

Applying Organisational Support Lenses for Employee Retention: The Role of Supervisor Support and Compensation Fairness

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Abstract

Employee retention is critical, yet organisations face challenging talent markets and increasing turnover costs from departing staff. This study examines drivers of retention for professional workers to isolate actionable focus areas for organisations. Drawing on organisational support theory, perceived organisational support, compensation fairness, and quality leader-member exchange relationships are hypothesized to reduce turnover intentions. Survey data from a sample of 120 employees analysed using PLS-SEM, confirmed perceived organisational support as the strongest predictor, followed by compensation equity and supervisor support. All three fulfil socioemotional needs that build affective commitment and loyalty when present. Practical recommendations center on monitoring support perceptions through pulse surveys, purposeful communications conveying care for employees, and leader training on nurturing developmental relationships. Investing in perceived support elements represents a high-yield, affordable retention strategy. These findings refine broader retention drivers, spotlighting the centrality of care and inclusion assurances for anchoring talent. Limitations around generalizability and cross-sectional data point to useful future research directions.

1. Introduction

Employee retention has become a crucial issue facing organisations in recent years. With increasingly competitive labour markets, organisations are struggling to retain their top talent (Novianti & Fuadiputra, 2021). High employee turnover leads to decreased productivity, loss of organisational knowledge, and increased hiring costs (Thomas-Williams, 2021). For example, one estimate found that it costs on average one-third of an employee's salary to replace them (Smith et al., 2022). When top performers leave, they take with them institutional knowledge and networks that are difficult to rebuild quickly. The need to constantly recruit and onboard new employees also reduces productivity as managers shift focus away from critical objectives.

The emergence of COVID-19 led to unprecedented disruptions for public sector operations in Nigeria (Nseobot et al., 2020). Mandatory lockdowns, health risks, and economic instability took a major toll, negatively impacting service delivery (Alozie et al., 2020). At the same time, these stresses triggered higher employee turnover in Nigerian public agencies, exacerbating operational challenges. As the pandemic first hit in 2020, many public sector workers had to abruptly shift to remote work without adequate preparation and infrastructure (Durowade et al., 2020). Coupled with heightened health concerns and strained personal circumstances, this fuelled greater attrition rates. Simultaneously, the resulting economic recession, and the government removal of

petrol subsidies without commensurate pay for public sector workers greatly affect households' income level which left public sector workers unable to fulfil their daily needs (Bello & Gidigbi, 2022). With incommensurate pay leading to further hardships and uncertainties about prosperity, many public servants became compelled to exit for better prospects. Operational capacities plummeted just as citizen needs and service demands rose during these crises. Thus, as Nigeria continues on the path to post-pandemic recovery with its tight fiscal space, enhancing employee retention has become an urgent priority to maintain and rebuild public sector functionality. Targeted interventions informed by scholarly insights becomes fundamental.

Past research has indicated that employee retention and turnover are related to various factors like job satisfaction, organisational commitment, compensation, work-life balance, and leadership (Porter & Rigby, 2021; Weis & Rosendale, 2019). For instance, employees who are more satisfied with their jobs and feel committed to the organisation tend to stay longer. In a meta-analysis, job satisfaction and organisational commitment had negative correlations with turnover intentions (Mahal, 2012; Perreira et al., 2018). Job satisfaction encompasses factors like enjoyment of the work itself, career development opportunities, and the work environment. Organisational commitment reflects employees' emotional attachment and sense of loyalty to the organisation. Those with higher satisfaction and commitment are less likely to think about leaving their job.

Competitive compensation and benefits also play a key role, as employees may leave for better offers elsewhere. A study by Shaw & Mitra (2017) found that perceived fairness of pay predicted turnover intentions and actual turnover one year later. Employees make comparisons between their efforts and contributions and the compensation they receive. When they feel underpaid compared to their worth, they are more likely to quit. Strong, supportive leadership improves retention, while toxic bosses tend to drive turnover (Alterman et al., 2021). Abusive or unethical supervisors can actively repel employees from the organisation. On the flip side, managers who provide guidance, advocate for their team, and offer feedback help develop and retain talent.

