

Knowledge Retention and Performance of Selected Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Organisations' knowledge and management practices are critical to their long-term success in a world that is becoming more interconnected and competitive. Since knowledge is becoming a vital asset in the digital era, it is clear that conventional resource-based rivalry is giving way to knowledge-based competition. Numerous obstacles that organisations must overcome might affect their overall performance, efficacy, growth, and efficiency. The major objective of this study is to examine the effect of knowledge retention and performance of selected universities in Kwara State. The underpinning theory of the study is knowledge-based view theory. The study adopted descriptive research survey, with cross-sectional approach. The population of the study comprises two thousand six hundred and forty two (2,642) academic staff of three selected universities in Kwara State. The sample size of three hundred and thirty six (336) was determined using MACORR calculator. Data were collected electronically using a google form. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed, with regression analysis used in analyzing the data through SPSS version 27. The study found that knowledge retention has a significant effect on the performance of selected universities in Kwara State with ($R^2 = 0.544$, $\beta = .688$, $t = 16.902$, $p = .000$), the study concluded that knowledge retention practices are instrumental in advancing performance outcomes in universities, especially when tailored to the specific dimension of growth. The study recommended that universities should implement structured mentoring programs and encourage documentation of procedures and practices.

INTRODUCTION

A knowledge based organization and knowledge management are crucial in the long term success of an organization in a rapidly globalizing and competitive environment. The transition to the digital age has intensified the focus of the knowledge-based competition over the traditional resource-based competition as knowledge has become a significant strategic resource. Knowledge management (KM) has therefore become a staple of the new front line

organizational strategy, as it helps improve performance, become innovative and keep ahead of the pack.

Most organizations worldwide are becoming knowledge-making organizations, entrenching knowledge making and sharing into their cultures to stay afloat in dynamic times. Learning, creating, remembering, and retaining knowledge has become crucial to organizations that would like to succeed. KM extends beyond the management of explicit knowledge but incorporates the use of tacit knowledge in the form of human capital skills, experiences, and competencies that can be hard to capture and utilize (Oyenuga, Adeyemi, and Salami, 2019).

In Africa, the recognition of knowledge as a driver of socio-economic development has spurred growing interest in KM practices. However, African institutions, including universities, face significant challenges in implementing KM, ranging from limited infrastructure and technological constraints to shortages of skilled personnel (Shahzad, Khan, & Ahmed, 2021). Despite these obstacles, there is a pressing need for African universities to strengthen KM practices as a way of enhancing their global competitiveness and contributing to development outcomes.

In Nigeria, universities play a central role in knowledge creation and dissemination. Their effectiveness in managing knowledge directly influences institutional performance and the quality of graduates they produce. Yet, recent concerns about the declining quality of graduates suggest inadequacies in how knowledge is managed across many universities (Mbah & Madafor, 2022). Much of the existing research on KM in Nigeria has focused on knowledge acquisition, creation, and sharing, while the dimension of knowledge retention the ability of institutions to preserve institutional memory and safeguard critical knowledge from loss has received less attention. This gap raises important questions about how knowledge retention practices affect the overall performance of Nigerian universities.

This study therefore investigates the relationship between knowledge retention and the performance of selected universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. By focusing on retention as a distinct dimension of KM, the study extends the existing literature on KM in Africa and provides practical insights for university administrators seeking to improve organizational performance through effective knowledge preservation strategies.

Knowledge retention refers to the ability of organizations to preserve valuable information, expertise, and skills over time. In universities, this involves safeguarding the intellectual capital of faculty and staff, particularly as they retire, relocate, or leave the institution. Without proper retention strategies, universities risk losing critical institutional memory and academic expertise. Effective approaches such as mentoring programs, structured documentation, and digital archiving help to transfer knowledge to other members of the institution and sustain organizational learning (Githii, 2021).

The problem of knowledge retention is particularly acute in the universities of Nigeria because there is a high turnover of staff and the problem of brain drain remains unresolved. This lack of capability to memorize knowledge has led to poor academic continuation, research interruption and deterioration of teaching quality. On the other hand, effective knowledge retention

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strategies increase the capacity of an institution through retention of expertise, facilitating transitions, and continuity of academic quality in the long run.

The performance of universities can be assessed through multiple indicators, including the quality of teaching, research output, graduate employability, student satisfaction, and institutional reputation. Knowledge retention directly influences these outcomes by ensuring that both tacit and explicit knowledge remain accessible for future use. In the Nigerian context, where concerns have been raised about declining educational standards, effective knowledge retention is critical to reversing these trends and strengthening the role of universities in national development.

