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Human Capital Development and Sustainability of Academic Staff of Federal Universities in South-East Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The study investigated the effect of human capital development and sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the effect of staff development on financial sustainability; employee training on social sustainability and knowledge acquisition on environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria. Relevant literature was reviewed taking cognizance of the problem and the hypotheses of the study. The study was anchored on Human Capital Theory. Descriptive research design was adopted. The study was conducted in the South-East, Nigeria. Data were sourced from primary and secondary source. The population comprised 13168 lecturers from all the ten public universities in South East, Nigeria. The sample size consist 1050 academic staff using purposive technique. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Face and content validity was adopted in the study**.** The reliability of instrument was established through the test-retest method and Cronbach Alpha. Simple percentage analysis was employed to answer the research questions, while Linear Regression Analysis was use in testing research hypotheses. The result reveals that staff development has a significant effect on financial sustainability of academic staff; employee training has significant effect on environmental sustainability of academic staff; and, knowledge acquisition has a significant effect on environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria. The study concluded that human capital development had a positive significant effect on sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria. The study recommended among others, that federal universities management should continue to ensure that, from time to time, the academic staff are further developed especially in the area of advanced studies (both locally and internationally) as education for academic staff is a continuous process and it is important for them to have a good mastery of their field in order to produce qualified graduates.

KEYWORDS: Staff Development, Employee training, Knowledge Acquisition, Financial Sustainability; social Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability of an organizations is judged according to its economic, environmental, and social performance. Sustainability is a critical part of most major corporations today. Furthermore, environmental and social demands from shareholders and stakeholders are contributing to the pressure for organizations to consider sustainability issues

more seriously. Companies have long used standard financial indicators to determine their business success. Only recently have a growing number of firms begun to use environmental, health and safety, and social indicators (Eccles & Krzus, 2018) Organizational sustainability has experienced several interpretations and approaches during the last years while trying to understand this complex concept of increasing importance. The approach of the concept goes from social sustainability, economic, ecological, cultural, political, and environmental, among others, according to Baroni (2022) that evaluates the evolution of the concept and its main approaches. Organizational sustainability is often misunderstood to mean primarily financial sustainability. That misconception occurs because, when an organization becomes unsustainable, the symptoms of that problem show up in the finances. However, organizational sustainability depends on much more than effectively managing the organization's finances. Just like the sustainability of individuals and families, there are many complex and dynamic dimensions that must be sustainable in organizations, as well. However, in an organization, there are some primary dimensions (Strategic sustainability, product and programme sustainability, personnel sustainability and financial sustainability) that, if they are managed well, will ensure the sustainability of the organization (Carter, 2016).

Human capital has long been recognized as one of the imperative resources that can create competitive advantages for firms. Human capital can enhance firms' capabilities of discovering and exploiting business opportunities and then can help them attain innovation, speed, flexibility, and adaptability. Even more importantly, when firms face turbulent and dynamic markets, human capital plays a more crucial role in achieving success (Wright, Dunford & Snell 2021). Expanded from the resource-based view arguments, a knowledge-based view of a firm considers knowledge as the most important resource to help a firm gain sustained competitive advantages (Eisenhardt, & Santos, 2022). Acquiring talent from outside increases the heterogeneity of the knowledge of a firm. This is particularly important for sustainable differentiation. Prior studies suggest that acquiring talent from outside can lead to looked-for human capital, develop product innovation reach new information and absorb managerial skills (Rule & Irwin, 2018), Acquiring valuable human capital externally is even more essential when desired human capital may not be sufficiently developed from within. Thus, although most of the strategic human resource management literature still strongly advocates the argument of internalization of human capital development, acquiring talent externally is becoming a leading issue in human resource management, which no firm can ignore (Lepak & Snell, 2019).

This realization of the value of human resources has led to the proposal by experts that they should be classified as assets, hence the term human capital (Anderson, 2017). To get the best out of the human resources in an organization, there must be substantial and meaningful investment on them. Organizational objectives such as profit maximization, large market share, and fulfilling social responsibility cannot be achieved without an efficient work-force. Therefore, human capital development is essential for sustainability and growth of an organization. It is thus us, being realized now that the forces that give life to an organization are the human energy and creativity operating therein (Onodugo, 2020). Thus, no matter how good and sophisticated capital and technology may be, it is of little relevance to the organization's goal when managed and operated by underdeveloped human resources.

They do not only lack capacity but also the motivation to use other resources efficiently towards the organizational ends (Ugbaja, 2017).In some organizations, only individuals who have acquired skills on specific jobs are employed. But in others, individuals are employed to be developed on- the -job as required by the organization. In this case, it is believed that the individual, throughEmployee training programmes, will acquire the skill and knowledge required for effective sustainability of the job (Nwatu, 2016). However, human capital development must be based on the need rather than meeting the requirements of the organization. Such requirements must be accurately defined and the development programme should be organized to exploit the potentials of the employee or to correct the deficiencies in the level of their sustainability (Ugwunna, 2017).