Work-life balance issues like excessive overtime or frequent travel can also push employees to leave. A meta-analysis by Allen et al. (2000) showed a positive relationship between work-family conflict and turnover intentions. Employees today often highly value flexibility and balance. Organisations that require frequent overtime or travel put strain on employees' personal lives. This makes them more likely to seek positions with fewer work-life balance challenges. Thus, a wide array of factors relating to the work itself, leadership, compensation, and cultural support have been tied to employee retention and turnover. Targeting improvements across these dimensions can help organisations hold onto their top performers.

Three dimensions of support especially relevant in the Nigerian public sector are to be examined in this study: organisational support, supervisor support and compensation fairness. Employees often perceive limited guidance from supervisors as well as unfavorable and opaque compensation systems in the public sector. When employees feel unsupported and unfairly compensated, their affective commitment and intention to remain with the organisation declines. However, there remains scarce research on how supervisor support and compensation fairness specifically influence turnover intentions within the cultural and institutional context of Nigerian public agencies. More investigation is warranted regarding the mechanisms linking supervisor behaviours, pay practices, perceived support, and actual retention rates in the Nigerian public sector. Such insights can inform targeted management interventions to enhance perceived support and retain valuable public servants.

This study thus aims to investigate the influence of perceived organisational support, compensation fairness, and supervisor support on employee retention in the Nigerian public sector context. Following the main objective, the research questions are- does perceive organisational support influence employee retention? Does compensation fairness influence employee retention? And does supervisor support influence employee retention? Therefore, by examining these critical factors, practical insights can be derived to inform targeted interventions that enhance supportive work environments and strengthen retention of valuable public servants.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organisational Support

Organisational support theory proposes that employees form perceptions about how much the organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Employees observe and interpret different conditions and treatment they receive from the organisation, using these as indicators of the organisation's commitment and care toward them. For example, fairness of organisational policies and resource allocation, opportunities for advancement, and general support from leadership, all shape perceived organisational support (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

When employees believe the organisation is concerned about them and provides the help needed to carry out responsibilities effectively, it fulfils key socioemotional needs. Specifically, higher perceived organisational support meets needs for esteem, approval, and affiliation (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Esteem needs relate to feelings of worthiness and value. When organisations demonstrate care for employees' well-being and appreciate their contributions, it conveys that they are important assets worthy of investment. This bolsters employees' self-

esteem and sense of purpose from making valued contributions. Perceived organisational support also provides social validation and approval that employees' efforts help the organisation achieve its goals. Recognition from leaders that employees' work aligns with and furthers organisational objectives confirms that their labour has meaning and social usefulness (Brun & Dugas, 2008). Employees derive a sense of approval and mattering when their hard work is acknowledged as contributing toward something larger than themselves.

Similarly, perceived organisational support fulfils affiliation needs through reinforcing employees' membership to a team and sense of belonging (Nisar Khattak et al., 2023). Organisations comprise extensive interpersonal networks and relationships. When employees believe the organisation genuinely supports them, they feel securely embedded within those social structures and affiliative bonds (Li et al., 2022). This solidarity and connectivity to the surrounding organisation supplies comfort and satisfies integration needs. In essence, perceived organisational support makes employees feel socially anchored within organisational life rather than isolated (Yurisnawati & Nuvriasari, 2024).

By fulfilling these critical needs, perceived organisational support fosters stronger affective commitment toward the organisation (Kim et al., 2022). Employees reciprocate supportive treatment with greater emotional dedication to helping the organisation succeed. In this way, perceived organisational support activates social exchange relationships, where favourable treatment motivates a desire to benefit the source of that treatment (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Perceived organisational support is associated with key work outcomes like lower turnover intentions and higher actual job retention. When employees believe their organisation genuinely supports and values them, they are less likely to consider leaving and more apt to stay (Noermijati, et al., 2024). Therefore, this study hypothesises thus:

H1: Perceived organisational support will influence employee retention.

