INFLUENCE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRACTICES ON ACADEMIC STAFF MORALE IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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BENIN CITY

JUNE 2026

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PG/EDU2016282
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A THESIS WRITTEN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA

JUNE 2026

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that, this study was carried out by Vinton-Okoedo ITOYA, in the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.

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DEDICATION

The researcher dedicates this study to his sons: Osehojie-King, Osekhale-Priest, Osenomen-Praise, and Osezele-Zion, for whom Ph.D. has now become the minimum academic standard. Also, to his late parents, Father; Joseph Agene Itoya and Mother; Lucy Evbayiro Odigie, whose genetic materials he possesses and treasures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher expresses profound gratitude to God Almighty for His abundant grace, mercy, benevolence, guidance, and protection throughout the course of this study. To Him alone be all the glory honour, and praise for ever and ever, Amen.

He is indebted to his supervisor, Professor (Venerable) M. Nwadiani, for his scholarly contributions, professional guidance, encouragement, availability for consultation, scholarly coaching, and his invaluable efforts in supervising this thesis and providing constructive feedback. The researcher also expresses his heartfelt gratitude to his co-supervisor, Dr. (Mrs.) U. Momoh, for her constructive criticisms, moral support, and guidance, which significantly contributed to the successful completion of this work.

He is grateful to the Head of Department, Professor (Mrs.) R. O. Osagie, and the immediate past Head of Department, Professor W. A. Iguodala, for their encouragement and support throughout the duration of this study. Sincere appreciation is also extended to Professors J. K. Adeyemi, O. I. Iyamu, S. E. Osunde, O. K. Omoroguiwa, V. O. Igbineweka, V. O. Ibadin, and H.O. Alonge, for their invaluable contributions, insightful corrections, and support, which greatly enhanced the quality of this work.

He appreciates the following for their scholarly inputs, which helped to improve this work. Drs. (Rev. Sis.) P. Ekejiuba, N. Obiweluozor, O.M. Edeki, P.

Igenegbai, P.A. Enaigbe, M.I. Imakpokpomwan, and I.D. Udom. Also appreciated are Drs. A. Ogbemudia, K.O. Idehen, M. Obasuyi, Late (Mrs.) J.E. Obano, (Mrs.) M.E. Imarhiagbe, (Mrs.) R. Igbinovia, and Dan Enowoghomwenma. Special thanks go to Dr. K. Imasuen and all the non-teaching staff in the Department of Educational Management for their support, encouragement, and contributions throughout this programme.

Due acknowledgement is extended to the researcher's research assistants and office staff: Dr. J. Edokpolor, Mrs. Q. Abikwi-Ekanem, Mr. I. Ilawagbon, Mr. D. Utomi, Mrs. E. Okobaro, and Mrs. E. Nakuje, for their roles, which contributed in no small measure to the success of this research endeavour. In the same vein, the writer is thankful to his employers, Benson Idahosa University, for the permission and enablement granted to undertake this academic venture.

The writer extends sincere gratitude to his immediate family; wife: Nosa-Heart Itoya, Sons: Osehojie-King, Osekhale-Priest, Osenomen-Praise, & Osezele-Zion, siblings, and friends; Dr. O. Odigie, Engr. G. Ogunsanwo, Mrs. E. Adebayo-James, Ms. R. Igbafe, Profs. S. Guobadia, A. Esimaje, to mention but a few, for their love, prayers, unwavering support, and encouragement throughout this academic journey.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South, Nigeria. Seven research questions were raised to guide the study. Research questions 1 and 2 were answered, while questions 3 to 7 were formulated into hypotheses and tested at a 0.05 alpha level of significance.

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was 3,245 academic staff in the 26 private universities in South-South Nigeria. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select 356 academic staff from private universities in South-South Nigeria. Two sets of instruments, titled ‘Corporate Governance Practices Questionnaire (CGPQ)’ and ‘Academic Staff Morale Questionnaire (ASMQ)’ were used to collect data. The instruments were validated by the researcher through his supervisors and one other expert in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, both in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City. The questionnaires were found to be reliable, with a reliability index of 0.86 for CGPQ and 0.89 for ASMQ. The data collected were analysed using Mean and Standard Deviation for the research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using the Chi-Square statistic.

Findings from the study showed that, transparency was the most predominant corporate governance practice in private universities in South-South Nigeria, and the level of academic staff morale was moderate. The study also established that there was a significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale. The study further established that there was no significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale based on age, sex, academic status, and marital status. It was, therefore, recommended, among others, that the corporate governance practice of transparency be strengthened, while ensuring accountability, upholding ethical standards, and demonstrating institutional responsibility.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Universities are universally recognized as the bedrock of human capital development, knowledge creation, and innovation. They function not only as institutions of higher learning but also as social systems that shape the future of nations. The credibility of any university system is not determined solely by the brilliance of its students or the sophistication of its infrastructure, but also by the quality of its corporate governance practices and the academic staff who bring effective teaching, quality research, and community services to fruition.

Corporate governance in universities refers to the framework of policies, processes, and relationships that direct, control, and hold institutions of higher learning accountable, particularly universities. In essence, corporate governance in universities is about striking a balance between compliance with regulatory requirements, responsiveness to stakeholders' needs, and fidelity to the mission of the institution. Corporate governance is about ensuring that policies and processes are not only designed for efficiency but are also implemented with fairness and transparency. For universities, especially in South-South Nigeria, strengthening corporate governance frameworks is crucial for sustaining credibility, retaining talent, and building institutions that can compete globally.

Corporate governance has long been associated with the corporate world, particularly in business and profit-making organizations. The role of the National

Universities Commission (NUC) cannot be ignored in this context. As the regulatory body for universities in Nigeria, the NUC sets minimum academic standards, monitors compliance, and plays a key role in ensuring that corporate governance frameworks across universities align with national or international benchmarks. The NUC's involvement in the accreditation process, approval of programmes, and periodic assessment underscores the importance of corporate governance in sustaining credibility and trust in Nigerian universities. Through its regulations, the NUC seeks to standardize corporate governance practices, though the extent of implementation varies across Nigerian universities.

The need for assessing corporate governance practices in universities also stems from the recognition that higher education institutions are not immune to the pressures of accountability and global competitiveness. Globally, universities are ranked not just by the quality of their research outputs, but also by their corporate governance systems and the well-being of their academic communities. A poorly governed university may lose credibility, while a well-governed university earns trust, attracts abundant resources and retains the best-talented staff.

Unlike commercial enterprises, universities have a mandate reflected in their strategic plans. This mandate aims to develop the human mind to be creative, innovative, research-oriented, and competent in various areas of specialization, as well as to acquire skills in entrepreneurship and a dedication to service. Other objectives include strengthening creative thinking, innovative qualities, and entrepreneurial abilities to make them more relevant to national development or societal progress.

The mandate of universities demands corporate governance structures that guarantee fairness in decision-making, equity in resource allocation, inclusiveness in policy formulation, and integrity in leadership. Without strong corporate governance practices, universities may experience inefficiency, mismanagement, and an inability to meet national and global expectations. Hence, corporate governance practices include ensuring transparency, accountability, responsibility, integrity, and fairness, which are critical in defining how decisions are made, resources are managed, policies and programmes implemented, conflicts resolved, and how stakeholders interact with institutional leadership.

Transparency is sharing facts or information, acting openly, and allowing stakeholders to gather information that may be critical to uncovering abuses and defending their interests (European Training Foundation, 2013). It involves the openness with which university administrators communicate policies, financial expenditures, recruitment decisions, and long-term plans. Transparency helps build trust and prevents rumors, favoritism, and suspicion. Contrarily, a lack of transparency may sometimes lead to staff discontent, especially in cases of unfair promotions or unclear salary structures. Hence, transparency has to do with clear procedures for public decision-making and opens channels of communication between university administrators and stakeholders, and makes a wide range of information accessible.

Accountability is the process by which university leaders and administrators are answerable for their actions and are subject to redress when commitments and duties are not met (Transparency International, 2014). In this sense, university leaders and administrators acting visibly and understandably would promote accountability and allow stakeholders outside a university to monitor its activity and to take action when something is not as it should be. For example, when universities publicly disclose their budget allocations or recruitment criteria, staff morale improves because they perceive fairness in the system. On the contrary, lack of accountability often results in financial mismanagement, neglect of staff welfare, and erosion of trust issues that have historically triggered unrest in Nigerian universities. Accountability ensures that those in leadership positions are held responsible for their decisions and actions. This means that vice chancellors, governing councils, registrars, bursars, and deans must justify how resources are utilized and how policies are implemented.

Responsibility is a conscious commitment to fairness, integrity, transparency, and accountability (Adebayo, 2022). In a university system, for example, responsibility manifests through adherence to institutional rules, efficient management of resources, and the promotion of an environment conducive to learning and research. It is also reflected in how management responds to issues such as staff welfare, promotion, research funding, and infrastructural development. Responsibility entails not only assigning duties, but also anticipating the consequences of one's decisions on others. When leaders fail to uphold this responsibility, it erodes trust, affects morale, and undermines organizational performance.