To acquire talent externally, firms need to design and deploy specific human resource management practices, referred as external human capital acquisition practices in this study. Drawing from the knowledge-based view, human capital acquisition practices as a mechanism to capture outside sources of knowledge. Human capital acquisition practices generally include a combination of practices that focus on attracting appropriate candidates, choosing the selection mechanisms, and selecting suitable employees (Dakhli and de Clercq, 2004). Therefore, we sought to fill this research gap by examining empirically the effects of human capital development on two different aspects of organizational sustainability, and market sustainability, and by discussing the implications of these practices on both types of sustainability.

Statement of Problem

The sustainability of academic staff in federal universities in South-East Nigeria is critically undermined by several specific human capital development challenges. A foremost issue is the inability of Human Resource Managers to accurately identify and determineEmployee training needs. This shortfall results in the underdevelopment of existing staff and a flawed selection process forEmployee training opportunities, leaving many lecturers without the requisite skills to effectively prepare lessons, deliver quality instruction, evaluate student performance, and conduct impactful research. Inadequate staff development programs have led to a situation where academic personnel exhibit low morale and a reluctance to engage in professional development opportunities such as conferences, seminars, and workshops. This reluctance not only stifles individual career growth but also weakens the overall academic environment. Consequently, lecturers often fall short of international research standards and educational best practices, which further diminishes the institution's reputation and the quality of graduates produced.

Moreover, there is a significant gap in knowledge accessibility and learning capacity within these institutions. Academic staff struggle to stay abreast of emerging trends and methodologies, which is compounded by the broader issue of talent and manpower development. Many of the graduates employed by these universities are unskilled, semi-skilled, or non-professional, necessitating prolonged periods of additionalEmployee training before they can contribute effectively. This mismatch between the skills of the academic staff and the expectations of modern higher education institutions undermines both the quality of teaching and the relevance of research outputs.

The challenges extend to the broader sustainability framework of these institutions, where issues of financial, environmental, social, academic, economic, and cultural sustainability are interlinked with human

capital practices. When staff development is compromised, it affects not only the quality of education and research but also the institution's ability to meet its sustainability goals. Without a strong foundation in continuous professional development, academic staffs are less equipped to support the long-term development of the university and contribute to national and global academic communities. Given these challenges, the effectiveness of human capital management practices becomes a critical factor in determining the future sustainability of federal universities in the region. It is imperative to address the specific problems of inadequate employee training, poor knowledge accessibility, limited learning capacity, and weak talent and manpower development. Only through a focused and comprehensive approach to human capital development can these institutions hope to improve the sustainability of their academic staff, enhance the quality of their educational offerings, and produce graduates who are well-equipped to meet the demands of a globalized workforce. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the effect of human capital practices on the sustainability of academic staff in federal universities in South-East Nigeria, with the goal of identifying targeted strategies that can bridge the gap between current challenges and the broader needs of a sustainable academic environment.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this research work is to investigate the effect of human capital development on sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

i. Determine the effect of staff development on financial sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria
ii. Examine the effect of employee training on social sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria
iii. Access the effect of knowledge acquisition on environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria

Research Questions

i. How does staff development affect financial sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria
ii. What are the effect of employee training on social sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria
iii. How does knowledge acquisition affect environmental sustainability of academic sustainability staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria

Hypotheses

Ho_1: Staff development has no significant affect effect financial sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria

Ho_2: Employee training has no significant effect social sustainability of academic staff of federal Universities in South-East Nigeria

Ho_3: Knowledge acquisition has no significant effect environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Human Capital Development

In the study of intellectual capital, the concept of human capital has been defined from multiple perspectives. Bontis (2021) describes human capital as an integration of genetic inheritance, education, experience, and life and business attitudes. Complementing this view, Hines (2020) characterizes it as the combined knowledge, skills, innovativeness, and abilities

of individual employees required to execute tasks, a definition that inherently encompasses intangibles such as company values, culture, and philosophy. In this light, educating employees naturally increases an enterprise's human capital, even though, as Edvinsson (2017) points out, companies in a free society can only "rent" rather than own this capital. Seviby (2018) further emphasizes that people are the true agents in business, arguing that all tangible assets and intangibles, including relationships, are ultimately derived from human actions. Ahangar (2021) reinforces this by stating that human capital is the largest and most critical intangible asset in an organization, encompassing the collective knowledge, competencies, experience, skills, and talents of its people as well as the organization's creative and innovative capabilities. Although investments in human capital are increasing, its effectiveness is still difficult to measure in conventional balance sheets. In contrast, structural capital—which includes processes, data, and patents—serves as the supportive framework for human capital, remains with the organization, and can be traded or shared. Meanwhile, relational capital, defined by a company's interactions with customers, suppliers, strategic partners, and shareholders, rounds out the intellectual capital components as summarized by CIMA (2021).

