

# Organizational Culture, Human Resource Development, And Employee Performance in Nigerian Private Universities: An Empirical Analysis

OLADIMEJI, Bayode Samuel<sup>1</sup>, FALOYE Dotun. O.<sup>2</sup>, ENYIOKO Chilaka Onyekachi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Doctoral Student, Business Administration, Achievers University Owo, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Business Administration Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Business Administration, Achievers University, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria

Doi <https://doi.org/10.55640/ijssll-06-04-04>

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between organizational culture, human resource development (HRD), and employee performance in private universities in Southwestern Nigeria. The increasing competition within Nigeria's higher education sector has compelled private universities to prioritize human capital development in order to achieve institutional effectiveness and academic excellence. Despite growing investments in HRD initiatives such as training, career development, and performance management, evidence suggests that these initiatives do not always translate into improved employee performance. This study therefore investigates how HRD influences employee performance while considering the mediating role of employee motivation and the contextual influence of organizational culture. A survey research design was adopted, and data were collected from academic and non-academic staff across six selected private universities in Southwestern Nigeria. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, 409 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 380 valid responses were analyzed. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the relationships among the variables. The findings reveal that HRD significantly influences employee performance, while employee motivation partially mediates the relationship between HRD and performance. The results further indicate that a supportive organizational culture enhances the effectiveness of HRD initiatives by encouraging employee engagement and professional development. The study concludes that integrating HRD practices with motivational strategies and positive organizational culture is essential for improving employee performance and sustaining institutional competitiveness in Nigerian private universities.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Development, Organizational Culture, Employee Motivation, Employee Performance, Private Universities, Nigeria.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The function of HRD in Higher Education is an important factor as Nigerian private universities seek to remain competitive in a more globalised and knowledge driven economy. HRD is one of the major categories of management function within the organisation, unique because it relates to developing the workforce skill set to meet their performance standards per the organisation's objectives. HRD includes training, career development, performance management, and overall organisational improvement. Each one of these major components develop employee skills/abilities, subsequently increasing employee productivity (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). In today's competitive academic environment, HRD is essential because it helps to ensure that all employees (academic and administrative) working for private

universities are able to reach their full potential. Improvement of employee performance will lead to increased levels of satisfaction among employees and ultimately, increased levels of growth and competitiveness for the institution. With regards to private universities located in Ondo State, Nigeria, HRD has become an essential component in achieving academic excellence, producing research, and increasing institutional competitiveness: therefore, HRD is vital in achieving these objectives.

The fast growth of private universities in Nigeria has greatly increased the level of competition present in the higher education sector. Generally, private universities depend heavily on the dedication and performance of their workers for the delivery of quality educational and service products. This places considerable importance on sound

human resource development practices at such institutions. As stated by Oladipo et al. (2022), human resource development and enhancement within university systems improves overall employee engagement, commitment to the organization, and retention of employees, all of which are important components of institutional sustainability.

"Human Resource Development" as defined by Okoro and his colleagues (2021) is all the various different methods used by organisations to help employees develop their skills, ability and knowledge to help the organisation perform. However, in the case of private universities in Nigeria, the general definition of HRD does not apply as expected. This is because of a variety of things such as lack of resources, no comprehensive training framework or not aligning the HRD initiatives with the Institutions goals (Musa and others, 2022). The literature indicates that many of Nigeria's private universities' investment in Human Resource Development (HRD) is disconnected from observable impacts on employee performance. Despite having established HRD practice areas (i.e., training programs, career development, and mentorship programs), these practice areas do not consistently produce measurable results in employee performance (Obisi, 2020). Further examination of how private universities employ motivation mechanisms to cultivate employee motivation and foster an organizational culture that enables employees to realize their HRD outcomes is needed to gain clarity on why HRD outcomes do not always achieve the intended impact.

In Nigerian private universities, the link between HRD practices and employee performance is often obstructed by various factors, including lack of resources, poor organizational culture, and the challenge of maintaining high levels of employee motivation. How well HRD delivers improved performance depends on how well employee motivation (both intrinsic and extrinsic) works (Akinbode & Shadare, 2021). Employee motivation is the psychological trigger that transforms newly learned knowledge and abilities into observable outcomes (Ogunyomi & Bruning, 2016). Additionally, the culture of the organization (the collective values, beliefs, and norms of all employees) can positively or negatively influence HRD and motivation and, ultimately, performance (Adeniji et al., 2021).

The effectiveness of Human Resource Development (HRD) programs in Nigerian private universities has often been questioned, as there is insufficient evidence to suggest that HRD interventions lead to sustained improvements in employee performance (Adeniji et al., 2021). A considerable body of research has shown that HRD investments do not automatically translate to enhanced employee productivity, and often, the performance outcomes fall short of expectations (Akinbode et al., 2022). The failure to adequately account for mediating and moderating variables such as employee motivation and organizational culture is one of the key reasons for this gap in performance outcomes.