Statement of the Problem

The retention of the valuable knowledge is one of the biggest problems in knowledge management. The ability to maintain both old and new knowledge in the face of uncertainty, complexity, and rapid change is highly important to the long-term success and relevance of any institution (Moşteanu, 2024). Compared to physical facts and figures, experiential knowledge is less capturable or transferable since it is engrained in human knowledge and practice. This necessitates organizations to have proper mechanisms of transferring this kind of deeper knowledge especially where the rate of staff turnover is high or where new staff is being introduced very often.

This is especially the case in Kwara State in tertiary institutions. The University of Ilorin is a federal university with a large and diverse academic workforce (at the University of Ilorin) and has the risk of losing key expertise due to frequent retirements and staff turnover. Kwara State University is the state-owned institution that is relatively young and still struggling to establish sustainable knowledge management systems but is affected by resource constraints that limit the preservation of institutional knowledge. The Al-Hikmah University is a privately owned institution that is subjected to the same issues of maintaining knowledge continuity in the face of staff turnover and the need to balance retention strategies to remain financially viable. Recent reports also show that every year thousands of lecturers leave Nigerian universities due to retirement and brain drain, further undermining the question of knowledge retention effectiveness in sustaining teaching, research, and community service performance (NUC, 2022; World Bank, 2021). It is against this context that the current paper discusses the impact of knowledge retention on the performance of the chosen universities in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: knowledge retention has no significant effect on the performance of selected universities in Kwara State.

Literature Review

Knowledge Retention (KR)

According to Mashele (2023), knowledge retention (KR) is the set of activities to control employee turnover and the loss of expert knowledge as a significant resource of an organization. A large amount of valuable knowledge can be lost when workers leave. As baby

boomers retire, the ability to attract and retain the most talented workers will be a critical issue in the strategic knowledge retention (Tadesse, 2020). Whereas Mashele (2023) focuses on the concept of employee turnover, Kumar (2017) expands on the concept by defining KR as a collection of both personal opinions, experiences, and knowledge and organisational practices, procedures, routines, and/or culture. This contrast shows that KR does not just focus on loss avoidance but also on maintaining shared practices that lead to institutional performance.

Grafman (2018) also considers KR to be a recollection of specific skills, procedures or knowledge that was previously learned. Compared to it, Sumbal et al. (2017) concentrate on tacit knowledge, defining KR as maintaining the implicit knowledge and practice that is hard to codify and yet imperative to organizational processes. These perspectives are seen to be complementary and to have a viewpoint that both explicit and tacit knowledge are required to be held to help institutions remain effective.

Burmeister and Deller (2016) argue that the future performance of an organization should be guaranteed by the KR of retiring and older employees. This point coincides with Ramona and Alexandra (2019), who emphasise that application of knowledge would not only demand production and acquisition, but also retention and preservation of the same within the organisation. In contrast with Burmeister and Deller (2016) who refer to demographic pressures, Ramona and Alexandra (2019) concentrate on the organizational culture as one of the crucial factors. In making universities unaware of KR maintain teaching and research performance, both emphasize diverging yet converging reasons.

Sumbal (2018) also states that due to ageing workforce and demographic shifts, KR has become a need and unavoidable practice in current businesses, posing an unstoppable risk of knowledge loss. On the same note, Iazzolino and Laise (2018) emphasise the fact that knowledge workers are the key drivers of revenue in knowledge-based organisations, and their loss results into a decline in organisational memory. Both articles highlight the fact that knowledge loss undermines the institutions ability to innovate, and this fact is directly related to the hypothesis of the current research that KR has a direct relationship with performance.

Omotayo (2015) insists that organisational knowledge is stored within the human resource and will not be preserved unless it is written and shared. According to Daghfous, Belkhodja, and Angell (2013), retention can be achieved in three steps, namely, identification of critical knowledge, transfer of undocumented knowledge, and utilization of preserved knowledge to improve business processes. Although Omotayo (2015) notes the danger associated with loss of knowledge, Daghfous et al. (2013) offer an organized model of eliminating the threat. In the context of universities, this framework is particularly topical in maintaining the continuity of research and teaching in the case of high turnover rates among the staff.

