

Talent Exceptionality and Retention Management in A Developing Market: An Evaluation of the Nigerian Public Health Sector

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ABSTRACT

Talent exceptionalism and retention management are critical to the effectiveness of public health systems, particularly in developing markets like Nigeria, where healthcare workforce shortages and brain drain persist. This thesis evaluates the Nigerian public health sector, focusing on how exceptional talent—health professionals with superior skills, expertise, and innovative capacity—is identified, nurtured, and retained. It examines the universal challenges affecting talent retention, including inadequate compensation, poor working conditions, limited career advancement opportunities, and governance ineffectiveness. By utilizing a qualitative approach with Microsoft Forms as the data collection tool, this study will generate rich, context-sensitive insights into Nigeria's public health sector through exploring the impact of financial and non-financial incentives, leadership strategies, and workplace culture on employee retention. Findings reveal that while monetary rewards are vital, factors such as professional development and job security significantly influence the decision of exceptional talent to remain in the sector, ultimately improving workforce stability and healthcare service delivery. The study highlights the role of government policies in shaping workforce stability and proposes a strategic framework for sustainable retention, emphasizing competitive remuneration, improved work environments, capacity-building programs, and enhanced leadership engagement. Comparative insights from other developing markets underscore the need for Nigeria to adopt a multi-faceted approach to workforce management, integrating both short-term retention mechanisms and long-term systemic reforms. The study will establish that a comprehensive, well-structured talent retention strategy is indispensable to strengthening Nigeria's public health sector and mitigating the adverse impacts of workforce attrition on healthcare delivery and national progress.

Keywords: brain drain, governance, incentives, workforce stability, workplace culture