Human capital is a pivotal dimension of intellectual capital, influencing a firm's value through its impact on innovation, process efficiency, and customer relations. Van Buren (2018) and Wang (2017) underscore the role of employee knowledge and capabilities as sources of innovation, with Wang and Chang (2017) further asserting that human capital affects business sustainability by enhancing innovation, internal processes, and customer satisfaction. Bhatt (2017) succinctly defines human capital as the capacity of individual employees to meet current tasks, highlighting its central role in operational success. Additional interpretations of human capital further elaborate on its multifaceted nature. Stewart (1997) regards it as the amalgamation of skills, competencies, and abilities within individuals and groups. Boujelbene and Affes (2023) interpret it as the value created by employee knowledge, competencies, skills, experiences, abilities, and talent. Rastogi (2020), as cited by Stiles and Klvisaechana (2018), stresses that there is no substitute for the relentless pursuit of knowledge, learning, creativity, and innovation. Nielson, Bkhl, Johasen, and Gormen (2016) assert that human resources including skilled staff, accumulated knowledge, and management philosophy are fundamental to enhancing a company's sustainability. Moreover, Wikipedia defines human capital as a means of categorizing people's skills and abilities in the context of their economic contributions, while Schmidt (2004) views it as an intangible asset that generates future economic value through the competencies of employees and organizational capabilities (Ugwu, Eboatu, Okoro & Okeke, 2022).

Staff Development

Staff development represents a strategic process aimed at building and sustaining the capacity necessary to achieve a new, desirable state that benefits the organization, its community, and the broader world (Chabra, 2018). According to Pigors and Myer (2021), it involves supporting employees in both their current roles and future endeavors by fostering effective habits of thought, actionable skills, comprehensive knowledge, and the right attitudes. This developmental perspective critically assesses the current environment, enabling teams, departments, and entire institutions to identify and implement effective strategies for enhanced performance. Fundamentally, staff development entails the design and support of learning activities that lead to a desired level of performance. It is generally oriented toward long-term growth

and continuous learning, focusing on preparing individuals for future responsibilities (Robinson, 2016). In contrast to employee training—which primarily addresses immediate job duties—development is geared toward future roles and challenges. Nonetheless, these terms are sometimes used interchangeably or encapsulated under the umbrella term "performance consulting," which highlights both the outcomes of employee training as well as the improvements in individual performance (Robinson, 2016).

Staff development programs are diverse in scope. They include participation in seminars, workshops, conferences, and short courses both within and outside the institution, as well as provisions for sabbatical leave (Tiberodwa, 2022). In secondary school settings, these programs are designed to enhance teachers' competencies, ensuring the effective transfer of requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Obisi (2016) points out that while staff employee training is often used to denote activities for specific job purposes, staff development encompasses a broader range of initiatives that not only improve job performance but also contribute to personal growth. In some instances, organizations pursue staff development proactively to further strengthen existing relationships and enhance performance, even in the absence of any immediate problems. In other cases, when specific issues arise, the development process serves as a means to devise solutions that restore or elevate the group to a high-performance state. In this sense, development is inherently about creating and sustaining meaningful change (Marmer, 2019; Okeke, 2023).

Training

As the nature of work evolves, jobs are becoming increasingly complex, necessitating that employers invest significantly in the employee training of their workforce a marked departure from earlier times when jobs were simpler and required minimal technical expertise (Njoku & Onyegbula 2017).Employee training are critical, interrelated processes in strategic human resource management, involving a sequence of deliberate activities designed to enhance the quality of an organization's managerial capital. In this context,Employee training is defined as a systematic process that ensures an organization cultivates effective managers capable of meeting both current and future needs (Iwelumo, Olatunji & Yerokun 2016). Obialor (2017) further explains that employee training, conducted under the auspices of the company, is a planned, coordinated, and intentional effort to instill in employees the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes that optimize their efficiency and effectiveness in contributing to overall organizational performance. Essentially,Employee training serves as a form of specialized education, equipping individuals with the specific expertise required to excel in their designated roles. On the other hand, development refers to tailored programs aimed at preparing and grooming employees through targeted education and employee training for higher levels of responsibility (Onasanya, 2016; Emeka-Nwokeji & Okeke, 2019)

Knowledge Acquisition

Mills and Smith (2021) explain that acquisition refers to an organization's capability to identify, secure, and accumulate both internal and external knowledge essential for its operations. In a similar vein, Pacharapha and Ractham (2022) define knowledge acquisition as the process by which insights, skills, and relationships are developed and created. Examples of this process include conducting external surveys, acquiring a firm rich in expertise, sending employees to external employee training, hiring skilled personnel, purchasing data sets, monitoring technological

advances, obtaining patented processes, and gathering intelligence on competitors (Holsapple & Singh, 2021). In a study on Knowledge Management and the performance of Indian software companies, Ruchi et al. (2016) found that knowledge acquisition and its preservation (storing) did not have a significant impact on organizational performance, potentially due to a lack of emphasis on effective knowledge acquisition and protection strategies. Nonaka and Takeuchi (2015) further contend that for acquired knowledge to be truly useful, the processes of accessing, collecting, and applying it must be straightforward and transparent, particularly given that much of this knowledge is tacit.

Sustainability of Academic Staff

The concept of sustainability has evolved considerably over recent years, attracting numerous interpretations and approaches as scholars and practitioners attempt to grasp its growing importance. Early perspectives have ranged from social, economic, and ecological to cultural, political, and environmental sustainability, as noted by Baroni (2022). Each of these dimensions offers a unique lens through which the multifaceted nature of sustainability can be understood.