The heightened demand for quality postsecondary education in Nigeria presents an enormous challenge for private university owners as they must prepare their workforce to perform at an acceptable level to address both academic and administrative-based issues. HRD is a critical tool for improving employee performance; nevertheless, many private universities are unable to implement effective HRD practices and suffer debilitating challenges as a result. The type and quality of HRD practices will have a large impact on the performance of employees within an organization; therefore, in private universities where there is an extremely high level of demand on both academics and on publications produced via research, HRD has a significant impact; however, there is ample empirical evidence indicating that a good number of private universities in Southwest Nigeria are unable to implement adequate HRD processes that would in turn provide quality employees leading to high levels of employee turnover, low levels of employee morale, and poor employee performance (Ojo & Akinola, 2021). What is the effect of human resource development on employee performance in private universities in Southwestern Nigeria? Assess how human resource development impacts employee performance in private universities throughout Southwest Nigeria.

H<sub>01</sub>: HRD does not have a significant effect on employee performance in private universities in Southwestern Nigeria.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Human Resource Development (HRD)*

According to Garavan (2018), HRD is a well-established practice that increases the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization through the development of employee competency, skill, knowledge, and ability. This process is increasingly significant in higher education institutions, as HRD provides the capability for academic and administrative employees to adapt to the changing nature of the academic environment. In addition to improving employee performance, the intent of HRD in a university setting is to enhance university performance through improved teaching, research, and student satisfaction (Gagne et al., 2021).

Human Resource Development (HRD) plays a pivotal role in enhancing employee performance within organizational settings, particularly in knowledge-driven sectors such as private universities in Southwestern Nigeria. HRD encompasses a range of activities including training, career development, performance management, and organizational learning, all of which collectively aim to improve the capabilities, motivation, and overall

performance of employees. The intricate relationship between HRD and employee performance is underscored by multiple scholarly works that emphasize the necessity of strategic HRD initiatives in cultivating a productive workforce.

Human Resource Development (HRD) refers to activities that support the development of individuals in their organizations. HRD includes training, evaluation, and career development and incorporates the standards of the organization's overall objectives to ensure maximum effectiveness is achieved by providing effective HRD systems and programs. The use of HRD within universities and colleges is important to improve their performance. According to Akinyemi et al., (2018) the use of good HRD practices significantly improves staff performance, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization. In addition, Garavan et al. (2019) state that effective HRD practices enhance individual and organizational performance by promoting continuous learning and helping employees meet changing job demands. Brown and McCartney (2020) argue that HRD can have a substantial positive impact on the quality of teaching and research within higher education.

A fundamental premise within HRD literature is that employee motivation significantly mediates the impact of HRD practices on performance outcomes. Work motivation, which refers to the intrinsic and extrinsic drivers propelling employees to achieve organizational goals, has been empirically linked to higher levels of job performance. For instance, Chien et al. (2020), in their study on four-star hotels in Mongolia, demonstrated that motivated employees exhibited superior performance metrics, driven by enhanced engagement and commitment to their roles. This finding aligns with da Cruz Carvalho et al. (2020), who highlighted that motivation not only boosts job satisfaction but also directly correlates with improved employee performance. Therefore, HRD initiatives that focus on fostering motivation through career development opportunities and skill enhancement are critical in elevating performance levels in private universities.

In addition, the effectiveness of HRD programs depends on an organisation's ability to develop a culture that supports the development of its employees. Astuty and Udin (2020) highlighted that perceived organisational support and transformational leadership play a major role in enhancing employees' affective commitment which, in turn, leads to higher levels of performance. Employees will be more likely to put forth their best effort and display the behaviours necessary for the organisation to succeed if they believe their organisation is committed to their growth and well-being. This perception of support is critical to HRD because it affects how employees react to their organisations' developmental programmes. In private universities, where intellectual capital is of great importance, creating an environment of supportive HRD climates is the means by which faculty and

administrative staff can ensure that they are both qualified and dependable contributors to the university's success.

Organizational culture significantly interacts with HRD to shape employee performance outcomes. Hanifah, Rofaida, and Ciptagustia (2021) elucidate that a positive organizational culture, characterized by shared values, norms, and practices, creates a conducive environment for HRD endeavors to succeed. Culture influences how employees perceive and engage with development opportunities. For instance, a culture that emphasizes learning and innovation encourages employees to participate actively in HRD programs, thereby enhancing their competencies and performance. This cultural dimension is particularly relevant in private universities in Southwestern Nigeria, where institutional culture can either empower or hinder employee growth. Integrating HRD practices with cultural alignment ensures that developmental efforts resonate with employees' intrinsic motivations and professional aspirations.