2.2 Compensation Fairness

Equity theory suggests that employees evaluate their compensation fairness by comparing their inputs and outcomes relative to a referent other (Eisenberger et al., 2023). Inputs encompass factors such as effort, experience, qualifications, and performance contributions. Outcomes include pay level as well as other benefits like health insurance or paid time off. Employees consciously or unconsciously weigh their input/outcome ratio against that of a comparative referent (Azmy et al., 2022). This might be a coworker in a similar role, industry salary averages, or an idealized standard of equity unique to that individual. When employees perceive that their input/outcome ratio exceeds that of the referent - meaning they contribute more than they earn in return - it leads to perceptions of inequity and unfair underpayment (Sorn et al., 2023). Even small inequities can provoke distress. A study by Trevor et al. (1997) found that a difference of just 4% in actual versus expected pay led to substantially higher intentions to quit. Perceptions of inequity create cognitive dissonance, as employees grapple with the disconnect between effort and compensation. This dissonance produces psychological tension and distress, fuelling withdrawal behaviours like absenteeism, poorer performance, and ultimately turnover as employees seek to restore balance (Hazeen Fathima & Umarani, 2023; Trevor et al., 2012).

Both actual compensation levels and the process for determining pay impact perceptions of fairness (Anjanarko & Jahroni, 2022; Muttaqin & Saputro, 2023). If pay rates seem unreasonable compared to market averages or coworkers' salaries, employees view them as inequitable. However, fairness perceptions also depend on the process. Identical compensation packages may be seen as relatively fair or unfair depending on whether procedures appropriately reflected performance, experience, and transparency. Poor justification, inconsistent application of policies, and lack of voice undermine process fairness and equity beliefs.

A number of studies have tied compensation fairness to key work attitudes and turnover behaviours. In Shaw & Gupta (2015) study, perceived fairness of pay predicted turnover intentions and actual turnover one year later. Sweeney et al. (1990) found compensation fairness positively predicted organisational commitment. Therefore, those seeing pay policies as equitable demonstrate greater commitment, satisfaction, trust in leadership, and desire to remain with the organisation. Enhancing both distributive and procedural elements of compensation systems is thus essential for retaining top talent. Employees' subjective evaluations of appropriate pay equity matter just as much if not more than objective salary levels in determining their tenure (Basma, 2024). Aligning compensation to merit and transparently conveying the connections between performance and pay can strengthen perceived fairness even without significantly expanding budgets. In this way, compensation fairness beliefs hold pivotal influence over employee retention.

H2: Compensation fairness will influence employee retention.

2.3 Supervisor Support

The supervisor-subordinate relationship has been shown to significantly impact employee attitudes and retention (Oladimeji et al., 2022). Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory proposes that supervisors develop different quality relationships with each subordinate (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Rather than adopting a "one-size-fits-all" approach, supervisors form differentiated partnerships unique to each report. High-quality LMX relationships are

characterized by mutual trust, respect, and obligation that both parties invest into the leadership process (Erdogan & Bauer, 2014; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2003). Employees in higher LMX relationships believe their supervisor will provide support and resources as needed, share inside information, offer influence in decisions, and professionally develop them (Martin et al., 2016; Martin et al., 2018). In return, they feel compelled to reciprocate with higher commitment, better performance, and voluntarily going above-and-beyond prescribed roles.

Meta-analytic findings show high LMX relates to greater job satisfaction, organisational commitment, motivation, performance, and lower turnover intentions (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2018). Employees paired with supervisors who cultivate close, supportive relationships report far more positive work experiences overall. They like their jobs more, feel intensely committed to the organisation’s purpose, exert extra effort out of personal drive, and produce higher performance levels thanks in part to extra mentoring and development. With heightened satisfaction, dedication, motivation and contribution, employees embedded within high LMX partnerships rarely wish to sever those valued bonds by exiting the organisation. Their manager’s commitment to their growth and success engenders reciprocal commitment toward achieving collective objectives.

H3: Supervisor support will influence employee retention.