One of the most influential definitions is provided by the United Nations' 2019 Brundtland Commission, which describes sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." In a similar vein, the OECD emphasizes the importance of linking economic, social, and environmental objectives in a balanced manner. This definition highlights that decision-making processes must account for the full spectrum of potential consequences while remaining accountable to the public (Farneti & Guthrie, 2019; Mohrman and Worley, 2016). Such perspectives underscore the dual nature of sustainability, presenting both significant challenges and opportunities for organizations as they strive to overcome economic pressures while preparing for future environmental needs (Ceasar & Page, 2023; Wilkinson & Hill, 2016). Yet, while some advocates celebrate the progress made, others contend that the current pace is insufficient to fully meet sustainable development goals, calling for more dramatic changes (Henderson, 2016; Dyllick & Hockerts, 2022; Okeke, 2023).

A common misconception is that organizational sustainability is synonymous with financial stability. While financial health is undoubtedly critical, true sustainability within an organization is multifaceted, encompassing strategic, product and program, personnel, and financial dimensions. Effective management across these areas is essential to ensuring long-term viability (Carter, 2016).The environment in which organizations operate has undergone a dramatic transformation. Global challenges such as climate change, globalization, demographic shifts, and social inequality have disrupted traditional business models centered solely on shareholder value. Moreover, episodes like the credit crunch and various corporate scandals have eroded public trust, prompting governments, consumers, employees, and investors to demand ethical and sustainable business practices (Wales, 2023). In everyday language, sustainability is sometimes referred to as "keeping the business going" or "future-proofing" the organization (Colbert & Kurucz, 2017). Boudreau and Ramstad (2015) articulate it as achieving success today without endangering the needs of tomorrow. This philosophy is exemplified by initiatives such as Ford's Sustainability Committee, which defines sustainable growth as the capacity to satisfy current customer needs while considering those of future generations (Ford, 2022). The Chartered Institute of Personnel

and Development (CIPD, 2022) similarly asserts that sustainability in an organizational context is about enhancing the societal, environmental, and economic systems within which a business operates—a concept that aligns with the triple-bottom-line framework (Colbert & Kurucz, 2017; Okeke, 2023).

Despite significant investments in managing financial assets, production equipment, intellectual property, and other tangible resources, contemporary management often struggles to achieve true sustainability. Research by Eccles et al. (2016) reveals that while many organizations have developed sustainability policies intended to foster a "culture of sustainability" that integrates environmental, social, and financial performance, such policies are not uniformly effective. In this context, sustainability has emerged as an evolution of earlier Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) frameworks. Blaga (2023) traces CSR's origins to Milton Friedman's influential assertion that the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits (Friedman, 2018), whereas the European Commission now defines CSR as the voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns into business operations—a move that increasingly correlates with sustainable business success (Van de Ven, 2018).

Financial sustainability

Financial sustainability represents a framework of practices, standards, norms, regulations, and financial products designed to generate returns while simultaneously addressing environmental and social objectives. Although often used interchangeably with Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) investing, a clear distinction is sometimes made between ESG integration—aimed at achieving improved risk-adjusted returns—and the broader spectrum of sustainable finance, which includes impact investing, social finance, and ethical investing (Hardyment 2024). At its core, sustainable finance connects the financial system to the economy by channeling funds to agents that drive growth. This concept was further advanced with the adoption of the Paris Climate Agreement, which mandates that financial flows align with a transition to low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development. In another light, financial sustainability is defined as a firm's ability to generate enough revenue or return on investment to cover all operational costs while securing a profit. This capacity not only determines the viability of a project for investment but also assesses whether the allocation of resources will yield sufficient returns for investors (Simpson, Cam; Rathi, Akshat; Kishan, & Saijel 2021; Odubuasi, Anene & Okeke, 2022). Achieving financial sustainability enables organizations to meet their administrative expenses and strategically prioritize their activities, ensuring that they can accomplish their missions without being hindered by prolonged negotiations with donors who might not share their vision or cost structures. Moreover, firms that maintain strong financial sustainability tend to generate superior stock market returns by attracting more equity investment, thanks to robust balance sheets and high profitability (Bril, Herman; Kell, Georg; Rasche, & Andreas 2022).

Environmental Sustainability

United Nations (UN) World Commission on Environment and Development, environmental sustainability means acting in ways that guarantee future generations access to natural resources sufficient to maintain or even enhance their quality of life compared to the present. It embodies the capacity to elevate human living standards while remaining within the ecological limits of our planet's supporting systems. Essentially, environmental sustainability seeks to rebalance the

increasingly strained relationship between human culture and the living world. This concept naturally prompts critical questions about the role humanity should play as both beneficiaries and stewards of the Earth. As an evolving species, we must reassess our lifestyles and business practices to secure a sustainable future. There is a growing debate on whether businesses can serve as the catalyst for this change, since financial success is increasingly linked to ecological health and societal well-being. While individual actions matter, large-scale institutional commitment is crucial for driving this transformation (Emeka-Nwokeji, Ekwueme, & Okeke, 2021)

At its core, environmental sustainability is the responsibility to conserve natural resources and protect global ecosystems, ensuring the health and well-being of both current and future populations. Given that many environmental impacts are not immediately apparent, adopting a forward-thinking approach is essential for making decisions that safeguard the planet over the long term.