### ***Employee Performance***

Performance measures how well employees help an organization reach its goals. A top-performing employee produces exceptional job results, works well with others, and exhibits a high level of commitment to achieving the goals of the organization (Pfeffer, 2021). In the field of higher education, employee performance is multi-faceted because an employee's performance can be assessed by their ability to produce teaching results (teaching performance), research publications (research performance), service to the institution (service performance) and their performance in developing administrative processes (administrative performance). Brown and McCartney (2020) further explain this idea by describing the four areas as part of an employee's multi-dimensional performance.

Employee performance is how well an employee does his/her assigned job. It is measured in terms of how effectively and efficiently the employee is completing their job (meeting known organizational goals). Employee performance can be characterized in four ways: by what goes into making an employee successful (productivity), by how good the employee's work product is (quality), by how well an employee acts (professional behavior), and by the corresponding standard that exists within an employer's organization (institutional standards). da Cruz Carvalho et al. (2020) found a positive relationship between employee motivation and job satisfaction and performance; employees with higher levels of motivation were associated with higher levels of productivity and organizational citizenship behaviours. Nurdiansyah et al. (2020) further substantiate the importance of motivation

and satisfaction in affecting performance as antecedents to performance; therefore, if Human Resource Development (HRD) professionals increase employee motivation through HRD interventions, they may then produce higher levels of performance. Lee and Raschke (2016), however, caution that the performance of an employee can only be understood through examining the culture of the organization and the dynamics of motivation; thus, performance should be understood in a more sophisticated manner to account for the many interactions among those factors. In the context of private universities in South-western Nigeria, employee performance directly influences educational quality, research productivity, and organizational reputation.

The motivational landscape in private universities is further complicated by the need to balance intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Idris et al. (2020) explore how compensation and work environment, as extrinsic motivational elements, significantly influence job satisfaction and employee performance. Their research in the Indonesian educational context reveals that adequate compensation packages and a conducive work environment are fundamental in motivating employees, thereby promoting retention and productivity. This aligns with findings by Prasetyo et al. (2021), who argue that organizational communication climate—an aspect of the work environment—serves as a motivational conduit by facilitating transparency, feedback, and social exchange. A positive communication climate enhances employee retention and performance by enabling employees to feel valued and informed, which is crucial in private universities where institutional success heavily depends on human capital stability.

Moreover, employees can get motivated with the help of intrinsic motivation. Tamunomiebi and Oyibo (2020) state that an employee's work-life balance (the ability to balance their work responsibilities and family/personal commitments after work) is a driving force for motivating employees, thereby ultimately resulting in a better overall employee experience, which would increase employee commitment to the organization and lead to improved performance by employees. The results of their literature review show that if employees feel they work in an environment where their personal and professional needs are being met, they will be more motivated to perform their jobs better. Also, Bataineh (2019) suggests happiness in the workplace is also an important contributor to employee performance and is related to intrinsic motivation. The study posits that fostering happiness through recognition, autonomy, and a positive organizational culture cultivates motivated employees who are more productive and resilient.

### ***Organizational Culture and Its Components/ Role in Employee Performance***

The shared beliefs, values and behaviours that define how people work together in an organization is its culture (Cameron and Quinn 2020). The organizational culture serves as a 'personality' for each organization; this can have a significant influence on employee behaviour, attitude and performance (Cameron and Quinn 2020); and also can promote or constrain the work performance of employees depending on the organization's culture (Ford & Lewis, 2020).

A company's culture is made up of the common values, beliefs, and practices of its employees and how they relate to one another and to others outside the organization. According to Schein (2010), "Organizational Culture" is the set of assumptions and underlying beliefs that dictate how employees of an organization act. Positive organizational culture offers employees the ability to connect and collaborate with one another, build trust, and have open lines of communication which improves performance (Cameron & Quinn, 2020).

It provides the social context within which employee motivation and performance unfold. Organizational culture is not only a reflection of the organization's identity but also a driving force that influences employee behavior, communication patterns, and decision-making processes. In higher education institutions, organizational culture significantly influences how faculty and staff perceive their roles and their relationships with management. A culture that fosters open communication, autonomy, and professional development tends to boost employee morale and performance (Kotter & Heskett, 2020). Studies indicate that universities with strong, supportive cultures exhibit higher levels of faculty satisfaction and student success (Kezar & Eckel, 2021).

A positive organizational culture is characterized by openness, trust, collaboration, and a commitment to continuous learning and development (Schein, 2010). These elements foster an environment in which employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to perform at their best. For instance, universities with a culture that emphasizes academic excellence, innovation, and inclusivity tend to exhibit higher levels of employee performance, as employees are motivated to align their actions with the institution's core values (Cameron & Quinn, 2020).