2.4 Conceptual Model

Drawing on organisational support theory, this study proposes a conceptual model (see figure 1) examining how perceived organisational support, compensation fairness, and supervisor support influence employee retention. Organisational support theory argues that employees observe various conditions and treatment from the organisation which signal the degree to which it values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing (Eisenberger et al., 1986). When employees believe the organisation supports them and provides help to perform their roles effectively, it satisfies socioemotional needs for esteem, approval, and affiliation (Kurtessis et al., 2017). By fulfilling these core requirements, perceived organisational support fosters greater affective commitment and employee retention (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Similarly, compensation fairness, encompassing both appropriate pay levels and fair procedures for determining them, ties closely to turnover behaviours (Shaw & Gupta, 2015). Employees weigh their inputs such as effort, credentials, and performance against the compensation received. Enhancing procedural and distributive justice elements of pay systems through transparent, performance-based policies can improve fairness perceptions and retention even without significantly expanding budgets (Sweeney et al., 1990).

Likewise, high-quality leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships built on trust, respect, and mutual investment between supervisors and subordinates relate to greater satisfaction, commitment, and lower turnover intentions (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Managers who provide guidance, marshal resources, and furnish developmental opportunities cultivate supportive partnerships. This convinces employees their supervisor values their future contributions, compelling reciprocal dedication. Destructive supervision filled with abuse and violation alternatively damages bonds and increases exits (Schyns et al., 2018). Fostering high LMX supervisor support is thus key for retention.

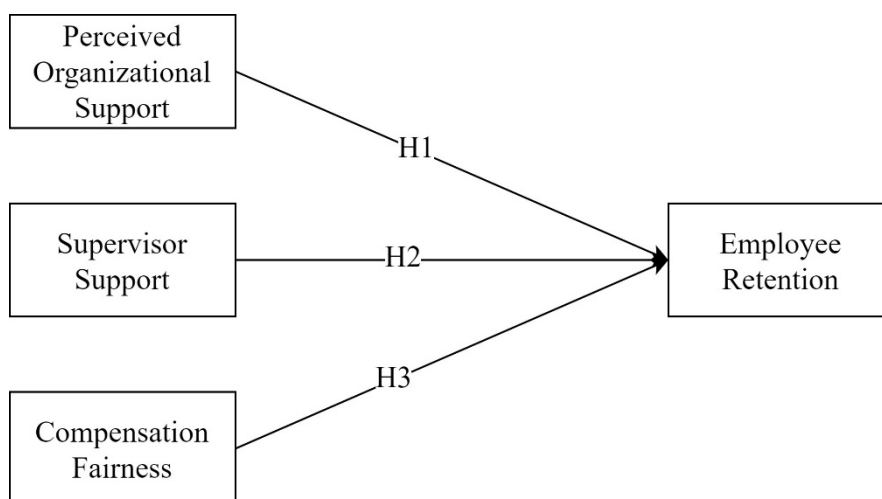


Fig. 1 Conceptual model

3. Methodology

A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was adopted to address the research objectives. The target population included all staff of Radio Kwara stationed in Ilorin, Nigeria. This organisation is a state-owned broadcasting station in Ilorin, in the North Central Region of Nigeria. This organisation represents an important sample for investigating employee retention challenges prevalent in the Nigerian public sector. Despite playing a critical role in providing information and programming to the local population, reports suggest staff at Radio Kwara and other government-run media outlets face issues of low compensation that does not adequately account for their experience and qualifications. Anecdotal evidence points to feelings of being underpaid relative to private sector benchmarks for similar roles. Additionally, there are indications of low motivation and morale stemming from limited professional development opportunities and lack of supportive supervision. This population of the study is 137 which comprises of individuals across administrative, technical and creative roles involved in radio broadcasting operations. For the sampling, it was based on a statistical power analysis conducted via G*Power to determine an appropriate sample size, 119 respondents were recommended for achieving 80% power in hypotheses testing. Primary data was collected from employees through a self-administered paper questionnaire. This incorporated measurement scales adapted from established research to assess key variables like work environment, employee motivation and demographics. The items used 5-point Likert agreement scale response formats. After design and expert validation, 135 questionnaires were distributed to employees randomly selected. Out of these, 120 completed responses were returned, achieving a response rate of 88%. Both face validity and content validity of the survey instrument were assessed through a review panel. A pilot test was initially conducted whereby 10 respondents from the target population completed the questionnaire and provided feedback. Minor changes were incorporated into the final version before full-scale distribution in person. To ensure the ethics of research, the questionnaire was made anonymous and no identifying information of the participants were collected. Cronbach's alpha values calculated during pilot testing confirmed internal reliability. The collected data was analyzed statistically using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique through SmartPLS 4 software. Common method bias was checked through marker variable tests. Regarding research ethics, employees participated voluntarily without coercion or incentives and anonymity was maintained.