Social sustainability

Social sustainability remains the most ambiguously defined aspect of sustainability. One useful definition suggests that a socially sustainable society is one where individuals are free from systemic barriers that impede access to essential areas such as health, influence, competence, impartiality, and meaning-making (Cohen, 2016). Despite its mention in foundational documents like the Brundtland Report, interpretations of social sustainability differ widely. Some scholars advocate placing social issues at the very heart of sustainability debates, arguing that every sustainability domain—ecological, economic, political, and cultural—is inherently social in nature. In this perspective, the ecological dimension is not just about the environment but about how humans are fundamentally embedded within it. This integrated view asserts that social sustainability is not limited to the intersection of economic, environmental, and social concerns but rather encompasses the entirety of human activities and interactions (Ramsey, 2015). To build more sustainable social systems, broad-based strategies are necessary. These include enhancing education and promoting the political empowerment of women, especially in developing countries, to dismantle longstanding gender barriers. In addition, a heightened commitment to social justice is crucial - one that addresses the disparities between the rich and the poor both within and across nations. Most importantly, strategies must also ensure intergenerational equity, providing future generations with the same opportunities for well-being and development as the current generation (Bell & Morse 2018).In essence, a focus on social sustainability aims to cultivate communities that are equitable, diverse, connected, and democratic—communities that provide a high quality of life for all their members (Okeke, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on Human Capital Theory by Adam Smith (1776). The origin of human capital goes back to emergence of classical economics in (1776) and thereafter developed a scientific theory. The idea of investing in human capital was first developed by Adam Smith (1776), who argued in the Wealth of Nations that differences between the ways of working of individuals with different levels of education and employee training reflected differences in the returns necessary to defray the costs of acquiring those skills. Economists such as Elliot (1991) developed the theory of human capital. He is concerned with human capital in terms of the quality, not quantity, of the labour supply. (Baron and Armstrong). After the manifestation of that concept as a theory, Schultz (1961) recognized the human capital as one of the important

factors of national economic growth in the modern economy (Dae-bong, 2019). The theory argues that a person's formal education determines his or her earning power. Human capital theory holds that it is the key competences, skills, knowledge and abilities of the workforce that contributes to organizations competitive advantage. It focuses attention on resourcing, human resource development, and reward strategies and practices. According to Human Capital Theory, education is an investment because it is believed that it could potentially bestow private and social benefits. Human capital theorists believe that education and earning power are correlated, which means, theoretically, that the more education one has, the more one can earn, and that the skills, knowledge and abilities that education provides can be transferred into the work in terms of sustainability (Dae-bong, 2019).

This theory emphasizes the value added that people contribute to an organization. It regards people as assets and stresses that investments by organizations in people will generate worthwhile returns. Many researchers have been conducted in the area of human capital however; there is still the existence of a wide gap between theory and practice. The shift towards value-addition based measurements of investment in intellectual capital has gradually begun to close the gap between theory and practice. This model meets the demand for giving employees the status of key resource by treating them as investment and not as cost; this because they invest their knowledge and skills which is valued by the market through the company's activities and reflected in the created value added. The model has received wide usage in the area of intellectual capital valuation especially with intellectual capital due to the inadequacies of the other valuation methods and measurement models. The model provides a standardized and consistent basis of measure that can be used for easily comparison both within sector, industry or internationally.

Relevance of the theory to the study

The theory is relate this study in the sense that investment in people results in economic benefits for individuals and society as a whole (Sweetland 2016). The investment in individual can be made in terms of education, health, nutrition, and any other development that results in long-term benefits. It is important to clarify that the investor in this particular case is an individual who decides whether to invest his or her time, money and other resources into some activity that will benefit his or her human capital. Human capital theory is highly relevant to the sustainability of academic staff because it emphasizes investing in staff development through employee training and education to improve their skills, knowledge, and motivation. This investment leads to increased commitment, sustainability, job satisfaction, and retention, which are all crucial for the long-term success and stability of an academic institution. By developing their human capital, institutions can better attract and retain talented staff, adapt to new challenges, and ultimately ensure their own continued operation and relevance

Empirical Review

Ezeanokwasa (2022) studied human capital development and academic staff sustainability in Anambra State University. The study employs descriptive research design. Chi-square statistical tool was used to analyze the data gathered from64 respondents out of 217 target population. The study found out that there is significant relationship between employee and organizational achievement, it also revealed that there is a strong relationship between selection/recruitment and organizational sustainability and lastly, that human development appraisal and academic staff sustainability is significant. The study is related to this study in terms of human capital practice, it was also a study on staff of tertiary

institutions but differs in the area of methodology as the study does not specify the instrument of data collection and the sample was not representative enough and no justification.