Integrity and fairness are actions and behaviours that are consistent with a set of moral or ethical values or standards embraced by university administrators and leaders, which create a barrier to corruption (Organization for Economic Corruption and Development, 2014). Integrity and fairness involve the quality of adhering to rules, morals, principles, and ethical standards, while operating with honesty and transparency. University administrators and leaders vested with the power to act in the public interest may be tempted to use their position for personal or private gain. Hence, the need to be guarded, irrespective of the ownership of the university

Private universities enjoy autonomy from governments interferences, but they are affected by corporate governance challenges, such as excessive centralization of authority, minimal staff involvement in decision-making, and uncertainties around long-term sustainability. Private universities in South-South, Nigeria, which represent the geographical coverage of this study, reflect these realities and thus provide a valuable context for investigating corporate governance practices and their influence on academic staff morale. Thus, academic staff morale is not an isolated concern but a critical measure of how corporate governance translates into a real-life experience within the university setting.

Academic staff morale pertains to the overall outlook, attitude, satisfaction, and confidence that academic staff feel or experience at work. It is an intangible but highly influential factor that shapes the commitment and performance of the workforce. In the context of universities, academic staff morale goes beyond just being susceptible to job satisfaction; it encapsulates enthusiasm, a sense of belonging, and the level of motivation that academic staff bring to their job responsibilities. A university with high academic staff morale benefits from a workforce that is engaged, innovative, and aligned with institutional goals, while low academic morale manifests in apathy, absenteeism, resistance to change, and even outright hostility toward management.

The importance of academic staff morale in universities can also be understood from the perspective of institutional reputation and competitiveness. Academic staff morale is not merely a human resources concern but a strategic necessity for universities. It influences productivity, reputation, staff retention, innovation, and stability. For universities in South-South Nigeria, where corporate governance challenges are often mirrored in low academic staff motivation, addressing academic staff morale becomes a matter of institutional survival. Without motivated academic staff, no amount of facilities or funding can guarantee academic excellence. Therefore, understanding or improving academic staff morale is central to achieving the broader goals or objectives of education and global competitiveness.

Academic staff morale is a crucial lens through which corporate governance practices can be assessed. A university may have sound policies on paper, but if academic staff members feel undervalued, overworked, or unfairly treated, the university will struggle to achieve its set goals and objectives. Academic staff morale indices are multi-dimensional in nature, as they include remuneration or pay, recognition, academic freedom, opportunities for career advancement, and working conditions.

Remuneration refers to the monetary compensation academic staff receive. Fair remuneration or fair pay may help minimize job dissatisfaction. An increment in salary does not always lead to higher motivation or long-term job satisfaction. In simple terms, salary may prevent dissatisfaction, but it does not necessarily motivate. Therefore, academic staff may experience insufficient remuneration or insufficient pay, thereby leading to a higher level of dissatisfaction and demotivation on the job.

Recognition involves the identification, acknowledgement, and appreciation of academic staff's previous contributions to the achievement of institutional goals.

Recognition is one of the numerous motivational factors that drive work outcomes and fulfillment. Therefore, there is a need for university administrators to constantly encourage academic staff to set goals and celebrate them when they achieve them.

Academic freedom is a resource that enables academic staff to exert more control over how they perform their jobs and, as a result, feel more a part of their work. Therefore, academic freedom can provide academic staff the autonomy to schedule their specific job activities for better outcomes, develop their capabilities to think critically and creatively, which may lead to better job performance.

Opportunities for career advancement take place when a university provides its academic staff with the opportunities to update and upgrade their knowledge, skills, and competencies. Opportunities for career advancement encourage academic staff to participate in career development programs and develop their capabilities (for instance, self-efficacy or self-confidence) to enhance their job responsibilities.

Working conditions involve the physical aspects of the working environment, which include workspace, safety measures, equipment, and amenities. Poor working conditions may cause job dissatisfaction. While comfortable and safe working conditions may reduce job demands and burnout, uncomfortable and unsafe surroundings may increase frustration. Academic staff may face tough working conditions, thereby leading to some job dissatisfaction. However, these motivational indicators, such as remuneration, recognition, academic freedom, opportunities for career advancement, and working conditions, may provide fulfillment and drive, true job satisfaction, work engagement, and work commitment, and prevent absenteeism among academic staff.

Corporate governance and academic staff morale could be affected by intervening variables such as experience, sex, academic status, and marital status of staff. Experience in the context of this study refers to older academic staff and younger academic staff. However, knowledge on how the differences in lecturing experience influence behavioural outcomes like academic staff morale is needed. This differential influence may be due to a general decline of skills, abilities and self-confidence of older academic staff. This general decline may not be accurate, as skills, abilities, and self-confidence may deteriorate with years of experience; older academic staff demonstrate advantages through long-lasting experience.

Sex in the context of the study pertains to male or female academic staff. It is a social construct that establishes and differentiates status and role between male and female, particularly in the way they contribute to, participate in, and are rewarded by the economy, as well as most social or academic institutions. The sex gap is a key factor to point out when discussing some issues relating to corporate governance and academic staff morale. The morale of female academic staff could be differently impacted from that of male academic staff as a result of the university's corporate governance practices. Therefore, sex could affect corporate governance practices, which, in turn, could influence academic staff morale.

Academic status pertains to senior and junior academic staff; for the academic staff, there are the senior academics (Senior Lecturers to Professors) and junior academics (Assistant Lecturers to Lecturer 1). For both, their morale could be differently impacted depending on their status. The junior academic staff might have lower morale in relation to job satisfaction, work engagement, and work commitment compared to the senior academic staff and vice versa, as a result of corporate governance practices. Specifically, this perception may be due to the widespread deficit hypothesis, which assumes a general reduction of skills, abilities, and performance of senior academic staff. This decline may not be accurate, as skills, abilities, and performance may deteriorate with senior academic staff.

Marital status in the context of the study pertains to the academic staff situation about whether an academic staff member is single or married. However, factors such as work-family conflict and balance, as well as work-life conflict and balance challenges, could lead to lower morale, especially among married academic staff. The challenge of balancing work roles with family responsibilities could be a major source of stress for academic staff, especially those who are married. Therefore, work-family conflict and interference may influence the marital status of university academic staff.

Corporate governance practices and academic staff morale are inseparably associated with the management of universities. Corporate governance provides the framework for transparency, accountability, responsibility, integrity, and fairness. Academic staff morale, on the other hand, reflects academic staff's basic needs (such as clear policies, working conditions, and fair pay) and their personal needs (such as recognition, achievement, autonomy, opportunities for career advancement). When corporate governance practices are fair, inclusive, and transparent, they seem to enhance academic staff morale, leading to stronger institutional performance. Conversely, when corporate governance is weak or compromised, academic staff morale suffers, productivity declines, and universities struggle to achieve their mandates. Hence, the need to investigate the influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In the evolving landscape of higher education in Nigeria, there appears to be a decline in the morale of academic staff despite the continuous reforms aimed at improving corporate governance practices in tertiary educational institutions, including private universities. Across universities, academic staff who are pivotal to academic and work productivity and institutional growth have reported growing dissatisfaction, disengagement, and a lack of commitment to work. While the causes of these negative aspects of staff morale are multifaceted, one recurring factor that could shape the day-to-day experiences of job satisfaction, work engagement, and work commitment is the quality of corporate governance practices within their universities.

In private universities, where the profit-driven model tends to deliver more administrative efficiency, staff members appear to continually face a different kind of morale crisis. Irregular payment of salaries and disrupted academic calendars appear to frequently or often contribute to limited academic freedom, weak internal democracy, absence of unions, and fear of termination. In most private universities, decision-making is highly centralized, with little room for staff input or institutional checks and balances. While private universities may appear more stable externally, many staff operate under tension, silence, and suffering, thereby unable to express dissent or advocate for improvement. Could the alleged low morale of academic staff be a result of corporate governance practices in Nigerian universities? The study, therefore, investigated the influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predominant corporate governance practice in private universities in South-South Nigeria?
2. What is the level of staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria?
3. Will corporate governance practices influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria?
4. Will corporate governance practices influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on experience?
5. Will corporate governance practices influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on sex?
6. Will corporate governance practices influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on academic status?
7. Will corporate governance practices influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on marital status?

Hypotheses

Research questions 1 and 2 were answered, while questions 3 to 7 were formulated into hypotheses.

Ho_1: Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria.

Ho_2: Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on experience.

Ho_3: Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on sex.

Ho_4: Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on academic status.