Organizational culture constitutes a complex system of shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that shape the behavior and attitudes of members within an organization. It operates at multiple levels, influencing how employees interact, make decisions, and perceive their roles within the organizational framework (Schein, 1991). In the context of private universities in Southwestern Nigeria, understanding organizational culture is crucial as it underpins human resource development and ultimately

impacts employee performance. As Meisenbach and Brandhorst (2018) emphasize, organizational culture serves as the social glue that binds members together, creating a collective identity that fosters cohesion and alignment toward common goals. Therefore, a robust organizational culture can enhance employee motivation and engagement, which are vital for the development and performance of human resources in academic institutions.

Recent empirical studies reinforce the critical influence of organizational culture on employee outcomes. Wang et al. (2019) provide evidence that spiritual leadership, a cultural facet emphasizing vision, altruistic love, and hope/faith, enhances employee effectiveness by fostering intrinsic motivation. This points to the broadening understanding of culture encompassing not only formal policies but also the intangible, psychological climate that motivates employees. The integration of such cultural elements into the fabric of private universities in Southwestern Nigeria could potentiate a workforce that is self-driven, innovative, and committed to institutional goals. This intrinsic motivation is a key driver of human resource development, facilitating continuous learning and adaptability in a competitive higher education landscape. Furthermore, Sandhu et al. (2017) examine the effect of employee motivation on performance, underscoring that motivated employees demonstrate higher productivity and quality of work. While motivation is often studied as a distinct construct, it cannot be extricated from the cultural environment that nurtures or stifles it. Organizational culture establishes the motivational context by defining what is valued and rewarded within the institution. Private universities with cultures that recognize and celebrate achievements, encourage autonomy, and promote professional growth tend to experience enhanced employee motivation. This culturally embedded motivation translates into improved employee performance, a critical determinant of organizational success and sustainability in the educational sector.

It is also important to consider the dynamic and evolving nature of organizational culture. As universities respond to external pressures such as globalization, technological advancement, and policy reforms, their cultures must adapt to remain relevant and effective. Meisenbach and Brandhorst (2018) highlight that culture is not static; it is continuously constructed and reconstructed through shared interactions and experiences. This fluidity presents both challenges and opportunities for private universities in Southwestern Nigeria. Leaders and human resource practitioners need to be proactive in shaping cultures that support innovation, diversity, and continuous improvement. Such cultures empower employees to develop professionally and perform optimally, aligning individual aspirations with institutional objectives.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a **survey research design**, which is most appropriate for examining relationships among variables within a real-world setting using structured instruments. This design is suitable because it enables the examination of the relationships between variables without manipulating them, thereby reflecting the natural setting of private universities in Southwestern Nigeria. A survey design allows for the systematic collection of quantifiable data from a sizeable and geographically dispersed population, facilitating empirical generalization of findings. This design was deemed appropriate given the objectives of the study, which involve examining the interrelationships between variables such as employee motivation, organizational culture, human resource development (HRD), and employee performance in private universities.

According to **Creswell and Creswell (2018)**, survey designs are ideal for capturing opinions, behaviors, and attitudes across a population, allowing for generalization of findings. Moreover, **Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019)** assert that survey research is not only cost-effective and versatile but also provides a structured approach to hypothesis testing and relationship analysis among constructs. These benefits are vital to this study which seeks to explore how employee motivation, organizational culture, and HR development impact employee performance in higher educational institutions. The study was geographically situated within **Southwestern Nigeria**, a region that comprises six states: Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo. This geopolitical zone was chosen due to its dense concentration of leading private universities, many of which are trailblazers in institutional innovation, staff development, and organizational excellence. Specifically, the study focuses on six renowned private universities: Afe Babalola University (ABUAD), Achievers University (AU), Joseph Ayo Babalola University (JABU), Lead City University (LCU), Covenant University (CU) and Caleb University (CALU). These institutions were purposively selected due to their reputation for adopting modern human resource management practices, strong organizational cultures, competitive staff welfare packages, and a high commitment to academic excellence. The population of this study consists of academic and non-academic staff across six purposively selected private universities in Southwestern Nigeria. According to current data from the National Universities Commission (NUC) and corroborated by internal data from university registries (2025), there are over 30 private universities in this region. For this research, six universities were purposively selected based on their institutional size, prominence, and

established human resource development (HRD) practices. These universities include Afe Babalola University (ABUAD), Achievers University (AU), Joseph Ayo Babalola University (JABU), Lead City University (LCU), Covenant University (CU) and Caleb University (CALU). The six institutions selected for this study represent a cross-section of varying institutional sizes, HRD policies, and performance appraisal systems, making them ideal for generalizable insights.

The rationale for targeting both academic and non-academic groups lies in the differentiated roles they play in university administration and knowledge production. Academic staffs are primarily engaged in teaching, research, and community service, while non-academic staff handles administrative and operational functions that support institutional effectiveness. Including both groups enriches

**Table 1: Total Population for the Study**

S/N	Universities	Academic Staff	Non-Academic Staff	Total Staff Population
1	ABUAD	520	430	950
2	CU	600	470	1,070
3	CALU	580	450	1,030
4	JABU	450	400	850
5	LCU	400	380	780
6	AU	264	359	623
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,814</b>	<b>2,489</b>	<b>5,303</b>

**Source:** Registry Departments of Selected Universities (2026)  
 This population (N = 5,303) serves as the universe from which a representative sample were drawn. The inclusion of both academic and non-academic staff is strategic to capturing a holistic understanding of the operational dynamics and institutional cultures influencing employee performance. This population size offers a significant scope for generalization and robust statistical analysis.