To assess the key variables in the study, the researchers adapted measurement scales from well-established instruments used in prior research as shown in Appendix A. For perceived organisational support, items were drawn from the Survey of Perceived Organisational Support (SPOS) developed by Eisenberger et al., (1986). This 8-item scale is widely used to measure employees' perceptions about the degree to which their organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. To evaluate compensation fairness, the study adapted the Pay Level Satisfaction scale from the Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire (Heneman & Schwab, 1985). This scale assesses individuals' beliefs about whether their compensation is equitable compared to their inputs like effort and qualifications, as well as market pay rates for similar roles. The quality of supervisor support was measured using items from the LMX-MDM scale (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). This instrument dimensionalizes leader-member exchange across factors like perceived contribution to the relationship, loyalty, affect/liking, and professional respect. Finally, for the key outcome of employee retention and turnover intentions, items were adapted from the Turnover Intention Scale (Cammann et al., 1983) which includes items like "I frequently think about quitting".

4. Results and Findings

A total of 120 employees participated in the survey. In terms of gender, 54% were male and 46% were female. Regarding age, most respondents were concentrated in the 30-45 range, with 38% ages 30-35 and 36% age 36-45. Only 11% were below 30 years old, while 16% were above 45. In education levels attained, 64% held a bachelor's degree or HND while smaller groups had secondary education (18%), primary only (7%), or postgraduate study (11%). The dominance of bachelor's degree holders reflects the typical education requirements of professional roles.

Table 1 Demographic distribution of respondents

	Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	65	54
	Female	55	46
Age	below 30 years	13	11
	30-35 years	45	38
	36-45 years	43	36
	Above 45 years	19	16
Education	Primary	8	7

	Secondary	22	18
	Bachelor/HND	77	64
	Postgraduate	13	11
Length of Service	Less than 10 years	16	13
	10-20 years	38	32
	21-30	46	38
	31-35	20	17

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the measurement and structural models in SmartPLS 4. The measurement model examined the convergent and discriminant validity and reliability of the multi-item constructs. As shown in the attached outputs, most indicators loadings exceeded the 0.708 threshold demonstrating convergent validity at the item level (Hair et al., 2019). Composite reliability values were above 0.7 and average variance extracted measures were above 0.5 for all constructs, satisfying recommendations for convergent validity at the construct level (Hair et al., 2017 et). To confirm discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) of correlations between constructs was calculated. All values were below the conservative 0.85 threshold indicating the constructs were empirically distinct (Henseler et al., 2014). Reliability was supported with Cronbach’s alpha values all over 0.7. Together this evidence supports the measures as valid and reliable for testing hypotheses.

Table 2 Reliability and validity

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
Perceived Organisational Support	POS1	0.685	0.714	0.732	0.534
	POS2	0.774			
	POS3	0.714			
	POS4	0.722			
	POS5	0.772			
	POS6	0.716			
	POS7	0.746			
	POS8	0.751			
Compensation and Fairness	COM1	0.735	0.776	0.765	0.558
	COM2	0.856			
	COM3	0.714			
	COM4	0.769			
	COM5	0.831			
Supervisor Support	SUP1	0.888	0.814	0.802	0.601
	SUP2	0.842			
	SUP3	0.766			
	SUP4	0.791			
	SUP5	0.754			
Employee Retention	RET1	0.7	0.766	0.774	0.572
	RET2	0.705			
	RET3	0.741			
	RET4	0.813			
	RET5	0.797			