Ho_5: Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on marital status.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated the influence of corporate governance practices on staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria. The study specifically:

i. ascertained the predominant corporate governance practices in private universities in South-South Nigeria.

ii. determined the level of staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria.

iii. examined if corporate governance practices influenced staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria.

iv. investigated if corporate governance practices influenced staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on experience.

v. examined if corporate governance practices influenced staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on sex.

vi. found out if corporate governance practices influenced staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on academic status.

vii. investigated if corporate governance practices influenced staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on marital status.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would be of benefit to educational stakeholders such as staff members, university administrators and proprietors, students, government and its agencies, and future researchers.

Academic staff would benefit from the findings of this study, as it would better inform them on how the implementation of corporate governance practices, such as transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, fairness, and integrity, would influence their work morale. The findings of the study would also inform academic staff of the need to be involved and their roles in policy formulation and the decision-making process.

The findings of the study would also help university administrators and proprietors by providing them with important information on how overall corporate governance practices would help to tackle the enormous administrative and leadership challenges. Similarly, the findings would help university administrators and proprietors to understand how corporate governance practices like transparency, accountability, responsiveness, integrity, and fairness would influence their staff morale. This would provide university administrators and proprietors with an opportunity to understand that the staff working environment needs to be properly governed and provided with the necessary resources.

The findings of the study would also provide university administrators and proprietors with information to cultivate corporate governance practices such as transparency, accountability, responsiveness, integrity, and fairness during policy implementation and decision-making, which would directly influence institutional stability, enabling a working environment for academic excellence, and favourable job performance.

The findings of this study would be of great relevance to students who are the major beneficiaries of education, as it would provide them with important information on how accountability, transparency, integrity, and fairness in policy formulation and decision-making can ensure optimization of resources for better academic outcomes. The findings would also provide students with salient information on how staff morale can influence effective teaching and learning. This implied that the findings of this study would provide students with the information on how the proper implementation of corporate governance practices and academic staff morale would influence better academic performance, which, in turn, would contribute to the overall accomplishment of the missions of university education in Nigeria.

The findings of the study would also be of immense benefit to the government and its agencies, especially to the National Universities Commission (NUC), TETFund, and State and Federal Ministries of Education, on the formulation and implementation of policies regarding corporate governance. The findings of this study would help the State/Federal governments and policymakers to understand the current state of corporate governance practices and job situations, and what to do to improve academic staff morale. The findings of the study would furnish the NUC with the critical modalities for conducting the accreditation exercises in the university system. The findings of this study would also provide specific information to NUC officials on how the governance structures of private universities would look at all times. The findings of this study would also provide information to support the design of corporate governance frameworks that consider staff morale as a key indicator of institutional health and effectiveness.

The findings of the study would also be of immense benefit to future researchers in the fields of educational planning, administration, and human resource management. The findings of this study would also help those who may want to further their research with a specific focus on how corporate governance practices can predict staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria. The findings would also help those who may want to compare the results of the study, using other geographical scopes or methods.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of the study is corporate governance practices and academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria. Corporate governance practices of interest to the study were transparency, accountability, responsibility, integrity, and fairness in the university leadership and management. The indices of academic staff morale in the study included remuneration, recognition, academic freedom**,** opportunities for career advancement, and working conditions.

The study was delimited to the academic staff in the twenty-Six (26) private universities in South-South Nigeria.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were operationally defined as follows:

Academic Staff Experience - referred to experienced academic staff (lecturing experience of 5 years and above) and less-experienced academic staff (less than 5 years of teaching experience).

Academic Staff Morale – referred to the overall outlook, attitude, satisfaction, and confidence that academic staff feel or experience at work as a result of their remuneration, recognition, academic freedom**,** opportunities for career advancement, and working conditions.

Corporate Governance - referred to how university leadership, structures, such as governing councils, management teams, Deans, Directors, and Heads of academic departments, make decisions and implement policies.

Corporate Governance Practices - referred to the decision-making and policy implementation processes of university leadership in terms of transparency, accountability, responsibility, integrity, and fairness.

Marital Status – referred to married or single academic staff.

Sex of Staff - referred to male or female staff.

Status of Staff - referred to Senior academic staff (Senior Lecturer to Professor) and Junior academic staff (Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer I).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviewed corporate governance practices and academic staff morale. It was discussed under the following subheadings.

- Theoretical Framework
- Concept of Corporate Governance Practices
- Concept of Academic Staff Morale
- Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale
- Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale Based on Experience
- Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale Based on Sex
- Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Staff Morale Based on Academic Status
- Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Staff Morale Based on Marital Status
- Summary of Reviewed Literature

Theoretical Framework

The study was hinged on the Stakeholder Theory by Edward Freeman in 1984, and the Motivation-Hygiene Theory propounded by Frederick Herzberg in 1959. Stakeholder theory posits that organizations should serve the interests of all their major stakeholders, not just shareholders in general. The general idea of the stakeholder theory is what an organization should be and how it should be conceptualized. The theory argues that effectively managing relationships with all these groups of stakeholders leads to greater long-term success and better performance for the company. The proponent of the Stakeholder Theory has suggested that organizations should look beyond profit maximization and take into consideration other stakeholders that the organization is associated with, and who contribute to the organization's achievements.

Stakeholders of organizations may also include customers, employees, local communities, suppliers and distributors, shareholders, the media, the general public, future generations, past generations, competitors, non-governmental organizations, activists, trade unions or trade associations, financiers, government, regulators, and policy makers. This implies that in the university system, stakeholders such as the Governing Council, University management, Senate members, Heads of academic departments, Deans, Directors, Lecturers, and students are all the actors for whom the university's development and growth are of prime concern.

Corporation itself should be thought of as a grouping of stakeholders, and the purpose of the corporation should be to manage stakeholders' interests, needs, and viewpoints (Freeman, 2006). Thus, university administrators and leaders have the responsibility of meeting the needs, interests, and viewpoints of all stakeholders. Thus, university administrators and leaders should, on one hand, manage the institution for the benefit of the stakeholders to ensure their rights and participation in the decision-making process. On the other hand, university leaders and administrators must act as stakeholders' agents to ensure the survival of the institution and safeguard the long-term interests of each group. Stakeholders include academic staff, students, society, and government participating in or benefiting from the provision of universities.

There are two types of stakeholders, namely: Primary stakeholders and secondary stakeholders. Primary stakeholders are those without whose continuing participation, the corporation cannot survive as a going concern, suggesting that these relationships are characterized by mutual interdependence. Primary stakeholders are those actors who entertain a direct and contractually-oriented relationship, as the name indicates, with the company and who are sometimes still called 'contractual' stakeholders. Primary stakeholders are partners of the organization, while secondary stakeholders have voluntary relationships with the organization.

Secondary stakeholders are actors who are situated at the borders of an industry and who may be impacted by its actions without having any contractual connection, relationship, or agreement to it (a group that is still sometimes described as 'diffuse'). Secondary stakeholders are not vital to the corporation. Stakeholders can also be grouped as internal and external. For instance, internal stakeholders in this context are those groups of individuals within the university system who have an interest in the quality of the university programme provided to students as well as in the standard of the outcomes.

The principle of stakeholder theory needs to be brought into the administration and the management of an organization. The major tenet of stakeholder theory is that stakeholders may bring an action against the directors for the failure to perform the required task. Stakeholder theory exists at three levels, which include normative, descriptive, and instrumental (Freeman, 2004). The normative level is the core of the stakeholder theory; it pertains to how stakeholders should act and should view the purpose of the organization based on ethical principles and is linked to moral values and philosophical purpose. At the descriptive level, focus is on how stakeholders actually behave and how they view their actions and roles. While at the instrumental level, the concern is on how university administrators or managers should act if they want to favour and work for the interest of the organization to maximize profits and maximize shareholders' value. University managers and administrators must formulate and implement processes that satisfy all and only those groups who have a stake in the corporation (Freeman, 1984). The main tasks in this relationship are to manage and integrate the relationships and interests of shareholders, employees, customers, communities, and other groups of individuals in a way that guarantees the long-term success of the corporation.

Fostering effective corporate governance practices requires continuous and holistic improvement, which necessitates cost-sharing among stakeholders, both internal and external. Internal stakeholders may include students, academic staff, non-teaching staff, heads of departments (HODs), administrators, and other management staff. External stakeholders may include non-governmental organizations (NGO's), government and its agencies, parents, private industries, international and local donor agencies, trade unions, and alumni associations.

The relevance of the stakeholders' theory to the study is that it explains how effective resource management and decision-making can be triggered in a corporate governance system. Such a corporation could be achieved via internal university stakeholders establishing a close corporate relationship and alliance with the external university stakeholders, or by the use of expertise from the environment to reinforce academic staff morale. The theory, however, did not address the influence that this corporate relationship may have on the stakeholders.