The sample size for this study is 372. The sampling strategy for this study adopted a **multi-stage sampling technique** to ensure both the representativeness of the population and the feasibility of data collection. This method allowed the researcher to purposively select institutions, systematically categorize staff, and conveniently access participants, while maintaining the statistical integrity of the sample. At the first stage, six private universities were selected through purposive sampling. The criteria for selection included institutional visibility, operational capacity, and the existence of structured HRD and performance management frameworks. These institutions were chosen to reflect diversity in size and administrative complexity, providing a rich setting for exploring HRD-related variables. In the second stage, the staff population within each selected university was stratified into two distinct groups: academic staff and non-academic staff. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation of these sub-groups within each institution. This approach was designed to control for possible variation in experiences and perceptions of HRD interventions between these job classifications. In the final stage, convenience sampling was used to select respondents within each stratum. This technique was adopted to accommodate institutional access limitations and

participants' availability.

To determine the appropriate sample size, **Yamane's (1967) formula** was applied:

$$n = \frac{N}{[1+N(e)^2]}$$

Where:

- *n* = required sample size
- *N* = population size (5,350)
- *e* = margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{5,303}{[1+5,303 (0.05)^2]}$$

$$n = \frac{5,303}{[1+5,303 (0.0025)]}$$

$$n = \frac{5,303}{[1+13.2575]}$$

$$n = \frac{5,303}{14.2575}$$

$$n = 371.9445 = 372$$

10% addition will give 372 + 37.2 = 409

To derive an adequate sample size of 409 respondents with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, this sample size of 409 was distributed proportionately across the six selected universities, based on each university's total number of employees. This proportional distribution provides fairness and establishes statistical validity. To arrive at the proportion for each university's employees to the overall population, the total number of employees in the sampling population was calculated and used to

establish a proportion of the total number of employees in each university.

For instance, ABUAD's total staff is 950, which constitutes:

$$\frac{950}{5,350} \times 409 = 73$$

**Employee Motivation as a Mediating Variable**

Employee motivation, acting as a mediating variable, was measured using a dual-dimensional approach incorporating both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, based on the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Motivation was evaluated through items adapted from the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (Gagné et al., 2015). The scale includes:

1. "I feel a strong sense of personal satisfaction when I perform well at work." (Intrinsic)
2. "I am motivated by opportunities for promotion and career growth." (Extrinsic)
3. "I receive recognition and rewards that encourage me to perform better." (Extrinsic)
4. "I enjoy the tasks and challenges associated with my job role." (Intrinsic)

These measures will capture the extent to which employees feel driven to engage in their work tasks, thus acting as a potential mechanism through which the independent variables affect performance outcomes.

**Data Analysis and Discussion**

**Table 2: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Sex</b>	Male	214	56.3
	Female	166	43.7
<b>Age (Years)</b>	20-29	48	12.6
	30-39	124	32.6
	40-49	112	29.5
	50-59	72	18.9
	60 and above	24	6.3
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	102	26.8
	Married	248	65.3
	Divorced	18	4.7
	Widowed	12	3.2
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	OND/NCE	26	6.8
	B.Sc./B.A	148	38.9
	M.Sc./M.A./MBA	164	43.2
	Ph.D	34	8.9
	Others	8	2.1
<b>Employment Category</b>	Academic Staff	246	64.7
	Non-Teaching Staff	134	35.3
<b>Years of Work Experience</b>	Less than 1 year	22	5.8
	1-5 years	98	25.8
	6-10 years	132	34.7
	11-15 years	84	22.1
	Above 15 years	44	11.6
<b>Employment Status</b>	Permanent	268	70.5
	Contract	86	22.6
	Temporary	26	6.8
<b>Monthly Salary (₦)</b>	Below ₦100,000	38	10.0
	₦100,000-₦199,999	96	25.3
	₦200,000-₦299,999	114	30.0
	₦300,000-₦399,999	72	18.9
	₦400,000-₦499,999	38	10.0
	₦500,000 and above	22	5.8

<b>University Location</b>	Lagos	112	29.5
	Ogun	78	20.5
	Oyo	64	16.8
	Osun	52	13.7
	Ondo	42	11.1
	Ekiti	32	8.4
<b>Total</b>		<b>380</b>	100.0

**Source:** Field Survey; 2026

**Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

The socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the 380 respondents who participated in this study investigating the influences of employee motivation and organisational culture on human resource development and employee performance in private universities in Southwestern Nigeria are provided in Table 4.2. The socio-demographic variables examined include sex, age, marital status, educational qualification, employment category, designation/position, years of work experience, employment status, monthly salary range, and university location. These variables are crucial for understanding the background characteristics of respondents and for contextualizing subsequent analyses on motivation, organizational culture, HRD, and performance.