Table 3 Discriminant validity (HTMT criterion)

	Compensation Fairness	Employee Retention	Perceived Organisational Support	Supervisor Support
Compensation Fairness				
Employee Retention	0.284			
Perceived Organisational Support	0.139	0.332		
Supervisor Support			0.289	

Supervisor Support	0.368	0.339	0.363
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The structural model results reveal perceived organisational support ($\beta=0.591, p<0.001$), compensation and fairness ($\beta=0.562, p<0.001$), and supervisor support ($\beta=0.486, p<0.001$) all positively predicted employee retention, supporting H1, H2 and H3 respectively. The control variable of gender and length of service did not have a significant effect. These three factors explained a substantial 66.2% of variance in retention, with perceived organisational support having the strongest total effect. This highlights the pivotal influence of perceived care for employees' wellbeing and valuing of their efforts from the organisation, leaders, and through adequate compensation. Fulfilling these socioemotional and economic needs fosters greater affective commitment and intent to remain employed.

Table 4 Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	β	Std Dev	T-value	P values
H1: Perceived Organisational Support -> Employee Retention	0.591	0.028	11.241	0.000
H3: Compensation Fairness -> Employee Retention	0.562	0.048	10.082	0.000
H2: Supervisor Support -> Employee Retention	0.486	0.066	9.873	0.000

R² = 0.662

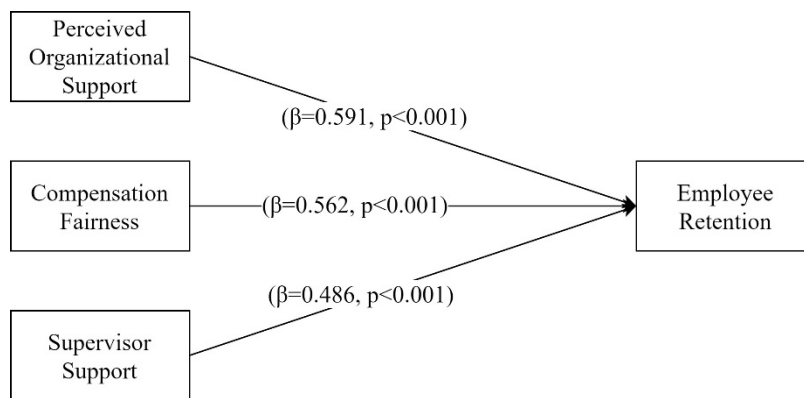


Fig. 2 Structural model result

5. Discussion

This study examined how perceived organisational support, compensation fairness, and supervisor support influence employee retention. The findings reveal all three factors positively predicted intent to continue employment. This aligns with organisational support theory positing that favorable treatment from the organisation and its agents satisfies socioemotional needs, fostering stronger affective commitment and retention (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees observe their work environment for signals about the degree to which the organisation values their contributions and cares for their wellbeing. Supportive treatment in the form of fair compensation, developmental supervision, and general organisational policies that enable effective role performance confirm employees' self-worth and social belongingness within the organisational community. By fulfilling core esteem, approval, and affiliation requirements, perceived support builds loyalty. Employees reciprocate caring, equitable treatment with greater dedication and willingness to remain employed to help the organisation succeed.

Specifically, when pay policies appropriately reflect individual effort and qualifications vis-à-vis market standards, it enhances perceptions of equity and organisational support for employee welfare (Shaw & Gupta, 2015). Even fixed salaries seem fairer within supportive contexts when determined through transparent procedures applied consistently across employees (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992). Additionally, high-quality leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships characterized by guidance, access to resources, and growth opportunities signal the organisation's investment in employees' long-term development (Lee et al., 2019; Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2005). Supervisors who provide coaching, mentorship, and stretch assignments convince employees that the organisation sincerely cares about nurturing their evolving competence over time. This cultivates feelings of reciprocal obligation, with employees striving to repay such developmental investments through heightened citizenship and retention, hoping those talent investments pay organisational dividends down the road (Martin et al., 2016).