The Motivation-Hygiene theory, which was postulated by Frederick Herzberg, proposed a two-factor theory, where factor one is called the Motivation theory, while factor two is referred to as the Hygiene Theory. The theory posited that humans, including academic staff, have two different types of needs and different segments of the work environment, which would either reinforce or thwart the achievement of those needs, which may include academic staff morale. The theory posits that certain motivation characteristics or factors are intrinsic in nature and are referred to as motivators. This set of motivational characteristics or factors is important for employees' morale. The motivational factors are fundamental to the job and are intrinsically rewarding for individuals. For example, tasks well performed/done, advancement, recognition of achievement, job responsibility, or the work itself are considered to be intrinsically rewarding, and motivation is based on a sense of achievement and personal growth. When these factors are satisfying or rewarding to the individual, they then work as motivators for the individual. However, the motivational factors do not cause dissatisfaction if they are absent at work; instead, there is a lack of satisfaction for the individual, which may affect the level of morale.

Other factors are extrinsic in nature and are called hygiene factors. This set of motivational factors could lead to an employee's job satisfaction. The hygiene factors, also known as extrinsic factors, are important for individuals' basic survival needs. These hygiene factors include salary, rewards, benefits, proficient supervision, competent administration, a good working environment, and working relationships. If these factors are not satisfied, then the individual becomes dissatisfied, thereby reducing their morale. Even if these factors are not met for the employee, they do not motivate an individual but help to prevent dissatisfaction. Herzberg's theory implies that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are opposites of each other and that job satisfaction is the absence of job dissatisfaction. An individual's attitudinal or behavioural outcomes, like morale, are based on the needs, motives, and values to be satisfied. This theory has long been applied to the academic staff in university settings (Nias, 1981).

The relevance of the Herzberg motivation-hygiene theory is that it explains the relationships between corporate governance practices and academic staff morale. Academic staff may exhibit low morale due to a lack of motivation and being prone to a defective workplace environment. For example, if the hygiene factors are not present, it will be challenging for academic staff to perform or execute the daily tasks, namely: instructional deliveries, conducting research, carrying out services within and outside the academic community, and the academic staff may become demoralized with the job. Without these factors, academic staff levels of morale may reduce due to a lack of adequate supply of hygiene factors or hygiene characteristics or corporate governance practices that could possibly contribute to the reinforcement of academic staff morale. However, in spite of ambiguity, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory has informed numerous studies over the years and is still viewed as the foundation upon which sound administrative principles are to be built, or simply put, as the basis for sound managerial principles.

Concept of Corporate Governance Practices

Corporate governance refers to a model for policy-making management based on involving stakeholders at all levels (for example, sectoral, local or regional, national or international) for the setting, implementing, and monitoring of objectives (European Training Foundation, 2013). It also refers to the framework of principles, systems, and processes through which institutions are directed, managed, and held accountable. Corporate governance encompasses the structures and mechanisms that guide leadership conduct, institutional strategy, and stakeholder engagement, ensuring transparency, fairness, and responsibility in decision-making. Though the concept originated within the corporate sector to address issues of agency, ownership, and control, it has since evolved into a widely applied standard across public sector institutions, including universities. As higher education institutions continue to grapple with increasing accountability demands, financial pressures, and the need for performance-driven management, corporate governance has become a central concern in promoting institutional integrity and effectiveness.

In the Nigerian university system, corporate governance is closely linked to educational management and institutional planning. Nwadiani (1996) emphasized that effective university administration depends on the alignment between institutional capacity, resource allocation, and strategic planning. He noted that poor planning and mismanagement of resources often result in inefficiencies that can undermine academic productivity and staff satisfaction. This underscores the importance of governance structures in ensuring equitable distribution and effective utilization of resources.

Governance practices are also reflected in leadership approaches and staff engagement. Momoh (2020) observed that administrative effectiveness in educational institutions is largely influenced by leadership practices that promote transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness. When academic staff are actively involved in decision-making and institutional policies are clearly communicated, they tend to develop a stronger sense of commitment. Conversely, centralized and non-participatory governance systems often lead to dissatisfaction, reduced trust, and low staff morale. Supporting this view, Momoh (2021) argued that, management style and organizational climate significantly influence staff motivation, noting that exclusion from governance processes and inconsistent policy implementation can result in disengagement.

Recent studies further reinforce these positions. Imakpokpomwan, Edeki, and Olubor (2022) highlighted persistent challenges in educational policy management in Nigeria, including inadequate resource provision and weak implementation strategies. These challenges reflect broader governance deficiencies and support Nwadiani's earlier assertion that ineffective management systems can hinder institutional performance and negatively affect staff morale.

From the foregoing, corporate governance in universities must extend beyond policy formulation to include effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Where governance processes are weak, academic staff are more likely to experience frustration, reduced motivation, and low morale. Conversely, governance systems that emphasize planning, accountability, and participatory leadership create an enabling environment for improved staff performance and institutional growth.

On their part, Edokpolor and Imafidon (2019) carried out a study on the influence of multi-stakeholders' partnership on corporate governance practices in public universities in South-South, Nigeria. Four research questions were answered using Mean and standard deviations, and four null hypotheses were tested using the t-test statistic. A survey research design was used for the study. A 4-point scale questionnaire was administered to 154 lecturers. The instruments were validated by 4 experts, and the reliability coefficient using Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = .90$. The study found that multi-stakeholders' partnership influences corporate governance practices (for example, effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, accountability, and integrity) in the use of funds for the execution of projects by educational administrators. The study also found a non-significant difference in the Mean responses of male and female lecturers on the influence of multi-stakeholders' partnership on corporate governance practices in the use of funds for execution of projects by educational leaders and administrators.

In universities, corporate governance is not merely about administrative structures; it speaks to how authority is exercised, how decisions are legitimized, and how trust is built among stakeholders. It involves a complex interplay between the governing council (or board of trustees in private institutions), the university management led by the vice-chancellor or president, and a wide array of internal and external factors such as faculty, non-academic staff, students, regulatory agencies, and the broader public. Governance determines how policies are developed, how resources are allocated, and how academic and ethical standards are maintained.

The scope of governance in universities extends well beyond regulatory compliance. It includes setting the strategic direction of the institution, providing oversight of academic and administrative functions, ensuring financial stewardship, and safeguarding the welfare of staff and students. As noted by Ogbonyomi (2023), governance frameworks in higher education are responsible for shaping institutional culture through decisions on policy design, performance monitoring, risk management, and ethical accountability. In both public and private universities, governance also mediates the balance between academic freedom and institutional discipline, autonomy and accountability, and tradition and transformation.

Recent developments in university governance highlight the increasing need for transparency and inclusive leadership. In many Nigerian institutions, the lack of effective governance mechanisms has been linked to persistent industrial disputes, low staff morale, and administrative inefficiencies. Adeyemi and Okafor (2024) observed that universities with more participatory and responsive governance structures tend to report greater staff engagement, better organizational resilience, and improved academic outputs. The inclusion of staff in decision-making processes, fairness in recruitment and promotion, and consistency in communication are now widely recognized as core governance principles that influence not only performance but also the morale of employees.

While public universities often suffer from bureaucratic inertia and political interference, private universities are sometimes criticized for overly centralized decision-making and limited staff voice. Yet both institutional types face the challenge of aligning their governance practices with modern expectations of efficiency, inclusivity, and transparency. Nwankwo (2023) notes that the evolving governance landscape in higher education calls for a hybrid model that marries corporate-style accountability with the collegial values of academic institutions.

Corporate governance in universities, therefore, serves as a foundational structure through which responsible leadership, institutional performance, and human capital development are achieved. By embedding ethical principles, effective communication, and stakeholder participation into the very fabric of governance, universities can create an environment where innovation, academic excellence, and staff morale thrive in tandem.

University governance refers to the frameworks, norms, and administrative processes through which higher education institutions are managed and steered toward achieving their academic, research, and social missions. At its core, governance in universities is underpinned by foundational principles such as transparency, accountability, collegiality, academic autonomy, inclusivity, and participatory leadership. These principles ensure that universities operate not only as academic institutions but also as public trusts accountable to a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including staff, students, regulatory bodies, and society at large.

Effective university governance is characterized by decision-making processes that are decentralized and inclusive. Academic institutions differ from corporate organizations in that they rely heavily on collegial governance, where faculty participation in major institutional decisions, particularly those related to curriculum, research, and staff development, is central. This collegial model promotes shared governance, whereby decision-making responsibilities are distributed among the governing council or board of trustees, the senate, and the university management team. Each of these organs plays a distinct yet interdependent role in steering the university.

The governing council (Board of Trustees in private universities) is primarily responsible for strategic oversight, policy approval, financial accountability, and high-level appointments. The senate, comprising primarily of senior academic staff, is charged with academic governance, including curriculum design, examination regulations, research policies, and quality assurance. Administrative units, under the leadership of the vice-chancellor or president and registrar, manage the day-to-day operational and academic execution of university policies. This tripartite governance structure ensures that checks and balances are maintained and that no single organ operates in isolation (Adegoke, 2023).

In the Nigerian context, university governance is shaped by a combination of national legislation, institutional statutes, and regulatory frameworks issued by the National Universities Commission (NUC). The Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Act of 2003 and the NUC Guidelines for Institutional Governance (revised in 2021) serve as key instruments guiding governance operations in both federal and state universities. These frameworks provide for the establishment of governing councils, outline procedures for leadership appointments, and emphasize the importance of stakeholder participation and accountability in all administrative processes (Okeke, 2022).