According to Makhubela (2018), the training, social networks, communities of practice, succession planning, and utilisation of retired workers are some of the strategies that could be useful to KR. Similarly, both Makhubela and Ngoepe (2018) recommend the inclusion of KR in daily operations, and Darwin (2017) highlights the necessity of using formal retention strategies to preserve the survival and financial success of the organisation. In summary, these studies emphasise that the lack of formalised retention systems would lead to performance

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degradation at institutions. This more than ever supports the major argument of the current research on how Nigerian universities can implement KR practices to maintain certain performance measures used to gauge performance by research output, teaching quality, and reputation of an institution.

Organizational Performance

To explain firm performance, Chacón-Fiallo (2021) referred to the relatively abstract concept of organisational effectiveness as its fundamental basis that lies in financial and business performance. Gorondutse et al. (2021) note that management effectiveness includes firm performance, a component of which is operational performance, as well as financial performance. It has numerous factors that are apparent to influence the performance of a firm. Short-term financial measures such as market share, sales growth, customer satisfaction, profitability, employee retention, stakeholder relationships and other market and financial indicators are often applied in the past studies to gauge the performance of the company (Otto et al., 2020). An improved organisational performance assessment system should include comprehensive performance indicators, which could measure the overall performance of an organization. However, Sigo (2020) argued that the best way of measuring financial performance is by using operational performance.

Finally, performance of a company is due to outstanding strategic initiatives and managerial commitment towards the goals and objectives of the organization. In SMEs performance could be measured by financial or non-financial measures or through a combination of both. To achieve the objectives of this study, the institutions will be considered in terms of performance with regard to efficiency and productivity.

Growth

Business growth in the tertiary institutions implies the expansion and development of academic courses, research capacities, and the student population at these institutions. This is typically measured by a proportional rise in the number of students, revenues, academic output, as well as other infrastructure projects. Chen and Li (2019) posit that there are several different approaches to the development of educational institutions that involve the increase in the range of programs and the improvement of research opportunities and at the same time the establishment of relationships with industry. Such actions therefore serve the purpose of assisting the universities to not only get more students into their system but also win additional funding and also increase their academic status. What is of equal importance is that the growth strategies of the higher education institution involve the adaptation to the changes that occur in the learning trends and needs of learners that ultimately leads to the improvement of the performance of the institution hence its sustainability.

Further, tertiary education business enlargement may always be linked to their innovativeness and adaptability. Zhang and Chen (2021) explain that being the institution that focuses on extending its research projects and global partnerships, it is possible to experience immense expansion. This can not only be in the form of more students enrolling but also the research output and the performance in the academics improves better. When different institutions

implement their growth strategies well, it may assist to improve their competitiveness position thus resulting to improved quality education and research contribution that will ultimately lead to regional and national development.

Theoretical Review

Resource Based Theory (RBT)

According to Wernerfelt (1984) and later on by Barney (1991), Resource-Based Theory (RBT) is based on the belief that performance of an organization is determined by the ability to manage valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources. According to the theory, sustainable competitive advantage exists when companies develop and implement unique resources and capabilities that other firms cannot reproduce easily (Fahy, 2000; Jugdev and Mathur, 2013; Ringim, 2012). Within the framework of this paper, knowledge retention can be discussed as an intangible, but a strategic resource that can be aligned with the assumptions of RBT. In the case of tertiary institutions, knowledge retention in terms of research findings, pedagogical methods, and experience is a potential of an institution to improve its performance. Universities such as Kwara State University, University of Ilorin, and Al-Hikmah University will obtain resources that are valuable (improve quality and efficiency), rare (unique institutional culture and expertise), inimitable (competitors find it difficult to imitate), and non-substitutable (hard to replace easily). This is why the constructs of knowledge retention and performance are directly related in the context of the RBT.

In spite of the usefulness, RBT has been criticized as another one that lacks clarity in determining the resources that do provide sustainable competitive advantage. Whereas the theory supposes that organizations have the ability to identify and utilize valuable resources, intangible resources like knowledge are sometimes hard to quantify, transfer, and control (Wade and Hulland, 2004). Furthermore, RBT has been associated with a shallow view because it concentrates on resources at a given moment without necessarily considering the dynamic nature of environments in which organizations are situated. In case of universities, e.g., to retain knowledge, it is necessary to continually adapt to the staff turnover, technologies, and to other factors of education needs, which is not fully reflected by RBT.