More broadly, general perceived organisational support facilitates success in assigned roles by supplying helpful job resources like information, technology, and autonomy. This prevents frustrations from role ambiguity or inadequate enablement that might otherwise precipitate exits (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Across economic, developmental, and operational domains, organisational support theory explains how favourable work environments satisfy esteem, approval, and affiliation needs that ultimately anchor talent (Kurtessis et al., 2017). When organisations demonstrate caring through equitable incentives, supportive supervision, and role-enabling policies, employees feel valued members of a team working toward shared objectives. By fulfilling socioemotional requirements for worthiness, belongingness, and purpose, high perceived organisational support compels reciprocation in the form of retained organisational membership and willingness to contribute efforts toward collective success.

Among the studied predictors, perceived organisational support exhibited the strongest link to retention, highlighting the particular importance of assurances that the organisation genuinely cares about employees' wellbeing. Given the centrality of the employment relationship to adult life as the primary source of livelihood and social community, affirmations of employees' value and belongingness within that vital social sphere carry intense significance (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When employees believe the organisation cares about them as people beyond mechanical production instruments, it powerfully fulfils core socioemotional needs for esteem, affiliation, emotional safety and validation (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Such supportive assurance of human worthiness and social identity forges profound employee attachment and identification with the organisation (Sluss et al., 2008).

In a meta-analysis, perceived organisational support evidenced among the highest effect sizes of any single predictor in relation to key outcomes like job satisfaction, retention intentions, and attendance behaviours (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Organisations able to cultivate strong climates of care and inclusion should reap substantial gains in loyalty and tenure compared to more impersonal, transactional associations centered narrowly on compensation for labour (Guchait et al., 2015; Munda et al., 2024). Employees form a calculative exchange relationship valuing financial incentives when believing the organisation lacks genuine concern for their wellbeing and aspirations. Alternatively, the socioemotional fulfilment nurtured by perceived organisational support inspires substantial reciprocal contributions in the form of extra effort, citizenship behaviours, and willingness to commit one's long-term membership out of alignment with the organisation's purpose (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

6. Practical Implications

The confirmed power of organisational support factors for strengthening retention suggests several practitioner implications. The sizable influence of perceived organisational support underscores the need for talent management practices like internal mobility programs, leadership transparency around decisions affecting employees, supervisor relationship training, and gathering regular feedback on burnout risks and unmet socioemotional needs (Oladimeji & Abdulkareem, 2023). Publicizing such practices as standard employee care policies rather than special incentives can foster system-wide perceptions of institutional support. Targeted supervisor-report relationship building training informed by leader-member exchange theory could optimize managers' inclination and skill in providing valued resources like mentorship. Practices directly confirming the organisation's investment in employees' growth signal its support for long-term partnerships beyond immediate production demands.

Additionally, pay equity analyses benchmarking internal pay ratios against industry standards and audits of compensation procedures could identify gaps undermining perceived fairness (Shaw & Gupta, 2015). Organisations should examine whether employee effort-reward ratios align to market benchmarks and make adjustments where substantial discrepancies arise. Even absent major salary expansions, pay scale transparency particularly for performance-based incentives and clear communication of performance-reward linkages enhance justice perceptions. The vital impact of distributed justice highlights the value of cultivating felt equity through accurate and bias-free performance appraisals, soliciting employee input before enacting pay policy changes, and providing explanations to those impacted by reward allocation decisions (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992). Such organisational efforts to enhance process transparency, invite participation in shaping incentives, and explain determination criteria based on merit demonstrate good faith in nurturing an equitable system. This helps develop perceived fairness even if all desired raises prove unfeasible. Consequently, organisations should emphasize regularly evaluating and refining their compensation management practices given the substantial influence on equity perceptions and ultimately, employee retention (Gerhart & Rynes, 2003).