Despite these regulatory frameworks, the actual implementation of governance principles across Nigerian universities is highly variable, often influenced by political interference, resource constraints, leadership style, and institutional culture. In many public universities, concerns have been raised about the excessive concentration of power in the hands of vice-chancellors or governing councils, leading to reduced staff involvement in decision-making and growing distrust between management and employees. According to Umeh (2023), staff in such institutions frequently report feeling marginalized in the decision-making process, particularly concerning promotions, disciplinary actions, and policy formulation. This, in turn, has significant implications for staff morale and institutional harmony.

Conversely, Private Universities often adopt more streamlined governance models with clearer hierarchies and quicker decision-making mechanisms. While this can enhance efficiency and responsiveness, it may also limit the space for staff participation and reduce transparency if governance is overly centralized. As Nwachukwu (2023) noted, Private Universities sometimes prioritize managerial efficiency over collegial consultation, creating tensions among academic staff who feel excluded from key institutional decisions.

One of the most debated aspects of University governance in Nigeria is the balance between autonomy and regulation. While Universities are expected to exercise autonomy in academic and financial matters, excessive regulation from government bodies and political actors has often stifled innovation and undermined institutional independence. Academic freedom, a cornerstone of University identity, is sometimes compromised by leadership practices that suppress dissent or penalize open criticism. This environment can erode trust and hinder staff motivation, ultimately affecting teaching quality, research output, and organizational climate.

Furthermore, challenges such as irregular governing council meetings, delayed leadership appointments, inadequate funding, and mismanagement of internal processes have further complicated governance in Nigerian universities. Several studies have linked these governance failures to low staff morale, increased labour disputes, and declining institutional performance. For instance, a study by Adeoye and Ogundele (2023) found that ineffective governance structures were a key factor behind staff disengagement and poor institutional outcomes in several Public Universities across Southern Nigeria.

Amid these challenges, reforms are being advocated for more robust governance frameworks that integrate transparency, stakeholder engagement, performance-based leadership, and ethical accountability. International best practices suggest that effective university governance should be dynamic, reflective of local contexts, and capable of responding to evolving academic, economic, and technological trends (World Bank, 2022). This includes strengthening internal audit mechanisms, encouraging participatory budgeting, and enhancing leadership training for administrators, and institutionalizing staff unions and academic boards as legitimate partners in governance.

Ultimately, the quality of university governance has direct and far-reaching effects on staff morale, academic credibility, and the institution’s societal impact. Where governance is participatory, fair, and accountable, universities are more likely to cultivate motivated staff, efficient administration, and stable academic environments. Conversely, when governance is opaque, autocratic, or disconnected from staff realities, institutional fragmentation, dissatisfaction, and resistance are inevitable.

Good corporate governance in the higher education sector serves as the bedrock for institutional stability, academic credibility, and staff engagement. While the core principles of corporate governance originated from the corporate world, their adaptation into the university context reflects a growing recognition of the importance of structured, ethical, and inclusive leadership within academic institutions. In Universities, governance is not just about control or compliance; it is fundamentally about creating the conditions necessary for academic excellence, innovation, and employee morale to flourish.

The core characteristics of sound University governance include transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, and equity. These elements collectively contribute to the ethical and operational foundation upon which Universities manage their affairs, engage their stakeholders, and pursue their strategic goals. Each characteristic plays a distinctive role in shaping how universities function and how staff experience their roles within the institutional ecosystem.

Transparency refers to the openness with which institutional decisions, policies, and resource allocations are communicated and justified. It involves clarity in governance procedures, budgeting processes, staff promotions, disciplinary actions, and academic standards. Transparency fosters trust among staff and other stakeholders and minimizes the spread of misinformation and suspicion. In Nigerian universities, however, transparency is often compromised due to weak institutional systems and a lack of routine communication. A study by Edeh (2023) underscores that universities with clearly communicated goals and consistent information-sharing mechanisms tend to experience fewer staff disputes and greater organizational cohesion.

Accountability is the obligation of university leadership to answer for their decisions, actions, and performance outcomes. It implies that governing councils, vice-chancellors, deans, and other leaders are subject to evaluation, guided by established rules, and responsive to both internal and external oversight. Universities that embrace accountability are more likely to uphold merit in hiring and promotion, address staff grievances promptly, and demonstrate fiscal integrity. When accountability mechanisms such as internal audits, senate oversight, and performance appraisals are functioning properly, they serve as checks against abuse of power and encourage responsible management practices (Chikwendu, 2024).

Participation is a defining feature of good governance in academic institutions. It refers to the extent to which various stakeholders, particularly academic and non-academic staff, are involved in decision-making processes that affect them. In well-governed universities, staff are not mere implementers of policies but active contributors to institutional development. This includes involvement in curriculum design, research strategy, administrative reform, and quality assurance processes. Participatory governance empowers staff, strengthens collegiality, and creates a culture of ownership and responsibility. According to Musa (2023), staff in Nigerian universities where governance is participatory report significantly higher levels of morale, institutional loyalty, and commitment to academic standards.

Responsiveness refers to the ability of university leadership to respond promptly and effectively to internal needs, external challenges, and evolving academic trends. Whether addressing staff complaints, student unrest, policy feedback, or societal demands, responsive governance is proactive, data-driven, and solution-oriented. In environments where responsiveness is lacking, decision-making becomes reactive, institutional trust diminishes, and tensions escalate. Ezeagu (2022) notes that unresponsive leadership, especially in areas like promotion backlogs, salary delays, or crisis communication, is a major source of staff demotivation in many Nigerian public universities.

Equity speaks to fairness in the distribution of opportunities, responsibilities, and rewards across all categories of staff. Good governance ensures that decisions are not based on favoritism, ethnicity, or political affiliation, but on clearly defined and consistently applied criteria. Equity promotes inclusion, meritocracy, and justice in personnel management. In universities, this includes fair access to training opportunities, transparent promotion procedures, and non-discriminatory disciplinary systems. Okonjo (2024) argued that universities with equitable governance practices experienced reduced industrial actions and greater workforce satisfaction compared to institutions with histories of bias and exclusion.

Collectively, these characteristics like equitable governance practices shape the internal climate of universities and significantly affect staff morale. Where governance structures adhere to these principles, employees are more likely to trust leadership, align with institutional vision, and remain committed to long-term academic goals. Conversely, when these characteristics are absent or weak, the resulting governance failures can lead to toxic work environments, industrial disharmony, and systemic inefficiency.

Good corporate governance also entails ethical leadership, where university leaders model integrity, promote institutional values, and place the long-term health of the institution above personal or political interests. Ethical leaders ensure that governance processes are not only efficient but also principled. They respect due process, welcome constructive dissent, and prioritize staff and student welfare in their decisions.

Edeh (2023) asserted that Nigerian universities that consistently apply good governance practices benefit from a stronger organizational climate, lower staff turnover, and improved academic outcomes. Furthermore, good governance creates a feedback-rich environment where lessons are learned, innovations are tested, and stakeholders feel heard and valued.

As universities in Nigeria face growing pressures ranging from funding shortages to global competitiveness, the importance of anchoring institutional performance on sound governance cannot be overstated. Embedding these governance principles into daily operations is not just ideal but essential for universities seeking to be resilient, inclusive, and forward-looking in an increasingly complex educational landscape.

The governance landscape in Nigerian universities is shaped by a dual framework comprising public and private institutions, each operating under distinct legal mandates, funding arrangements, administrative structures, and stakeholder expectations. While both categories of universities are subject to the regulatory oversight of the National Universities Commission (NUC), their internal governance models differ significantly, reflecting divergent philosophies of control, resource management, accountability, and staff engagement.

In Public Universities, governance is primarily informed by statutory provisions, including the Universities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, national education policies, and specific laws enacted by federal or state governments. These institutions receive substantial funding through government subventions, although many also engage in internally generated revenue (IGR) activities. Governance structures in public universities are relatively decentralized and formalized, typically comprising a Governing Council, an Academic Senate, and a host of internal committees that oversee strategic, academic, and administrative operations. The Governing Council, often composed of government-appointed members, is responsible for overall policy direction and financial oversight, while the Senate, dominated by academic staff, takes the lead on academic matters, including curricula, examinations, research governance, and academic standards.

Public universities are also distinguished by their strong tradition of staff unionization and collective bargaining. Unions such as the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), and the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU) play a critical role in institutional governance through advocacy, dialogue, and, in many cases, industrial action. This unionized environment often facilitates more participatory governance, giving staff avenues to voice concerns about welfare, promotions, policies, and institutional leadership. However, the bureaucratic nature of public university governance, marked by slow decision-making, overlapping authorities, and frequent political interference, often impedes agility, innovation, and operational efficiency (Adebiyi, 2023).