Out of the 380 respondents surveyed, 214 (56.3%) were male, while 166 (43.7%) were female. This distribution indicates a higher participation of males in employment within private universities in Southwestern Nigeria. Although males dominate numerically, the relatively substantial proportion of female respondents reflects increasing gender inclusion in the higher education workforce. The implication is that issues of motivation, organizational culture, and human resource development must be examined within a gender-diverse institutional environment, where motivational needs and work-life balance considerations may differ across genders. The age distribution of respondents shows considerable variation across career stages. Specifically, 48 respondents (12.6%) were aged between 20–29 years, 124 (32.6%) fell within the 30–39 years category, while 112 (29.5%) were between 40–49 years. Respondents aged 50–59 years accounted for 72 (18.9%), whereas only 24 respondents (6.3%) were aged 60 years and above. The data indicate that a substantial majority of respondents (62.1%) were between 30 and 49 years of age. This suggests that the workforce in private universities is dominated by individuals in their most active and productive career phases, making them particularly responsive to organizational culture, training opportunities, career advancement, and motivational incentives.

In terms of marital status, the findings reveal that most respondents were married, accounting for 248 individuals (65.3%). Single respondents constituted 102 (26.8%), while

smaller proportions were divorced (18; 4.7%) or widowed (12; 3.2%). The dominance of married respondents suggests that family responsibilities may significantly influence employees’ expectations regarding job security, income stability, promotion prospects, and welfare-related motivational practices. This demographic characteristic underscores the importance of supportive organizational cultures and HRD policies that address work-family balance within private universities. Regarding educational qualifications, the results show that the respondents were highly educated. Specifically, 26 respondents (6.8%) possessed OND/NCE certificates, 148 (38.9%) held Bachelor’s degrees, 164 (43.2%) had Master’s degrees (M.Sc./M.A./MBA), while 34 respondents (8.9%) possessed Ph.D qualifications. A small proportion (8; 2.1%) indicated other qualifications. This distribution demonstrates that the private university workforce is largely composed of highly skilled and professionally trained individuals. The prevalence of postgraduate qualifications highlights the importance of continuous human resource development, research support, and intellectual stimulation as key motivational drivers in academic institutions.

Analysis of employment category reveals that 246 respondents (64.7%) were academic staff, while 134 respondents (35.3%) were non-teaching staff. This reflects the core academic mission of universities, while also acknowledging the essential administrative and technical roles played by non-teaching staff. The presence of both categories enhances the robustness of the study by allowing for a comprehensive assessment of motivation and organizational culture across different functional units within private universities.

The distribution of respondents by years of work experience shows that 22 respondents (5.8%) had less than one year of experience, 98 (25.8%) had 1–5 years, 132 (34.7%) had 6–10 years, 84 (22.1%) had 11–15 years, while 44 respondents (11.6%) had more than 15 years of experience. The findings suggest that the majority of respondents (56.8%) had between 6 and 15 years of experience in their current universities. This indicates a relatively experienced workforce with sufficient exposure to institutional policies, organizational culture, and HRD practices, thereby enhancing the credibility of their responses. In relation to employment status, the results

show that 268 respondents (70.5%) were on permanent appointments, while 86 (22.6%) were employed on contract basis, and 26 (6.8%) were temporary staff. The dominance of permanent employment suggests relative job stability within private universities, which may positively influence employee commitment, motivation, and long-term performance. However, the presence of contract and temporary staff also highlights potential disparities in motivation and access to HRD opportunities.

The monthly salary distribution indicates that 38 respondents (10.0%) earned below ₦100,000, 96 (25.3%) earned between ₦100,000 and ₦199,999, while the largest proportion, 114 respondents (30.0%), earned between ₦200,000 and ₦299,999. Additionally, 72 respondents (18.9%) earned ₦300,000–₦399,999, 38 (10.0%) earned ₦400,000–₦499,999, and only 22 respondents (5.8%) earned ₦500,000 and above. This distribution suggests that most employees fall within the middle-income category, emphasizing the relevance of both financial and non-financial motivational strategies in enhancing performance.

Finally, the geographical distribution of respondents shows that Lagos State recorded the highest representation with 112 respondents (29.5%), followed by Ogun State with 78 (20.5%) and Oyo State with 64 (16.8%). Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti States accounted for 52 (13.7%), 42 (11.1%), and 32 (8.4%) respondents respectively. This distribution reflects the concentration of private universities in Lagos and adjoining states, while also ensuring adequate regional coverage across Southwestern Nigeria. Overall, the socio-demographic profile of respondents reveals that private universities in Southwestern Nigeria are staffed largely by educated, experienced, and professionally active individuals, most of whom are permanently employed and within their productive working ages. These characteristics provide a strong empirical foundation for examining how employee motivation and organizational culture influence human resource development and employee performance in private universities.

