practices, such as competitive salaries and opportunities for career advancement, organizations can demonstrate their willingness to support positive employee

behaviors, which fosters a positive exchange relationship (Tsui et al., 1997). Ultimately, this leads to increased employee contribution, reduced turnover, and higher firm performance.

Literature Review:

The talent retention challenges in Nigeria's Information Technology (IT) sector have garnered increasing attention from researchers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders. This literature review aims to provide an overview of existing studies, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings related to talent management practices, skills shortages, and workforce mobility within the Nigerian IT sector. A study by Adebisi and Adeola (2020) highlights the significance of talent management practices in addressing talent retention challenges in Nigerian organizations (Amori & Becky, 2016). The authors emphasize the importance of adopting strategic talent management approaches, including recruitment, training, performance management, and employee engagement, to attract and retain skilled IT professionals.

Several studies have identified skills shortages as a critical barrier to talent retention in Nigeria's IT sector; Ogunlusi et al. (2019) underscore the mismatch between industry demand and the skills available in the labor market, particularly in emerging technology areas such as cybersecurity, data analytics, and artificial intelligence. The authors call for concerted efforts to bridge the skills gap through targeted education and training programs. Brain drain, characterized by the emigration of skilled professionals, poses a significant challenge to talent retention in Nigeria's IT sector. According to Adepoju and Ayodeji (2018), factors driving talent flight include limited career advancement opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, political instability, and better prospects abroad. The authors advocate for policies to incentivize skilled professionals to remain in Nigeria and contribute to the local IT ecosystem.

Organizational culture and employee engagement play crucial roles in talent retention and job satisfaction. Okorie et al. (2020) argue that a positive organizational culture that values employee well-being fosters collaboration and promotes work-life balance, which can enhance employee engagement and reduce turnover intentions. The authors highlight the importance of creating supportive work environments that recognize and reward employee contributions.

The presence of multinational corporations (MNCs) in Nigeria's IT sector intensifies talent competition and exacerbates retention challenges. Olatokun, Jegede, and Akinpelu (2017) emphasize the need for local organizations to adopt competitive compensation packages, offer opportunities for career growth and development, and create inclusive work cultures to retain top talent in the face of competition from MNCs.

TALENT RETENTION IN NIGERIA'S IT INDUSTRY

Talent retention is a critical concern for organizations globally, particularly in dynamic industries such as information technology (IT), where skilled professionals are in high demand (Farndale et al., 2010). In the context of the IT industry in Nigeria, talent retention refers to the strategies and efforts employed by organizations to retain skilled professionals within the technology sector.

Retaining top talent is critical for sustained success and innovation in this rapidly evolving and competitive industry. Factors such as better income, work-life balance, and career progression often drive employees to seek opportunities elsewhere, contributing to high turnover rates (Sullivan, 2004; Owolabi & Adeosun, 2021).

In Nigeria, businesses need help retaining talent, leading to increased turnover due to weak reward systems and inadequate talent management practices (Bamigboye & Abdulazeez, 2023). Job dissatisfaction can stem from inadequate compensation, limited opportunities for advancement, and poor working conditions. These factors contribute to the fact that despite the demand for managerial talent, skill shortages persist, posing challenges for multinational corporations operating in Nigeria's IT sector.

CHALLENGES OF TALENT MANAGEMENT IN IT INDUSTRY NIGERIA

Globalization and Emigration: The Nigerian IT industry is grappling with the profound effects of globalization and emigration on talent management. The digital era and agile work practices have disrupted traditional talent retention and management methods. To adapt to evolving work environment demands, organizations are embracing new technologies to streamline recruitment, enhance employee engagement, and facilitate remote work. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the adoption of these technologies, propelling organizations toward innovative approaches to employee recruitment and retention (Ghosh, 2021).

Emigration, fueled by job dissatisfaction, significantly contributes to the loss of skilled workforce in high-demand fields. This loss poses significant hurdles for organizations striving to retain talent globally (Scullion & Collings, 2011). Moreover, the growing diversity in employee groups, spanning ethnicity, culture, generation, and gender, has made managing these highly diverse groups daunting for companies operating in a globalized setting. Despite the upward trend in gender diversity, women are still underrepresented in senior international management roles, despite the proven performance benefits of gender diversity at senior levels.

The increasing mobility of individuals across geographical and cultural borders, propelled by globalization and reduced immigration and emigration barriers, is reshaping global talent management dynamics. These labor migrations are driven by disparities in economic development and wage rates among nations, leading to a brain drain from less developed to more developed countries (Tung, 2013). Professionals and high-skilled workers are migrating at higher rates, further intensifying the global labor movement. To retain talent, organizations must develop robust strategies to manage diverse employee cohorts and counter the adverse effects of brain drain on talent retention.