In contrast, private universities in Nigeria operate under more streamlined and centralized governance frameworks. These institutions are typically owned by individuals, faith-based organizations, or corporate entities, and are governed by Boards of Trustees or Governing Councils appointed by the proprietors. The governance structure tends to be top-down, with proprietors or their representatives exercising significant influence over policy formulation, financial decisions, and personnel management. While still subject to NUC regulations, private universities enjoy greater autonomy in areas such as fee setting, staff appointments, and academic programming. This operational flexibility allows for quicker decision-making, stricter enforcement of institutional policies, and more responsive administration.

However, the centralized nature of Private University governance, while enabling discipline and managerial efficiency, can also limit staff autonomy and suppress participatory leadership. Academic and non-academic staff often have limited input in decision-making processes, and avenues for collective bargaining or unionization are either discouraged or altogether absent. This governance culture can affect staff morale, especially when policies are implemented without consultation or when leadership appears unaccountable. According to Oyeleke (2023), the absence of formal grievance redress mechanisms and the lack of shared governance in many private universities can result in disengagement, reduced job satisfaction, and high staff turnover.

Nevertheless, private universities are often more efficient in areas such as promotion timelines, resource mobilization, infrastructure development, and administrative responsiveness. Their governance models, though centralized, may foster institutional stability and predictability, which can be appealing to both staff and students. The success of such models, however, is largely dependent on the ethical orientation and management capacity of the proprietors and leadership teams.

Adebiyi (2023) observed that while public universities tend to offer greater academic freedom and union representation, they often suffer from politicized appointments, financial instability, and governance paralysis. On the other hand, private universities exhibit stronger internal controls and policy enforcement, but frequently fall short in terms of inclusive governance and staff empowerment. These distinctions underscore the fact that the governance model adopted by a university has a profound effect on its institutional culture, operational dynamics, and employee morale.

Moreover, the divergence in governance between public and private universities reflects broader socio-political and economic realities in Nigeria. Public universities are often viewed as national assets with obligations to equity and public service, while private universities are increasingly market-oriented, focusing on competitiveness, brand reputation, and sustainability. This contextual duality necessitates different governance approaches, but it also raises questions about how best to balance efficiency with inclusion, control with autonomy, and discipline with engagement across both sectors.

As governance continues to evolve in the Nigerian higher education system, there is a growing consensus that a hybrid model, one that integrates the transparency and participation of public governance with the efficiency and responsiveness of private governance, may hold the key to sustainable university development. Encouraging broader stakeholder involvement, protecting staff rights, and professionalizing university management are key steps toward closing the gap between governance design and practice in both public and private institutions.

Concept of Staff Morale

Staff morale refers to the overall emotional, psychological, and attitudinal disposition of employees toward their work, colleagues, leadership, and the institution at large. It is a critical determinant of how individuals perceive their roles and how motivated they feel to perform effectively within an organization. In university environments, where the nature of work is intellectually demanding and highly collaborative, staff morale plays an indispensable role in shaping both academic and administrative outcomes.

Unlike motivation, which often targets specific tasks or goals, morale encompasses a broader and more sustained state of emotional well-being, satisfaction, and institutional connectedness. It is a multi-dimensional construct that integrates affective, cognitive, and behavioural components, each reflecting a different layer of how employees experience their organizational life. High staff morale generally manifests in enthusiasm for work, willingness to collaborate, resilience during challenges, and alignment with institutional goals. Conversely, low morale may be expressed through apathy, disengagement, absenteeism, internal conflicts, and eventual attrition.

In Nigerian universities, morale among staff for both academic and non-academic is particularly significant, given the systemic challenges confronting the higher education sector. These include inconsistent salary payments, political interference in management, poor working conditions, limited access to professional development, and opaque promotion criteria. According to Chibundu (2023), staff morale within Nigerian universities cannot be adequately explained by financial compensation alone. Rather, it is intricately tied to non-monetary factors such as fairness in policy implementation, respect for professional autonomy, inclusion in governance, and clarity in institutional vision.

Staff morale is influenced by the interplay of individual, relational, and organizational factors. Job security, for instance, is a significant predictor of morale, especially in environments where contract terms are uncertain or where dismissals are perceived as arbitrary. Similarly, recognition of effort and achievements, whether through promotions, awards, or informal praise, contributes meaningfully to employees' emotional investment in their roles. Interpersonal relationships, particularly collegiality and mutual respect among staff, are also critical, as toxic workplace dynamics can quickly erode morale even in otherwise functional institutions.

Leadership style has been identified as one of the most powerful organizational determinants of morale. Participatory, empathetic, and transparent leadership fosters a sense of belonging and trust, while authoritarian or inconsistent leadership often breeds dissatisfaction and resistance. Institutional support systems ranging from mental health services to staff development programs also play an important role in reinforcing morale by demonstrating care and commitment to staff welfare (Ogbonna, 2024).

Chibundu (2023) categorized staff morale into three interrelated dimensions that offer a comprehensive framework for analysis:

- The Affective Dimension pertains to the emotional responses of employees to their work environment. This includes feelings of job satisfaction, emotional attachment to the institution, and overall happiness at work. When staff feel respected, valued, and emotionally secure, their affective morale tends to be high.
- The Cognitive Dimension involves the intellectual evaluations employees make about their workplace, such as perceptions of fairness, alignment between personal and institutional goals, clarity of policies, and the credibility of leadership. This dimension reflects how staff understand and interpret their organizational experience.
- The Behavioural Dimension is expressed through observable actions such as punctuality, work ethic, cooperation with colleagues, and willingness to go beyond basic duties. High morale in this dimension translates to organizational citizenship behaviours, while low morale may result in passive resistance, non-compliance, or withdrawal.

This multidimensional perspective is particularly useful when examining the impact of corporate governance practices on staff morale. Governance influences morale not only through formal mechanisms such as policy and procedure but also through the tone of leadership, accessibility of decision-makers, responsiveness to grievances, and openness of communication channels. For instance, a university that upholds transparency in promotions, regularly consults staff in strategic planning, and provides clear communication about institutional changes is more likely to nurture high morale than one that treats staff as passive recipients of top-down directives.

Staff morale is not static; it fluctuates in response to both institutional dynamics and broader societal conditions. In recent years, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic, prolonged academic strikes, and economic instability have all contributed to significant morale fluctuations across Nigerian universities. These disruptions have emphasized the need for resilient governance systems that prioritize staff welfare, maintain open dialogue, and sustain motivation in the face of adversity (Nduka, 2023). Understanding staff morale as a layered and dynamic phenomenon is therefore essential for identifying the governance gaps that undermine it and designing institutional reforms that can restore and sustain it. Since universities depend heavily on human capital, particularly skilled and motivated staff, the health of institutional governance cannot be separated from the morale and well-being of the people it serves.

Staff morale, while intangible, is often manifested in tangible and observable behaviours, attitudes, and performance outcomes. Within university environments, where the success of teaching, research, and administration heavily depends on human engagement, the presence or absence of staff morale can significantly influence not just individual output but also institutional effectiveness and long-term stability. Recognizing the behavioural, emotional, and organizational indicators of morale is essential for diagnosing institutional health and aligning governance practices with staff well-being.

High staff morale is generally associated with a range of positive institutional behaviours and outcomes. One of the most consistent indicators is job satisfaction, where staff express genuine contentment with their roles, responsibilities, and working environment. Employees with high morale tend to perceive their tasks as meaningful, their conditions as adequate, and their supervisors as supportive. This sense of satisfaction often leads to proactive engagement, where individuals voluntarily participate in committees, research initiatives, student mentorship programs, and other non-mandated institutional activities.

A strong indicator of high morale is team cohesion and collaboration, evidenced by healthy interpersonal relationships, mutual respect, and open communication across departments and hierarchical levels. Staff members in such environments typically demonstrate a willingness to share knowledge, resolve conflicts amicably, and support collective institutional goals. According to Ekanem (2023), Nigerian university departments that foster collaborative cultures are better able to weather leadership transitions and policy changes without major disruptions.

Additionally, high morale is reflected in low absenteeism and staff turnover, as employees show commitment and loyalty to the institution. In such cases, staff are not only physically present but also emotionally and intellectually invested in their roles. They exhibit visible enthusiasm and innovations, actively seeking ways to improve programs, streamline administrative processes, or enhance the student experience. Academic staff, in particular, may push for curriculum reforms, initiate community outreach, or publish more rigorously, not because of external pressure but out of intrinsic motivation and pride in their profession.

Conversely, low staff morale is often evident through a set of behaviours and attitudes that reflect disengagement, dissatisfaction, and institutional disillusionment. A common sign is frequent absenteeism or habitual lateness, which may serve as a subtle form of protest or an indicator of stress, burnout, or perceived neglect. Staff may avoid optional meetings, arrive late to classes or administrative duties, or take frequent sick leaves, not necessarily out of physical illness but as a coping strategy for deeper dissatisfaction.