**Table 3: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Relative Influence of HRD and Employee’s Motivation on Employee Performance**

Model	Predictor Variables	β	t-value	Sig. (p)	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	F-change	Sig. F-change	Model Fit Summary
Model 1	HRD (Training & Development)	0.450	8.400	0.000***	0.203	0.200	-	70.560	0.000***	F(1,378) = 70.560, p < 0.001
Model 2	HRD (Training & Development)	0.270	4.170	0.000***	0.281	0.276	0.078	24.030	0.000***	F(2,377) = 24.030, p < 0.001
	Employee Motivation	0.400	7.600	0.000***						

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Note: \*\*\*p < 0.001; \*\*p < 0.01; \*p < 0.05

Based on these findings, several conclusions can be drawn. First, HRD initiatives positively influence employee performance in private universities, confirming the centrality of training, career development, feedback, and recognition in enhancing individual and organizational outcomes. Second, Employee Motivation partially mediates the relationship between HRD and performance, demonstrating that motivated employees are more likely to utilize skills acquired through HRD initiatives effectively. Third, the findings suggest that employee motivation is a stronger driver of performance than HRD alone, highlighting the need for a dual approach in human resource management that integrates both

development and motivational strategies.

The study also has important policy implications. University management should adopt HRD frameworks that are closely integrated with motivational strategies to ensure that employee development translates into measurable performance improvements. This could include implementing structured recognition and reward systems, providing clear career advancement opportunities, and offering performance-linked incentives. Additionally, management should focus on fostering an organizational culture that encourages employee engagement and values the contributions of staff, as these factors have been shown to strengthen the effectiveness of HRD initiatives. Continuous evaluation of HRD programs is also recommended to assess not only

skill acquisition but also employee motivation and application of skills in the workplace.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that the effective combination of HRD and Employee Motivation is essential for enhancing employee performance in private universities in Southwestern Nigeria. HRD provides the foundation through skill and knowledge development, while Employee Motivation ensures that these resources are effectively applied to achieve organizational goals. The findings provide empirical and theoretical support for the integration of development and motivational strategies in human resource management and underscore the need for institutions to view employee performance enhancement as a multidimensional process that addresses both competency and motivation.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the effect of Human Resource Development (HRD) on employee performance in private universities in South-western Nigeria, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of employee motivation and the contextual influence of organizational culture. The findings demonstrate that HRD remains a fundamental managerial tool for enhancing workforce capability and institutional effectiveness in higher education institutions. As universities operate in an increasingly competitive and knowledge-driven environment, the development of human capital through structured training, career development, and performance management becomes indispensable for achieving academic excellence and administrative efficiency. The results of the empirical analysis revealed that HRD practices have a significant positive influence on employee performance within the selected private universities. This finding supports earlier scholarly arguments that systematic investment in employee development leads to improved job competence, productivity, and organizational commitment. In the context of private universities, where the quality of teaching, research output, and administrative effectiveness depends largely on staff competence, HRD initiatives such as professional training, mentoring, and continuous learning opportunities play a crucial role in strengthening institutional performance.

Furthermore, the hierarchical regression analysis showed that employee motivation significantly mediates the relationship between HRD and employee performance. While HRD equips employees with the necessary knowledge and skills, motivation determines the extent to which employees apply these competencies to achieve organizational goals. The study therefore confirms that motivated employees are more likely to utilize newly acquired skills effectively, resulting in higher levels of productivity and work engagement. This finding reinforces theoretical perspectives which argue that HRD interventions alone cannot guarantee improved performance

unless they are supported by motivational mechanisms such as recognition, career advancement opportunities, fair compensation, and supportive leadership.

Another important implication of the study is the role of organizational culture in shaping the effectiveness of HRD and motivation within the workplace. A positive organizational culture characterized by trust, collaboration, openness, and continuous learning creates an enabling environment in which HRD programs can thrive. In such environments, employees feel valued and supported, which enhances their willingness to participate in training programs and apply acquired knowledge in their daily work activities. Conversely, a weak or unsupportive organizational culture may undermine HRD initiatives by discouraging participation, limiting knowledge sharing, and reducing employee morale.

The study also highlights several practical implications for university administrators and policymakers. Private university management should prioritize the integration of HRD strategies with motivational policies in order to maximize employee performance. Investment in training programs must be complemented by policies that promote employee engagement, career progression, and performance-based recognition. Universities should also establish supportive organizational cultures that encourage innovation, teamwork, and professional development. By aligning HRD initiatives with employee motivation and institutional values, private universities can strengthen their human capital base and improve their competitiveness within the Nigerian higher education sector.