Afrah (2023) carried out a study on "The role of human capital on organizational performance". Using Benadir University in Mogadishu, Somalia as a case study, he examined the role of human capital on organizational performance as well as the significance of human resource practice on organizational performance. The study populations were the Deans, teaching staff, and non-teaching staff at Benadir University in Mogadishu, and a sample size of 25 was utilised because the study population was unknown. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents, which was then analysed using descriptive statistics and SPSS. The findings revealed that the role of human capital in organizational performance is critical for the advancement of the organization's profitability. The study concluded that human resource practice is important in developing staff capacity; thus, the study contributes to the role of human capital development on organizational performance of selected private universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Etale and Bingilar (2022), carried a study on the impact of human capitals development on sustainability of academic staff in Nigerian Universities. The study involved a survey of two Universities in Bayelsa State. Three hypotheses were tested. Data were obtained from the annual reports of the Federal University, Otuoke and Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island both in Bayelsa State selected for the period 2020-2021. Data were subjected to statistical analysis using the multiple regression technique. The results of the study revealed that academic staff development has positive and significant relationship with Sustainability of Academic Staff in Nigerian Universities. The paper is related to this study in the area of study in higher institution but differs in concepts as the research does not observe other variables (Advanced studies and seminars) of Human capital development in the university system.

Owo (2022), carried out research on Appraisal of Staff Development Programmes and sustainability for Lecturers in Colleges of Education, South-East of Nigeria. Four hypotheses were tested by the study. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze data generated using 264 questionnaire administered and secondary data, data was analyzed using
ANOVA. The study found out that Staff Development programmes did not have direct impact on the sustainability of lecturers in South-East Nigeria.

Ozurumba and Amasuomo (2021), studied academic staff development and output in three state universities in the South-South region of Nigeria. The study used analysis of variance as it statistical tool of analysis and found out that there is no significant difference between academic staff employee training and teaching, research output and community service. The study is related to this study in the area of its main objective as it determined the relationship between academic staff employee training and output but differs in the aspect of methodology and population as the study covers three different populations.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was adopted in this study. This design was preferred because it enables the researcher describe the area of research and explain the collected data in order to investigate the differences and similarities with our frame of reference within a given period of time (time of research). This study was

carried out in South East, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of 13168 lecturers from all the five federal universities in South East, Nigeria. Purposive sampling known as judgmental sampling was adopted in this study to have a sample size of 1050. 250 academic staff from each universities in the area of study. The reasons for using purposive sampling was to have equal representative of academic staff from each universities. This study make use of primary and secondary source data. The primary source of data was the sampling or study unit regarding in (or form) which information is collected on first hand basis. Secondary source data was collected from journals and text books. The survey instrument (questionnaire) contain both section A and section B. section A sought information on demographic of the respondents while section B sought information on the measures of Human Capital Development (Independent Variable) and Sustainability Of Academic Staff (Dependent Variable). The questionnaire adopted 5 point Likert rating scale which was used to measure the level of agreement and disagreement ith a particular statement to tap the situation or phenomena. The Likert rating scale was weighted thus: 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (undecided), 2 (disagree), 1 (strongly disagree). For the purpose of this research, the face and content validity approach was adopted.

To check reliability of the instrument, the questionnaires were pre-tested through pilot study to ascertain its effectiveness in soliciting information intended. The researcher used test-retest and Cronbach Alpha method in order to test reliability of the research instruments (0.71-0.94). Base on the threshold, they are found to be reliable for the study. The need to enhance easy comprehension and analysis prompted the use of simple percentage analysis in analyzing research question and Linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the relative predictive power of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21 was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

1050 copies of the questionnaire were issued out, 1021 were completed and returned thus showing a response rate of 97.2 percent were return. The table also shows that 29 copies of questionnaires were invalid showing 2.8 percent response rate of invalid questionnaire.

Analysis of Research Question

Research Question One: how does staff development affect financial sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria?

Table 4.5: Respondents opinion on the effect of staff development on financial sustainability of academic staff of Federal Universities

S/N	Items of the Questionnaire	Alternative Responses					Total
		SA	A	UND	D	SD	
1.	Staff development process build employee capacity to sustain a new desired	459 (45.0)	500 (49.0)	12 (1.2)	30 (2.9)	20 (2.0)	1021 (100.0)
2.	Staff development supporting learning activities that result in a desired level of performance	441 (43.2)	493 (48.3)	20 (2.0)	36 (3.5)	31 (3.0)	1021 (100.0)
3.	Staff development transfer quantity knowledge to employees	457 (44.8)	478 (46.8)	20 (2.0	45 (4.4)	21 (2.1)	1021 (100.0)