Monitoring key perceived support indicators through regular pulse surveys, intentionally messaging care for employees in policies and communications, and relationship-centered training comprise cost-effective high-yield investments toward retaining top talent for the long term. Specifically, organisations should institute brief monthly or quarterly pulse surveys to track employee perceptions around organisational support, role enablement, equity, inclusion, and other key areas. Unlike in-depth annual engagement studies, pulse surveys with just a few targeted questions provide leading indicators allowing rapid response to emerging issues before escalation. Confidential surveys foster candid input, while demonstrating the organisation's commitment to

listening and taking action based on feedback. Organisations can augment surveys with focus groups or skip level meetings to understand lived experiences behind data trends.

Additionally, purposeful internal messaging should regularly convey the organisation's care for employees and commitment to their wellbeing. Traditional human resources practices around compensation, job design, and training undoubtedly communicate implicit messages, but organisations should get far more intentional about expressing support and nurturing talent (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). For example, leadership town halls and organisation meetings could consistently emphasize how much employees' dedication matters to carrying out the organisation's meaningful purpose. Thoughtful gestures like service anniversary recognitions personalized by leaders and peer appreciation programs reinforce that the organisation notices and values employees' contributions. Such symbolic efforts alongside substantive support policies shape the day-to-day felt experience of organisational support or lack thereof.

Further, formal supervisor-report relationship training informed by leader-member exchange theory can develop managers' skill and inclination for providing developmental support critical for retention (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Training should coach leaders how to build trust with direct reports through regular 1-on-1 coaching conversations focused on career goals, candid productive feedback, and collaborative problem-solving around obstacles. Equipping managers to broker organisational resources and open doors for those they mentor also demonstrates commitment to nurturing talent long-term rather than merely extracting short-term production. While such organisational investments demand commitment, perceived support and high-quality supervision remain among the highest returning interventions for fortifying employee loyalty and tenure.

7. Conclusion

This research study shows the important role of perceived organisational support, fair compensation and supportive supervision in employee retention, in the context of Nigerian public sector. The results demonstrate that when employees perceive genuine appreciation from their organisation - through equitable compensation, leadership relationships that foster their growth, and supportive policies that enable them to perform their jobs effectively - reward this with higher levels of engagement and retention. By fulfilling core psychological needs for self-esteem, a sense of belonging and meaningful purpose, high perceived organisational support nurtures emotional connections that anchor talent for the long term. Rather than just transactional exchanges, organisations need to invest strategically to create the experience of genuine concern for the collective wellbeing and growth of employees. Measures such as regular pulse surveys to monitor supportive experiences, targeted messages to value contributions, fair reward systems, and leadership development that focuses on quality relationships can cost-effectively strengthen retention drivers. As Nigerian authorities strive to rebuild institutional capacity post-pandemic, increased attention to these supportive elements is an affordable and high-return strategy to strengthen the human capital needed to deliver effective services to citizens.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

The author confirms sole responsibility for the following: study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

Appendix A: Questionnaire Items

Perceived Organisational Support

1. The organisation values my contributions.
2. I receive recognition and appreciation for my work from the organisation.
3. The organisation cares about my well-being.
4. I feel supported by the organisation in achieving my work responsibilities.
5. I am provided with the necessary resources and tools to effectively perform my job.
6. The organisation provides opportunities for my career advancement and growth.
7. My opinions and suggestions are valued by the organisation.
8. The organisation effectively communicates its goals and objectives to me.

Compensation and Fairness

1. I am satisfied with the fairness of my compensation compared to my job responsibilities.

2. My compensation is aligned with my performance and contributions.
3. The transparency of the compensation system in my organisation is satisfactory.
4. The pay raises and promotions are distributed fairly within the organisation.
5. My compensation is competitive compared to similar positions in other organisations.

Supervisor Support

1. My supervisor provides me with guidance and direction in my work.
2. I feel comfortable seeking support and assistance from my supervisor.
3. My supervisor advocates for my professional development and growth.
4. My supervisor effectively communicates expectations and provides feedback.
5. My supervisor supports my work-life balance and well-being.

Employee Retention

1. I am likely to actively search for job opportunities outside of the organisation.
2. I see myself working for this organisation in the long term.
3. I am committed to staying with the organisation.
4. I am satisfied with my overall experience working for the organisation.
5. I would recommend this organisation as a good place to work to others.

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