Overall, the study concludes that employee performance in private universities is influenced by a combination of developmental, motivational, and cultural factors. HRD provides the structural framework for enhancing employee competence, while motivation acts as the psychological mechanism that drives employees to apply their skills effectively. Organizational culture, in turn, provides the environment that either supports or constrains these processes. Consequently, improving employee performance requires a holistic approach that simultaneously addresses skill development, motivation, and institutional culture.

In summary, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on human resource management in higher education by demonstrating that effective HRD practices, when supported by strong motivational strategies and positive organizational cultures, significantly enhance employee performance. For private universities in Southwestern Nigeria, adopting an integrated human resource management framework that combines development, motivation, and cultural alignment will be essential for sustaining academic quality, improving

research productivity, and achieving long-term institutional success.

## REFERENCES

1. Adeniji, A. A., Osibanjo, A. O., Salau, O. P., Falola, H. O., & Igbinoba, E. E. (2021). Organizational culture and employee performance in Nigerian universities. *International Journal of Business and Management Review*, 9(2), 1–15.
2. Akinbode, G. A., & Shadare, O. A. (2021). Human resource development practices and employee performance in Nigerian higher education institutions. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 9(3), 45–56.
3. Akinbode, G. A., Shadare, O. A., & Oginni, S. O. (2022). Human resource management practices and employee productivity in Nigerian universities. *African Journal of Business Management*, 16(4), 89–101.
4. Akinyemi, B. O., Olatunji, S. O., & Olanrewaju, A. T. (2018). Human resource development practices and employee commitment in Nigerian universities. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*, 8(4), 214–230.
5. Armstrong, M., & Taylor, S. (2023). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (16th ed.). Kogan Page.
6. Astuty, I., & Udin, U. (2020). The effect of perceived organizational support and transformational leadership on employee performance. *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 7(10), 401–411.
7. Bataineh, K. A. (2019). Impact of work-life balance, happiness at work, on employee performance. *International Business Research*, 12(2), 99–112.
8. Brown, R., & McCartney, S. (2020). The impact of human resource development on academic performance in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(5), 1–15.
9. Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. (2020). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
10. Chien, G. C. L., Mao, I., Nergui, E., & Chang, W. (2020). The effect of work motivation on employee performance. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 33, 100587.
11. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
12. da Cruz Carvalho, A., Riana, I. G., & Soares, A. (2020). Motivation on job satisfaction and employee performance. *International Research Journal of Management, IT and Social Sciences*, 7(5), 13–23.
13. Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268.
14. Garavan, T. N. (2018). Human resource development and organizational performance. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 20(3), 289–305.
15. Garavan, T. N., Carbery, R., & Rock, A. (2019). Mapping talent development: Definition, scope and architecture. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 43(3/4), 1–16.
16. Hanifah, H., Rofaida, R., & Ciptagustia, A. (2021). The role of organizational culture in enhancing employee performance. *Journal of Business and Management Review*, 2(4), 270–284.
17. Idris, A., Dollard, M., & Winefield, A. (2020). Work conditions and employee performance in educational institutions. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 34(5), 1–14.
18. Kotter, J. P., & Heskett, J. L. (2020). *Corporate culture and performance*. Free Press.
19. Lee, M. T., & Raschke, R. L. (2016). Understanding employee motivation and performance. *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 3(2), 126–142.
20. Meisenbach, R. J., & Brandhorst, C. (2018). The social construction of organizational culture. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 32(4), 1–21.
21. Nurdiansyah, R., Rahmawati, R., & Prasetyo, A. (2020). Employee motivation and job satisfaction as predictors of performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Research*, 5(1), 90–101.
22. Obisi, C. (2020). Human resource management and employee performance in Nigeria. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 12(10), 45–53.
23. Ogunyomi, P., & Bruning, N. (2016). Human resource management and organizational performance in Nigerian SMEs. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(6), 612–634.
24. Ojo, A. O., & Akinola, O. A. (2021). Human resource development and staff productivity in Nigerian private universities. *Nigerian Journal of Management Sciences*, 22(1), 56–68.
25. Oládipò, S. E., Adeyemi, S. L., & Alabi, A. T. (2022). Staff development and employee engagement in Nigerian universities. *African Journal of Educational Management*, 24(2), 77–92.
26. Pfeffer, J. (2021). *Leadership and the organizational culture challenge*. Harvard Business Review Press.
27. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.
28. Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
29. Tamunomiebi, M. D., & Oyibo, C. (2020). Work-life balance and employee performance in Nigerian organizations. *Journal of Management and Strategy*, 11(2), 1–12.
30. Wang, M., Guo, T., Ni, Y., Shang, S., & Tang, Z. (2019). The effect of spiritual leadership on employee effectiveness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 2620.
31. Yamane, T. (1967). *Statistics: An introductory analysis* (2nd ed.). Harper and Row.