4.	Staff development is concerned with organizational activity aimed at bettering the performance of individuals	461 (45.2)	500 (49.0)	15 (1.5)	25 (2.4)	20 (2.0)	1021 (100.0)
5.	Staff development connotes anyEmployee training activity that help to improve to employee skills	458 (44.9)	501 (49.1)	12 (1.2)	31 (3.0)	19 (1.9)	1021 (100.0)
	Total	(44.6)	(48.2)	(1.5)	(3.3)	(2.2)	(100.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1, shows that 459 (45.0%) strongly agree that staff development process build employee capacity to sustain a new desired, 500 (49.0) agree, 12(1.2) undecided, 30 (22.9%) disagree while 20(2.0%) strongly disagree. Table 4.5 that on the average, shows that 441 (43.2%) strongly agree that staff development supporting learning activities that result in a desired level of performance, 493 (48.3) agree, 20(2.0) undecided, 36 (3.5%) disagree while 31(3.0%) strongly disagree. Table 1also shows that 457 (44.8%) strongly agree that staff development transfer quantity knowledge to employees, 478 (46.8) agree, 20(2.0) undecided, 45 (4.4%) disagree while 21(2.1%) strongly disagree. The table shows that 461 (45.2%) strongly agree that staff development is concerned with organizational activity aimed at bettering the performance of individuals, 461 (45.2) agree, 15(1.5) undecided, 55 (2.4%) disagree while 20(2.0%) strongly disagree. Finally the table shows that 458 (44.9%) strongly agree that staff development connotes any employee training activity that help to improve to employee skills, 501 (49.1) agree, 12(1.2) undecided, 31 (3.0%) disagree while 19(1.9%) strongly disagree.

Research Question Two: What is the effect of employee training on social sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria?

Table 2: Respondents opinions on employeeEmployee training affect social sustainability of academic staff of federal universities

S/N		Alternative Responses					Total
		SA	A	UND	D	SD	
1.	Training ensures adequate human resources are available for expansion into new areas	452 (44.3)	487 (47.7)	20 (2.0)	37 (3.6)	25 (2.4)	1021 (100.0)
2.	Training allows employees to cope with newly developed technology	453 (44.4)	489 (47.9)	22 (2.2)	32 (3.1)	25 (2.4)	1021 (100.0)
3.	Investment perspective inEmployee training is an opportunity to increase long-term sustainability of organization	461 (45.2)	469 (45.9)	20 (2.0)	40 (3.9)	31 (3.0)	1021 (100.0)
4.	Training reduce the involuntary turnover of employees and preventing skills obsolescence	501 (49.1)	455 (44.6)	20 (2.0)	25 (2.4)	20 (2.0)	1021 (100.0)
5.	EffectiveEmployee training programmes allow management to	450 (44.1)	501 (49.1)	20 (2.0)	25 (2.4)	25 (2.4)	1021 (100.0)

	maintain a workforce that can adequately replace employees who may leave the company						
	Total	2317 (45.4)	2401 (47.0)	102 (2.0)	159 (3.1)	126 (2.5)	5105 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2, shows that 452 (44.0%) strongly agree employee training ensures adequate human resources are available for expansion into new areas, 487 (47.7) agree, 20(2.0) undecided, 37 (3.6%) disagree while 25(2.4%) strongly disagree. Table 4.6 shows that 453 (44.4%) strongly agree that employee training allows employees to cope with newly developed technology, 489 (47.9) agree, 22(2.2) undecided, 32 (3.1%) disagree while 325(2.40%) strongly disagree. Table 2 shows that 461 (45.2%) strongly agree that investment perspective in employee training is an opportunity to increase long-term sustainability of organization, 469 (45.9) agree, 20(2.0) undecided, 40 (3.9%) disagree while 40(3.9%) strongly disagree. The table shows that 501 (49.1%) strongly agree that employee training reduce the involuntary turnover of employees and preventing skills obsolescence, 455 (44.6) agree, 20(2.0) undecided, 25 (2.4%) disagree while 20(2.0%) strongly disagree. Finally the table shows that 450 (44.1%) strongly agree that effective employee training programmes allow management to maintain a workforce that can adequately replace employees who may leave the company, 501 (49.1) agree, 20(20) undecided, 25 (2.4%) disagree while 25(2.4%) strongly disagree.

Research Question Three: how does knowledge acquisition affect environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria?

Table 3: Respondents opinions on the effect of knowledge acquisition affect environmental sustainability of academic staff of Federal Universities

S/N	Items of the Questionnaire	Alternative Responses					Total
		SA	A	UND	D	SD	
1.	Assessment of performance is made, possible through acquisition of knowledge,	457 (44.8)	461 (45.2)	23 (2.3)	45 (4.4)	35 (3.4)	1021 (100.0)
2.	Acquisition prevents waste of ideas and resources among academic staff	469 (46.0)	470 (46.0)	21 (2.1)	31 (3.0)	29 (2.8)	1021 (100.0)
3.	Knowledge transfer technique is enhanced by acquiring more knowledge	459 (45.0)	485 (47.5)	17 (1.7)	40 (2.0)	20 (2.0)	1021 (100.0)
4.	Knowledge management procedures identified with acquisition of knowledge are those identified with getting information	501 (49.1)	457 (44.8)	18 (1.8)	25 (2.4)	20 (2.0)	1021 (100.0)
5.	Knowledge management sustain academic environment	457 (44.8)	461 (45.2)	23 (2.3)	45 (4.4)	35 (3.4)	1021 (100.0)
	Total	2343	2334	102	186	139	5105