Another indicator of low morale is withdrawal and minimal engagement. Employees in such environments often contribute only the bare minimum, avoiding extra duties, academic discourse, or institutional development efforts. This pattern may manifest as silence in meetings, reluctance to collaborate, or indifference toward quality assurance mechanisms. Such disengagement is particularly concerning in academic institutions, where intellectual exchange and community are critical to institutional vitality.

A third sign is resistance to leadership, which may take the form of overt opposition or subtler behaviours such as cynicism, passive non-compliance, or the circulation of negative narratives about management. Where staff feel that leadership is unfair, opaque, or disconnected from staff realities, trust erodes, and institutional alignment becomes difficult to achieve.

Increased interpersonal conflict is also symptomatic of low morale. Tensions among staff may rise due to perceived inequities, communication breakdowns, or favoritism in appointments and promotions. In such climates, cooperation gives way to competition or blame-shifting, reducing productivity and creating a hostile work environment.

Therefore, high staff morale, particularly among younger or mid-career professionals, can signal a systemic morale issue. When talented staff exit for other institutions perceived as more supportive, transparent, or progressive, the university not only suffers a brain drain but also incurs the hidden costs of recruitment, onboarding, and institutional memory loss.

Yusuf (2023) highlighted the nuances of morale challenges across institutional types in Nigeria. In public universities, low morale was closely linked to frequent industrial actions, often stemming from prolonged salary delays, poor infrastructure, and irregular promotion cycles. Staff in these institutions reported a persistent sense of marginalization and lack of recognition for their efforts. Meanwhile, in private universities, though better resourced and more administratively streamlined, morale issues emerged in the form of quiet disengagement and elevated turnover, particularly among early-career academics. The rigid, hierarchical structures and limited participatory governance in many private institutions led to frustration, a lack of academic freedom, and eventual exits.

These contrasting manifestations suggest that while the forms of morale erosion may differ, the underlying causes, such as lack of recognition, poor communication, exclusion from decision-making, and perceived unfairness, are common to both sectors. Consequently, the ability of a university to interpret and respond to these indicators is a direct reflection of its governance quality.

Understanding the indicators of staff morale is, therefore, not merely a diagnostic exercise but a strategic imperative. Institutions that monitor and respond proactively to early signs of disengagement or dissatisfaction are better positioned to maintain a stable and motivated workforce. Given the crucial role that staff morale plays in shaping institutional culture, student outcomes, and academic excellence, its preservation must be at the heart of governance practices.

Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale

Staff morale in universities is shaped by a complex interplay of organizational, personal, relational, and environmental factors. These determinants influence not just how employees feel about their roles, but also how they perform, relate with colleagues, and contribute to institutional goals. Understanding these factors is crucial for designing governance systems that support employee well-being and institutional excellence.

Leadership style and administrative behaviour in universities significantly affect how staff perceive their value and role within the institution. Transformational leaders who are visionary, inclusive, and responsive tend to boost morale, while autocratic or indifferent leadership styles often suppress motivation. Adepoju (2023) noted that staff morale improves when leaders actively communicate institutional direction, engage staff in decision-making, and provide timely feedback.

Staff members are more likely to remain committed and enthusiastic when their efforts are recognized and rewarded. This includes promotions, awards, commendations, and even simple acknowledgements. When staff perceive that promotions are politicized or based on favoritism, morale suffers. Recognition is especially critical in academic institutions where contributions can be intellectual, administrative, or service-oriented.

Unreasonable workloads and a lack of clarity in job expectations can lead to burnout and dissatisfaction. In many Nigerian universities, particularly public ones, staff often juggle teaching, research, administrative tasks, and community service, all without commensurate support or compensation. This overload has been identified as a major stressor and a key contributor to low morale.

The physical work environment, including office space, internet access, library resources, and safety, can influence how staff feel about their institution. Badiru (2023) argued that inadequate facilities and poor maintenance of university infrastructure in public institutions were among the leading causes of demoralization, especially among administrative and technical staff.

Transparent communication, especially regarding institutional goals, policy changes, and decisions affecting staff, creates trust. Conversely, secretive or top-down communication erodes confidence and fosters rumors, resentment, and disengagement. Institutions that share governance data openly and solicit feedback from staff tend to have more cohesive and motivated workforces.

When staff are excluded from key governance processes, especially decisions about promotion, budgeting, or academic policies, they tend to feel undervalued. Inclusive governance structures, where representatives from various staff categories participate in councils, committees, and senates, foster ownership and morale. Ajayi (2023) observed that institutions with participatory governance recorded lower conflict rates and higher institutional loyalty. In their views, Nwadiani (1996) and Momoh (2020) both emphasized that ineffective management practices and a lack of inclusive leadership in educational institutions can lead to reduced staff motivation and low morale.

Regular salaries, clear promotion pathways, pensions, and other financial benefits influence morale, especially in environments where inflation and cost of living are high. Public universities often struggle with delayed salaries and irregular benefits, while private universities may pay more regularly but offer less security in terms of contract stability. These financial uncertainties deeply affect staff morale and institutional engagement.

Opportunities for training, conference attendance, scholarships, and research funding contribute to staff motivation and morale. Universities that invest in the continuous professional growth of their staff tend to attract and retain top talent. Conversely, institutions that neglect training and capacity-building risk stagnation and talent loss. These factors, when well-managed, serve as morale boosters. When ignored or mismanaged, however, they become demotivators that compromise staff productivity, institutional reputation, and the overall health of the university.

The connection between corporate governance and staff morale in academic institutions is both direct and multifaceted. Governance structures shape the rules, processes, and culture within which employees operate, while morale reflects how staff perceive and respond to those conditions. In other words, how a university is governed often determines how its staff feels, behaves, and performs.

Governance mechanisms such as leadership approach, participatory decision-making, policy consistency, and accountability frameworks directly affect employees' emotional and psychological outlook. In environments where governance is transparent, consultative, and stable, staff tend to feel more secure, valued, and committed. In contrast, weak governance characterized by poor communication, autocratic decision-making, or erratic policies leads to disillusionment, frustration, and disengagement.

Abiola (2023) argued that a strong positive correlation may exist between corporate governance transparency and staff morale indicators such as institutional loyalty, productivity, and willingness to recommend the institution to others. The author further depicted that staff morale is not an isolated psychological phenomenon but a byproduct of institutional behaviour governed by leadership norms and structural systems.

Furthermore, governance affects morale through both direct and indirect mechanisms. Directly, when staff are included in governance structures, such as through representation in academic boards, promotions panels, and disciplinary committees, they are more likely to feel respected and empowered. Indirectly, governance decisions around budgeting, hiring, and strategic planning influence working conditions, career advancement, and recognition, all of which shape morale. In private universities, the link may manifest differently. Governance tends to be more centralized, with less room for dissent. This can lead to operational efficiency, but also causes fear of victimization and emotional burnout. In public institutions, though governance is slower due to bureaucracy, greater union involvement and democratic participation can serve as morale buffers despite infrastructural or funding challenges.

Understanding this governance-morale nexus is crucial because it informs policy reforms and leadership development in Nigerian universities. Institutions that wish to improve staff performance, reduce attrition, and attract top talent must recognize that good governance is not just about compliance and control. It is also a foundation for building positive institutional culture and a committed workforce.

The conceptual framework served as the analytical foundation upon which the research study was built. It provided both a visual and narrative representation of the major variables under investigation, illustrating their interrelationships and the theoretical logic that connects them. For the study, the conceptual framework functioned as a guiding structure that helped to shape the formulation of research questions, direct the methodological approach, and interpret the research findings within a coherent and meaningful context. The core objective of the study was to examine the influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria.

To provide a robust and structured analytical basis for this study, the key variables were categorized into independent**,** dependent, and moderating or contextual variables. Each category captures the core components of the research inquiry and connects directly to the research questions, hypotheses, and conceptual framework.

Corporate governance practices constitute the independent variable, representing the systems and principles through which universities are managed, guided, and held accountable. The dimensions of governance considered in the study were transparency, accountability, participation in decision-making, leadership style, policy consistency, and communication flow. These six governance components are central to how staff interpret the quality of leadership and institutional climate.

Staff morale, which was the dependent variable in the study, encompassed Job Satisfaction, institutional loyalty, engagement and commitment, motivation, work enthusiasm, and staff retention.

The moderating variables in the study were: type of university, geographical region, academic vs. non-academic staff, sex, and years of service.

By considering these moderating variables, the study better understood how governance practices and morale interact under different institutional and demographic conditions.

Transparency is a fundamental component of good corporate governance and plays a significant role in shaping employee perceptions and overall morale within an organization. In universities, transparency involves the clear and timely dissemination of information regarding institutional decisions, policies, resource allocation, and performance outcomes. It ensures that employees understand the rationale behind decisions and have access to relevant organizational processes, thereby fostering trust and reducing uncertainty (Men et al., 2022).