These limitations of RBT are especially applicable in the context of the Nigerian university. Universities are dynamic systems with high rates of academic staff turnover, industrial action, erratic funding, and increasingly swift changes in educational technology. It is these reasons that knowledge cannot be treated as a fixed and stable resource as it is believed in classical RBT. Rather, the capacity of universities to continuously revise their knowledge retention plans dictates the quality of how knowledge can be used and retained over time. This research thus uses RBT bearing in mind that knowledge retention can be factored in the VRIN framework, its usefulness in improving the performance of a university relies on how well the university is able to adapt to the uncertainties of the environment.

Empirical Review

The article by Enakrire and Smuts (2023) is a qualitative research on Knowledge Retention (KR) to enhance growth in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Africa. Through the

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application of interpretive content analysis and unstructured surveys, the study was conducted to examine the various perceptions and practices of KR among the respondents across various HEIs. Results showed that there were differences in the degree of awareness and application of the KR strategies based on contextual factors (professional areas and workplaces). The paper has indicated that KR helps in the development of new knowledge, workplace learning, career development, and research. It further established both conventional note-taking and digital tools and strategies, such as desktops, laptops, and social media as tools to enable KR despite the limitations of technology and organisational policies.

Bratianu, Stanescu, and Mocanu (2021) examined the impact of knowledge management on business education. Focusing on the role of business environment and mediating role of academic curriculum, the study aimed to gain insights to comprehend the impact of knowledge management on business education. The study was carried out with both qualitative and quantitative methods. To construct a study model and a survey of the professors and business students, the qualitative phase included a critical literature analysis and semantic analysis. The quantitative analysis was done using the SPSS version processor 3.5 and SPSS 26.0 PROCESS macro to validate the results. It was revealed that knowledge management affects business education through mediating the academic curriculum and changing the business world.

Shujahat, Sousa, Hussain, Nawaz, Wang, and Umer (2019) examined the effects of knowledge management activities (knowledge creation, sharing, and application) in relation to subsequent transformation into knowledge-based innovation in the IT industry of Pakistan through the mediation of knowledge-worker productivity. The research found that knowledge-worker productivity mediates significantly between the notions of creativity and knowledge generation and use processes using the SmartPLS 3 software. This shows how culture and humans play an important role in knowledge management (KM) rather than technology techniques.

Alyoubi, Hoque, Alharbi, Alyoubi, and Almazmomi (2018) examined how knowledge management (KM) affects employee work performance in Saudi Arabia. They also focused on knowledge management strategies (social networks, codification, personalisation) and processes (acquisition, sharing, creation, and retention). The survey was conducted in the King Fahd National Library, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and the analysis was conducted on the survey data using the partial least squares (PLS) and structural equation modelling (SEM). The findings indicated that KM practices and processes enhanced work performance and job satisfaction to a large extent. Although the acquisition, creativity and social network approach had a lesser impact on job satisfaction, knowledge sharing, retention, codification and personalisation approach had the most impact.

Onikoyi, Fetuga, Odeh, and Onaolapo (2024) explored the relationship between knowledge management (KM) and organizational performance of foam manufacturing companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling was used in the survey research to include employees of Vitafoam Nigeria Plc. and Mouka limited. Findings revealed positive effects of KM technology, KM strategy, KM training and knowledge application on workforce effectiveness. The paper has highlighted the significance of embracing different KM strategies to improve productivity and efficiency within organizations.

Jeremiah (2023) examined knowledge management practices and performance of multinational manufacturing companies in Lagos State, Nigeria. Data were gathered with a 5-Likert scale questionnaire and interviews with a sample size of 403 operational and managerial staff and analyzed thematically using Nvivo. The results identified substantial impact of the knowledge generation and knowledge storage, sharing, and application on the brand image, business growth and profitability, and sales. The research concluded that sound KM practices are a contributing factor to long-term growth and development in multinationals.

Taken together, these studies reveal that knowledge management and knowledge retention are closely related to performance in a wide variety of settings, including African HEIs, Asian IT sectors, European business schools, or manufacturing companies in Nigeria. But, although the African and Nigerian reports highlight structural and human resource issues (poor infrastructure, staff attrition and succession development) the Asian and European results highlight the mediating factor of curriculum, innovation and knowledge-worker productivity. These disparities demonstrate that despite the universal applicability of KM and KR, the routes and obstacles differ across regions and industries. It is worth noting that there is very minimal empirical studies that have explored the relationship between knowledge retention and the performance of Universities in Nigeria, specifically in Kwara State. The significance of the gap is that the current research aimed to add context-specific evidence related to the impact of KR practices on teaching, research, and institutional development in Nigerian higher education institutions.