Skill Gap in Talent Management: In Nigeria's IT sector, talent retention poses a significant hurdle due to a limited pool of skilled professionals. This shortage is caused mainly by a need for more technical skills among graduates, affecting qualified candidates' availability (Awolaja, 2023). Unfortunately, the talent management challenge is further exacerbated by a mismatch between the skills required for sourcing, selecting, and retaining talent and the actual capabilities of those responsible for these tasks in SMEs. This discrepancy is often due to a need for more specialized knowledge and training in recruitment and HR practices among line managers who are frequently tasked with these responsibilities. As a result, Nigerian IT companies may need more efficiency in talent retention processes, hindering their ability to attract and retain skilled employees vital to business growth and success (Udegbunam et al., 2024).

Retirement of Baby Boomers: Many experienced IT professionals from the baby boomer generation are reaching retirement age, leading to a loss of institutional knowledge and experience, particularly in legacy technologies. Seasoned professionals with critical experience in legacy technologies, systems, and processes leave and pose challenges and opportunities for organizations. Losing valuable institutional knowledge and expertise usually leads to knowledge transfer gaps, which impact IT operations' efficiency and effectiveness. Finding qualified replacements with comparable experience and expertise, particularly in niche areas or legacy technologies, can be a significant challenge for organizations. This difficulty may impede efforts to maintain and support legacy systems and hinder innovation and digital transformation initiatives. However, the retirement of baby boomers also presents a chance for organizations to diversify their workforce and promote innovation. By embracing intergenerational diversity and incorporating fresh perspectives from younger professionals, organizations can foster creativity, collaboration, and agility in their IT operations. Additionally, retiring baby boomers may seek consulting or part-time roles, providing opportunities for knowledge retention and mentorship (Oluwafemi, 2023).

STRATEGIES FOR TALENT RETENTION

Talent retention is critical for effective talent management. It requires a comprehensive approach prioritizing competent leadership, active employee engagement, and alignment with the organization's values and objectives. By investing in competent management, cultivating a positive work atmosphere, and recognizing the diverse needs of their workforce, organizations can boost job satisfaction, reduce turnover rates, and secure top talent, thereby maintaining a competitive edge in the global marketplace. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in African businesses to survive during the lockdowns (Chibo-Christopher, 2023). The pandemic has also highlighted the need for agile workforce planning and management practices to adapt to the evolving landscape. Offering flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options or flexible hours, resonates particularly well with IT professionals in Nigeria, who prioritize work-life balance and autonomy. Flexible work arrangements enhance job satisfaction and mitigate turnover rates (Tamaş, 2022).

Diversifying recruitment channels expands the reach to a broader talent pool. Leveraging diverse avenues, including job boards, social media platforms, employee referral programs, and networking events, presents numerous opportunities for talent development. Organizations must

also consider the dynamic technology landscape, evolving consumer behavior, and the demand for creative and analytical proficiencies when recruiting. Onboarding processes are instrumental in acclimating new hires, supporting their professional development, offering skill enhancement opportunities, and fostering a positive work environment. Employer branding is pivotal in attracting top talent, emphasizing career advancement prospects, work-life balance, and a supportive company culture. In the long run, sustained efforts to support professional development, provide skill enhancement opportunities, and nurture a positive work environment are crucial for retaining top IT talent.

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1: Andela Nigeria

Andela Nigeria is an excellent example of talent development, particularly in software engineering. The company was established in 2014 by four professionals with backgrounds in online education and recruitment. *Andela* is a for-profit business based in New York and Lagos, Nigeria. Its primary objective is to train software developers from Nigeria and Kenya and supply these professionals to companies looking for remote talent worldwide (Ordu & Tombari, 2019).

What sets Andela apart is its unique approach to training and employment. Trainees undergo a rigorous six-month training program with MacBook provisions, subsidized housing, and daily meals. Upon graduation, successful trainees commit to working for Andela for four years. This approach provides valuable skills to individuals and addresses the global shortage of software engineers.

Andela's success is evident from its significant growth. As of 2018, the company had approximately 900 employees, including developers, trainees, and staff members. Its valuation reached an estimated \$20 million, demonstrating its impact and potential within the tech industry. Despite its achievements, Andela faces challenges, especially in raising capital and developing a tailored training curriculum. The company initially relied on personal investments from its founders and later secured significant venture capital funding from investors such as Google Ventures and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

Andela's approach to publicity is noteworthy. The company emphasizes its mission to bridge the global shortage of software engineers and deliver impactful technological solutions across Africa. The company actively engages with audiences through social media, technology events, seminars, and workshops, positioning itself as a key player in addressing critical societal challenges through technology. Andela's case study exemplifies innovative talent development strategies that address industry needs, empower individuals, and contribute to societal advancement (Ordu & Tombari, 2019).