	(45.9)	(45.7)	(2.0)	(3.6)	(2.7)	(100.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 shows that 45 (44.8%) strongly that assessment of performance is made, possible through acquisition of knowledge, 461 (45.2) agree, 23(2.3) undecided, 45 (4.4%) disagree while 35(3.4%) strongly disagree. Table 3 shows that 469 (46.0%) strongly agree that acquisition prevents waste of ideas and resources among academic staff, 470 (46.1) agree, 21(2.1) undecided, 31 (3.0%) disagree while 29(2.8%) strongly disagree. Table 3 shows that 459 (45.2%) strongly agree knowledge transfer technique is enhanced by acquiring more knowledge, 485 (47.9) agree, 17(1.07) undecided, 40 (3.9%) disagree while 20(2.0%) strongly disagree. The table shows that 501 (49.1%) strongly agree that knowledge management procedures identified with acquisition of knowledge are those identified with getting information, 457 (44.8) agree, 18(1.8) undecided, 25 (2.4%) disagree while 20(2.0%) strongly disagree. Finally the table shows that 457 (44.8%) strongly agree that knowledge management sustain academic environment, 461 (45.2) agree, 23(2.3) undecided, 45 (4.4%) disagree while 35(4.4%) strongly disagree.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one

Ho: Staff development has no significant affect effect financial sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria

H_1: Staff development has a significant effect on financial sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria

Table 4: Test of Significance of simple regression analysis on effect of staff development and financial sustainability of academic staff of federal universities

Variable	*R	*B	*t	*P-value*	Decision
Financial Sustainability	.689	.494	256.420	.000	*S
Staff Development	.535				

*Significant
*Regression coefficient
*Frequency

As shown in Table 4, the simple regression coefficient (R) for the staff development and financial Sustainability are .689 and .535 while the (β = . 365) was significant, t=256.420, p<0.05. Respectively. These show that while staff development makes 49.4% contribution to the variance in financial sustainability of academic staff of federal universities and it makes 28.6% contribution to the female students' academic achievement were obtained for financial sustainability of academic staff of federal universities respectively. This probability value of 0.00 was compared with significance level of 0.05 and it was found to be significant since P<0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative was accepted this indicated that Staff development has a significant effect on financial sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria. (β = . 365) was significant, t=256.420, p<0.05.

Hypothesis Two

Ho: Employee training has no significant effect social sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria

Ho_1: Employee training has a significant effect social sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria

Table 5: Test of significance of simple regression analysis on effect of employee training on social sustainability of academic staff of federal universities.

Variable	*R	* β	*t*	*P-value*	Decision
Social Sustainability	.601				
		.365	176.080	.000	*S
Training	.604	.			

*Significant

*Regression coefficient

Results presented on Table 5 shows that the simple regression coefficient (R) for the employee training on social sustainability with beta (β = 365) was significant, t=176.080, p<0.05. These shows that employee training make 36.5% contribution to the variance in male undergraduates' academic achievement and makes 36.5% contribution to social sustainability of academic staff of federal universities. The t-value176.080 were obtained for employee training of academic staff respectively. This probability value of 0.00 was compared with significance level of 0.05 and it was found to be significant since P<0.05. Therefore, the hull hypothesis was rejected and this indicated and the alternative hypothesis was accepted that is: Employee training has a significant effect social sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three

Ho_3: Knowledge acquisition has no positive significant effect environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria

Ho_3: Knowledge acquisition has a positive significant effect environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria

Table 6: Test of Significance of Simple regression of effect of Knowledge acquisition on environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities

Variable	*B*	SE B	B	*t*	*p*-value	Decision
Environmental Sustainability	444	.110	.			
			.222	48.148	.000	Significant
Knowledge Acquisition	.528	.069				

Table 6 shows that the Knowledge acquisitionhas a significant effect on environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities since the standardized beta (β = .222) was significant, t=48.148, p<0.05. Therefore, null hypothesis of knowledge acquisition has no significant effect environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria was rejected. In the same vein, the alternative

hypothesis was accepted therefore we can said that knowledge acquisition had a positive significant effect environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria.

Summary of Findings

i. Staff development has asignificant effect on financial sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria. (β = 365, *t*=256.420, p=.000<0.05).
ii. Training has a significant effect on environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities since the standardized beta (β = .222, *t*=48.148, *p*=.000<0.05.
iii. Knowledge acquisition has a significant effect on environmental sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria (β = .222, *t*=48.148, *p*=.000<0.05.

CONCLUSION

This work examined the effect of human capital development on sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria. From the analysis it was discovered that staff development has a significant effect on financial sustainability, Knowledge acquisition has a significant effect on environmental sustainability, knowledge acquisition has a significant effect on social sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria. Therefore, the study concluded that human capital development had a positive significant effect on sustainability of academic staff of federal universities in South-East Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made Based on the finding, the following recommendations were made.

i. Federal universities management should continue to ensure that, from time to time, the academic staff are further developed especially in the area of advanced studies (both locally and internationally) as education for academic staff is a continuous process and it is important for them to have a good mastery of their field in order to produce qualified graduates.
ii. Programmes relating toEmployee training should be relevant in the federal universities and academic staff should be encouraged to improve their careers in order to ensure job security and competitiveness.
iii. Management should consider their staff and their job assignment to knowledge accessibility in other to improve organizational sustainability through compulsory employee training programmes for all employees in order to improve the knowledge and understanding

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