METHODOLOGY

The study investigates the impact of knowledge retention on the growth of selected universities in Kwara State namely, Kwara State University, University of Ilorin, and Al-Hikmah University. The study adopted a quantitative method for data collection as this provides better data and deeper understanding of the variables under study. The population of the study is two thousand six hundred and forty-two (2,642) academic staff of the three selected universities. Using MACORR sample size calculator, a sample size of three hundred and thirty-six (336) was determined. Stratified sampling was employed in the study, where academic staff of the three selected universities in Kwara State were categorized into different strata based on their academic ranks. Questionnaires were administered through Google Forms across these strata to ensure adequate representation. The questionnaire was structured into sections that captured demographic information and items measuring knowledge retention and growth, using a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument's reliability was confirmed through a pilot test, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, while content validity was ensured through expert review. Ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate institutional committee, and informed consent was sought from all participants prior to data collection, assuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed, with regression analysis used in analyzing the data through SPSS version 27. Given its cross-sectional nature, the study is limited in establishing causality between knowledge retention and growth, though it provides valuable insights into associations among the variables.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Table 4.1 Knowledge Retention

S/No	Items	Scale	Frequency	Percentage
1.	The institution has implemented effective systems for documenting and preserving important knowledge and expertise.	SD	4	1.3
		D	30	9.4
		N	90	28.2
		A	144	45.1
		SA	51	16.0
2.	There are established procedures to ensure that critical knowledge is transferred when employees leave or retire.	SD	6	1.9
		D	14	4.4
		N	86	27.0
		A	166	52.0
		SA	47	14.7
3.	The institution maintains a centralized knowledge repository that is accessible to staff and faculty for ongoing reference and learning.	SD	4	1.3
		D	30	9.4
		N	76	23.8
		A	161	50.5
		SA	48	15.0
4.	Knowledge retention strategies are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in staff and institutional needs.	SD	6	1.9
		D	22	6.9
		N	83	26.0
		A	152	47.6
		SA	56	17.6
5.	The institution provides training and support to ensure that staff and faculty effectively use and contribute to knowledge retention systems.	SD	4	1.3
		D	12	3.8
		N	48	15.0
		A	168	52.7
		SA	87	27.3

Source: Authors' Field Computation, 2025

Table 4.1 above shows that it is evident that for the item “the institution has implemented effective systems for documenting and preserving important knowledge and expertise,” 4 respondents (1.3%) strongly disagreed, 30 respondents (9.4%) disagreed, 90 respondents (28.2%) were neutral, 144 respondents (45.1%) agreed, while 51 respondents (16.0%) strongly agreed.

However, in response to the statement “there are established procedures to ensure that critical knowledge is transferred when employees leave or retire,” 6 respondents (1.9%) strongly disagreed, 14 respondents (4.4%) disagreed, 86 respondents (27.0%) were neutral, 166 respondents (52.0%) agreed, while 47 respondents (14.7%) strongly agreed.

Also, regarding the statement “the institution maintains a centralized knowledge repository that is accessible to staff and faculty for ongoing reference and learning,” 4 respondents (1.3%) strongly disagreed, 30 respondents (9.4%) disagreed, 76 respondents (23.8%) were neutral, 161 respondents (50.5%) agreed, and 48 respondents (15.0%) strongly agreed.

For the item “knowledge retention strategies are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in staff and institutional needs,” 6 respondents (1.9%) strongly disagreed, 22 respondents (6.9%) disagreed, 83 respondents (26.0%) were neutral, 152 respondents (47.6%) agreed, while 56 respondents (17.6%) strongly agreed.

Lastly, on the statement “the institution provides training and support to ensure that staff and faculty effectively use and contribute to knowledge retention systems,” 4 respondents (1.3%) strongly disagreed, 12 respondents (3.8%) disagreed, 48 respondents (15.0%) were neutral, 168 respondents (52.7%) agreed, and 87 respondents representing 27.3% strongly agreed.

Table 4.2

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Knowledge Retention	.305	319	.000	.807	319	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 4.2 above shows that the p-value for knowledge retention is less than the threshold of 0.05. This shows that the normality null hypothesis for the variable is rejected.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀₁: knowledge retention has no significant effect on the performance of selected universities in Kwara State

Table 4.3: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.738 ^a	.544	.543	4.80920

a. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge Retention

b. Dependent Variable: Growth of Selected Universities in Kwara State

Source: Field Survey, 2025

As indicated in Table 4.3 above, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.738, which is a strong positive correlation. The fact that the R square is 0.544, means that knowledge retention explains 54.4% of the difference in the performance of the chosen universities in Kwara State. The number of predictors and the sample size is also confirmed by the Adjusted R Square (0.543) which underpins the explanatory power of the model. The standard error of the estimate (4.80920) implies a fair degree of accuracy of the model to predict the growth of the chosen universities in the State of Kwara.