Case Study 2: Jumia Nigeria

Jumia Nigeria is an interesting case study in talent management within the e-commerce industry. It demonstrates innovative strategies for recruiting, developing, and retaining top talent. Jumia

Nigeria's talent management strategy involves employing strategic recruitment practices to attract high-caliber professionals. One crucial aspect of their approach is recruiting top talents from renowned firms like McKinsey and Co. These individuals bring valuable expertise and diverse perspectives to the organization, contributing to its growth and success.

Jumia Nigeria's unique approach involves deploying top talents as Co-Founders to launch products in various regions across Africa, Asia, and South America. This strategy facilitates market expansion and empowers these individuals to take ownership of their respective projects, driving innovation and growth within the organization. Jumia Nigeria prioritizes the continuous development of its talent pool through various training and mentorship programs. These initiatives aim to enhance employees' skills and capabilities, enabling them to thrive and contribute effectively to the company's objectives. Additionally, Jumia invests in providing opportunities for career advancement and skill enhancement, fostering a culture of learning and development.

Jumia emphasizes creating a conducive work environment that values employee engagement and well-being to retain top talent. The company offers competitive compensation packages, professional development opportunities, and a supportive culture encouraging collaboration and innovation. Furthermore, Jumia implements diversity and inclusion policies to ensure all employees feel valued and respected. Jumia Nigeria's commitment to talent management excellence has been recognized through various awards and accolades, including the Human Resources Best Practice award in the e-commerce category. This recognition underscores the effectiveness of the company's talent management practices in engaging, developing, and retaining talent ([industry2022https://punchng.com/jumia-nigeria-wins-hr-best-practice-award/](https://punchng.com/jumia-nigeria-wins-hr-best-practice-award/)).

Case Study 3: Workstation Nigeria

Workstation Nigeria is an insightful case study in talent management for the shared-office space sector. The company's founder, Fareed Arogundade, established it in 2016 as a tech-enabled shared-office space service and facility enterprise. Despite being a relatively new business model in Nigeria, Workstation has experienced rapid growth, with 2000 registered businesses and individual members as of 2018. This achievement has been attributed to the company's emulation of successful counterparts like WeWork and Cove, adapting proven concepts to the Nigerian market.

One significant aspect of Workstation's talent management strategy is its emphasis on publicity and brand building. The company leverages organic growth channels such as referrals, word-of-mouth, and social media to attract potential clients. By highlighting the benefits of collaboration, infrastructure, affordability, and flexibility offered by Workstation, the company fosters a sense of community and togetherness among its members.

Despite challenges, Workstation remains committed to its mission and closely monitors operational costs to make informed decisions. Additionally, the company actively seeks partnerships with individuals and organizations that share its vision, presenting business proposals and plans to potential investors. This approach helps Workstation secure the necessary resources for expansion and enhances its scalability and impact.

Located in Lagos, Workstation plans to expand to other major cities such as Abuja and Port Harcourt. This expansion presents opportunities for young entrepreneurs interested in partnering

with Workstation to market its products and services in new locations, further driving growth and success. Overall, Workstation Nigeria's case study exemplifies effective talent management strategies focusing on brand building, community engagement, and strategic partnerships to rapidly expand the shared-office space sector (Ordu & Tombari, 2019).

Analysis:

The talent retention challenges in Nigeria's IT sector stem from a combination of internal and external factors, posing significant barriers to organizational growth and sustainability. Internally, organizations need more skills, career advancement opportunities, and talent management practices. Externally, factors such as brain drain, competition from multinational corporations (MNCs), and socio-economic factors drive the emigration of skilled professionals. To address these challenges, it is crucial to understand the underlying dynamics and explore potential solutions that align with the sector's unique context and challenges.

Findings:

Key findings emerge regarding talent retention challenges in Nigeria's IT sector:

1. **Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement:** Positive organizational culture and employee engagement emerged as critical factors in talent retention. Organizations that prioritize employee well-being foster collaboration and provide opportunities for growth and development to experience lower turnover rates and higher employee satisfaction levels.
2. **Competition from MNCs:** The presence of multinational corporations (MNCs) in Nigeria's IT sector intensifies talent competition, making it challenging for local organizations to attract and retain skilled professionals. MNCs offer competitive compensation packages, global career opportunities, and better work environments, posing a threat to local organizations' retention efforts.
3. **Enhancing Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborative efforts between government, industry, and educational institutions are essential for driving talent development initiatives, promoting industry-academia collaboration, and building a robust talent pipeline.
4. **Implementing Talent Retention Strategies:** Local organizations must implement talent retention strategies that offer competitive compensation packages, opportunities for career advancement, and supportive work environments to attract and retain top talent in the face of competition from MNCs.

The Solution to Talent Development in the IT Industry in Nigeria

Positive Work Environment.