Table 4.4: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1822.156	1	1822.156	285.693	.000 ^b
	Residual	2021.832	317	6.378		
	Total	3843.987	318			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Selected Universities in Kwara State

b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge Retention

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.4 above shows that the F-statistic is 285.693, with a corresponding p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This demonstrates that the regression model is statistically significant, and that knowledge retention has significant effect on the performance of selected universities in Kwara State.

Table 4.5: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.895	.788		7.483	.000
	Knowledge Retention	.697	.041	.688	16.902	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Selected Universities in Kwara State

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.5 above indicates that the unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.697$) means that an increase in knowledge retention of one unit will raise the efficiency score on average by 0.697 units, all things being equal. The standardized Beta coefficient (0.688) indicates a high effect size. The t-value (16.902) is high and the p-value (0.000) indicates that this effect is statistically significant at 1% level.

Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis was that performance of the chosen universities in Kwara State is not influenced significantly by the factor of knowledge retention. The null hypothesis has been rejected and the alternative has been accepted. It claimed that knowledge retention is an influential factor in the development of the targeted universities within the Kwara State. The difference in growth scores ($R^2 = 0.544$) was explained by knowledge retention which had a strong standardized effect (0.688). It has been discovered in the study that when Universities focus on the retention of knowledge by archiving best practices, documenting procedures and retaining experienced staff, more efficiency is likely to be realized in their operations. There are minimal administrative bottlenecks, duplication of efforts, and reinventions of processes in such institutions and thus achieve greater effectiveness. This implies that a good institutional memory is a factor that is helpful in the ease of academic and administrative performance.

Nevertheless, the results also demonstrate the threat of staleness with the stored knowledge unless it is updated regularly, and the value of updating the institutional practice to ensure that it is relevant in an ever-changing academic setting. Policy wise, such findings suggest that knowledge retention structures in the form of digital repositories, mentorship, and knowledge transfer programs would require institutionalization by the players in the higher education and university management in Nigeria in event of a staff exit to enable continuity and flexibility. By integrating them into policy, universities would be able to remain competitive despite the high turnover rates and swift technological advancements.

The results also support the postulations of the Resource-Based Theory (RBT), which asserts that resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) create sustainable advantage. Knowledge retention fits in the same category as it is a strategic resource that boosts growth of the institution. The limitation of RBT, however, is that, as the

study demonstrates, the RBT orientation is usually static, meaning that universities function in dynamic settings where knowledge needs to change constantly. Therefore, the research confirms the relevance of RBT but also shows how institutions need a dynamic capability viewpoint that focuses on how institutions renew and adjust their stored knowledge to meet the needs of change. These findings are aligned with the conclusion by Jeremiah (2023), Enakrire and Smuts (2023), Githii (2021), and Stewart (2021), who pointed out that knowledge retention is a decisive fuel to organizational performance and survival in the institution of higher learning.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined Knowledge Retention and the performance of selected universities in Kwara State. Based on the data collected and analysed, the study concluded that knowledge retention contributes significantly to operational efficiency by ensuring that tacit and explicit knowledge are preserved. This allows universities to minimize repetitive learning, reduce duplication of efforts, and maintain stable, productive systems. The objectives of the study were achieved by establishing the positive effect of knowledge retention on institutional growth, thereby confirming that practices such as archiving best practices, documenting procedures, and mentoring enhance academic and administrative outcomes. Nonetheless, the study acknowledges certain limitations, particularly its cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to capture long-term effects of knowledge retention, and its reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias. These limitations suggest caution in generalizing the findings but also open avenues for further longitudinal and multi-method research in Nigerian higher education.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that universities should implement structured mentoring programs and encourage documentation of procedures and practices. Retention strategies like alumni networks and institutional memory documentation will sustain operational efficiency, especially during staff transitions. In addition, universities should adopt technology-driven approaches such as establishing digital repositories, cloud-based archives, and knowledge management systems that make institutional memory easily accessible. Succession planning frameworks should also be embedded to ensure that critical tacit knowledge is transferred before staff retirement or exit, thereby minimizing knowledge loss and supporting long-term institutional performance.

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