A positive work environment is key to talent development. When employees are happy, they are more likely to stay and contribute to the company's success. Organizations can retain their IT workforce by prioritizing employee well-being, work-life balance, and supportive culture (Ng et al., 2018). Intrinsic motivators, such as organizational values and vision, are also crucial for

employee engagement and retention. Maintaining a meaningful work environment beyond pay and benefits is key to talent development (Leuhery, 2024; Rahschulte & Steele, 2011).

A positive and inclusive organizational culture that aligns with employees' values and beliefs is critical for enhancing retention. IT professionals are attracted to organizations that prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion and offer supportive work environments. By implementing these retention strategies, IT businesses in Nigeria can increase employee satisfaction, reduce turnover rates, and maintain a talented workforce that can drive innovation and growth in the industry (Leuhery, 2024).

Collaboration is Key: Collaboration is crucial in the IT sector, as retaining talent presents a significant challenge. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have successfully developed policies that address talent migration challenges (Healthcare, 2023). Governments can encourage businesses to invest in local talent development through incentivization, thereby retaining skilled workers (George et al., 2024). Collaboration between governments and educational institutions is essential for creating skill development programs that align with local industry needs. International cooperation is also vital, as countries work together to facilitate the movement of skilled workers while addressing brain drain concerns. Research and data sharing between researchers and policymakers can lead to a better understanding of talent migration trends and more effective policy solutions (Chao et al., 2023). Facilitating networking and exchange programs between professionals from different countries can also help retain talent by providing opportunities for collaboration and growth (Li, 2023). Finally, governments can work with experts and stakeholders to develop migration policies that balance the needs of the local workforce with the benefits of attracting skilled workers from abroad (Chen & Chang, 2019).

Crises Management

In today's ever-changing world, crisis management is crucial for organizations to navigate difficult times and emerge stronger. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the significance of being agile and adaptable in talent management. Traditional plans and projects must be fixed, necessitating quick and efficient adaptation. As a result, organizations must evolve their talent management practices to meet changing needs and circumstances. These strategies ensure that employees remain engaged, motivated, and aligned with business priorities, even amidst uncertainty (Tamaş, 2022).

Effective coaching is critical in helping employees navigate uncertainties, build resilience, and adapt to new working methods, ultimately enhancing their performance and contribution to the organization. Additionally, optimizing workforce planning and strategies becomes imperative during crises, particularly in identifying critical roles, skills, and competencies needed to address emerging challenges. Assessing the current workforce's capabilities, identifying gaps, and implementing appropriate upskilling or reskilling initiatives are essential to ensure organizational readiness and resilience. Organizations can stay ahead of the curve by prioritizing crisis management, implementing agile talent development and management practices, remaining competitive, and positioning themselves for long-term success (Tamaş, 2022).

Policy Recommendation

Competitive Compensation: Industry players should offer competitive salaries, bonuses, and benefits packages to attract and retain top talent. Health insurance, retirement plans, and other perks are attractive to IT professionals.

Work-Life Balance: Promote a healthy work-life balance by offering flexible work hours, remote work options, and paid time off. This can help reduce burnout and improve employee satisfaction and retention.

Employee Recognition and Rewards: Recognize and reward employees for their contributions and achievements through awards, bonuses, and public recognition to motivate employees and increase job satisfaction.

Strong Organisational Culture: Foster a positive and inclusive Organisational culture that values diversity, teamwork, and innovation and can create a supportive environment where employees feel valued and motivated to stay with the organization.

Conclusion

The talent retention challenges facing Nigeria's IT sector are complex and multi-faceted, but manageable. This study has highlighted the pressing need for concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, industry players, and policymakers, to address these challenges effectively. By implementing targeted interventions such as improving education and training programs, enhancing workplace conditions, and implementing robust talent management strategies, Nigeria can foster a more conducive environment for attracting and retaining skilled IT professionals. Furthermore, the prospects for success in tackling these challenges are promising, given Nigeria's growing economy, burgeoning technology ecosystem, and the increasing global demand for IT services. By capitalizing on these opportunities and addressing the underlying issues, Nigeria's IT sector can emerge stronger, more competitive, and better positioned to contribute significantly to the country's socio-economic development in the years to come.

Addressing talent retention challenges in Nigeria's IT sector is crucial for driving sustainable growth, innovation, and competitiveness in the digital age. The analysis of internal and external factors impacting talent management practices revealed significant barriers, including skills shortages, brain drain, organizational culture issues, and competition from multinational corporations. Despite these challenges, there are promising prospects and opportunities for improvement. Drawing on theoretical frameworks, case studies, and empirical research, it is evident that a multi-faceted approach is necessary to tackle these challenges effectively. Strengthening STEM education and training programs, promoting employee engagement and well-being, enhancing public-private partnerships, and implementing talent retention strategies are essential strategies for building a robust IT workforce in Nigeria.

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