The implementation of transparency has been strongly linked to the enhancement of staff morale through various mechanisms. One critical pathway is the development of trust between management and employees. When employees perceive that leadership communicates openly and provides access to accurate information, they tend to view the organization as reliable and respectful of their input. This trust-building effect positively influences job satisfaction and organizational commitment

(Pirrotta et al., 2024). Similarly, transparency addresses the concern about fairness by clarifying decision-making processes and eliminating ambiguity surrounding promotions, workload distribution, and reward systems. When procedures are perceived as fair, employees report higher levels of motivation and satisfaction (Men et al., 2022).

Another important dimension of transparency in boosting morale is its ability to satisfy employees' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. According to Self-Determination Theory, employees experience higher morale when they are given clear information and opportunities for involvement in decision-making processes (Li et al., 2020). In contrast, opaque processes and secretive practices often lead to feelings of exclusion, frustration, and disengagement, which are detrimental to morale.

Empirical studies reinforce the positive correlation between transparent communication and morale-related outcomes. For instance, recent findings reveal that organizations that maintain openness in internal communication experience increased levels of employee trust, engagement, and job satisfaction (Men et al., 2022). Similarly, Pirrotta et al. (2024) observed that, in the public sector, transparency in internal communication practices significantly predicted employees' job satisfaction and commitment levels. These findings align with the position of Romero-Rodríguez et al. (2024), who argue that transparency in communication constitutes a core element of "happiness management," an approach that emphasizes employee well-being and positive workplace climates.

In universities, transparency is particularly crucial due to the complex governance structures of universities. These institutions often rely on numerous committees and administrative units, which can create an environment susceptible to miscommunication and mistrust. Therefore, making information on decisions, promotion criteria, and resource allocation easily accessible helps to foster a sense of inclusion and legitimacy among staff (Chizoba et al., 2025). In Nigeria, where public universities often grapple with issues of mistrust and allegations of favoritism, implementing transparent governance systems has been highlighted as a means of improving staff morale and institutional credibility (Paul et al., 2025).

Practical approaches to promoting transparency include publishing clear guidelines on promotions and workload models, providing regular updates on financial allocations, and instituting two-way communication channels such as town hall meetings and anonymous feedback platforms. These measures not only enhance staff understanding but also strengthen their sense of belonging, ultimately contributing to improved staff morale (Gutierrez, 2025). However, it is essential to recognize that transparency without genuine engagement can appear superficial; therefore, information sharing should be accompanied by opportunities for dialogue and feedback (Men et al., 2022).

Therefore, transparency implementation is a vital governance practice that positively influences staff morale by fostering trust, enhancing perceptions of fairness, and promoting psychological well-being. For universities in Nigeria and beyond, embedding transparency in decision-making and communication processes can significantly improve employee satisfaction and commitment.

Accountability refers to the obligation of individuals and organizations to justify their actions, decisions, and use of resources to stakeholders. In governance, accountability mechanisms ensure that those entrusted with authority act in the best interests of the organization and its members. Within universities, accountability encompasses compliance with policies, responsible financial management, ethical conduct, and responsiveness to institutional and public expectations (Adeyemi & Olaleye, 2023). Effective accountability systems contribute to building institutional integrity, which, in turn, shapes employees' trust and morale.

The relationship between accountability and staff morale is grounded in the principle of organizational justice. Employees are more motivated and satisfied when they perceive that leaders are held accountable for their decisions and that there are checks against abuse of power. This perception enhances fairness and legitimacy within the workplace, reducing the likelihood of favoritism and arbitrary decisions (Agyekum & Boateng, 2024). Conversely, a lack of accountability fosters an environment of impunity, which erodes trust and diminishes morale.

Empirical research highlights the positive link between accountability and morale-related outcomes. A recent study by Chizoba et al. (2025) found that accountability frameworks in Nigerian public institutions improved employee confidence in leadership and reduced workplace tension. The study was adapted from an interviewer-guided questionnaire from previous similar studies. A convenient sampling method was used to interview consenting older persons with a reported age of 260 years. Data was analyzed using a frequency distribution and compared across demographic characteristics using SPSS 21.0. Similarly, Agyekum and Boateng (2024) argued that when governance structures in higher education incorporated clear reporting and audit systems, staff demonstrated higher levels of engagement and commitment. This is because accountability systems create predictability and transparency, both of which are essential for psychological safety and staff morale.

Accountability also intersects with performance management. Employees are more likely to remain engaged when leaders model accountability by providing feedback, adhering to ethical standards, and accepting responsibility for outcomes. According to Ogbu and Eke (2022), accountability-driven leadership creates an environment where employees feel valued and respected, which in turn boosts morale. In contrast, accountability gaps often lead to resource mismanagement and unethical practices, which undermine employee trust and contribute to job dissatisfaction.

In Nigerian universities, challenges such as financial opacity, lack of follow-up on policy implementation, and weak disciplinary measures often undermine accountability. These governance weaknesses contribute to staff disillusionment and disengagement (Paul et al., 2025). Therefore, implementing accountability measures such as regular audits, transparent procurement processes, and performance evaluations is crucial for improving morale. Additionally, institutions can introduce whistleblowing mechanisms and grievance redress systems that allow staff to report concerns without fear of retaliation. These practices not only strengthen accountability but also foster a sense of fairness and security among employees (Adeyemi & Olaleye, 2023).

Therefore, accountability implementation is an indispensable component of corporate governance that directly impacts staff morale. By institutionalizing mechanisms for answerability and responsibility, universities can enhance trust, promote ethical leadership, and sustain a positive organizational climate that nurtures staff well-being and commitment.

The relationship between responsiveness and staff morale is grounded in the principle of organizational support. When institutions respond promptly to staff needs and concerns, employees feel valued and respected, which fosters trust and enhances morale (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Conversely, delayed or inadequate responses can create frustration, uncertainty, and disengagement, leading to a decline in morale and organizational commitment (Babalola & Akinyele, 2023).

Research showed that responsiveness significantly predicts job satisfaction and employee well-being. For instance, Babalola and Akinyele (2023) argued that Nigerian universities that implemented proactive communication and grievance-handling mechanisms experienced higher staff motivation and reduced workplace conflicts. Similarly, Adegbite and Adetunji (2024) argued that, responsiveness in handling academic promotions, salary arrears, and policy adjustments may positively influence staff perceptions of fairness and trust in leadership.

Responsiveness also plays a critical role during organizational change and crises. Studies reveal that institutions that provide timely updates and solutions during uncertainty such as policy shifts or financial challenges maintain higher levels of staff confidence and morale (Liu, et al, 2024). In contrast, when staff perceive management as unresponsive or indifferent, it erodes trust and creates a culture of disengagement (Okon & Eze, 2023).

In Nigerian universities, responsiveness is often constrained by bureaucratic delays, weak communication channels, and inadequate grievance redress mechanisms. These shortcomings contribute to staff dissatisfaction and frequent industrial actions (Okon & Eze, 2023). Addressing these challenges requires institutionalizing structures for quick feedback, decision-making, and problem resolution. Practical measures include setting response timelines for staff queries, creating accessible complaint-handling systems, and using digital platforms for real-time communication.

Furthermore, responsiveness should not be reactive alone but anticipatory. This involves proactive identification of staff needs through regular surveys, open forums, and consultation processes. When staff observe that leadership anticipates and addresses issues before they escalate, it strengthens their sense of security and loyalty (Adegbite & Adetunji, 2024).

In other words, responsiveness implementation is a critical governance element that directly influences staff morale. By institutionalizing timely and proactive responses to staff needs, universities can build trust, reduce conflicts, and create an environment conducive to satisfaction and commitment.

Fairness, as a governance principle, refers to the equitable treatment of all organizational members in processes, decisions, and the distribution of resources. It encompasses procedural fairness (fairness in decision-making processes), distributive fairness (equitable allocation of resources and rewards), and interactional fairness (respectful and transparent communication during organizational interactions). In universities, fairness relates to areas such as staff promotions, workload distribution, remuneration, disciplinary actions, and access to professional development opportunities (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001).

Fairness is widely recognized as a determinant of employee morale because it shapes perceptions of organizational justice. Employees who believe they are treated fairly and integrity tend to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction, trust, and commitment to the organization, and in turn boost staff morale (Colquitt et al., 2013). Conversely, perceived unfairness and lack of integrity results in frustration, low motivation, and withdrawal behaviours, which undermine morale and institutional performance (Ajayi & Afolabi, 2023).

Ajayi and Afolabi (2023) argued that university staff who perceived fairness in promotion processes and workload allocation may demonstrate stronger organizational commitment and engagement. Similarly, Ogbu and Eke (2022) argued that procedural fairness in disciplinary and appraisal systems may enhance job satisfaction among academic staff, while distributive fairness in salary structures contributed to a positive work climate.

Fairness is also linked to transparency and accountability. For example, clear and well-communicated promotion criteria and resource allocation guidelines reduce ambiguity and perceptions of bias, thereby enhancing fairness perceptions (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Additionally, fairness promotes inclusiveness by ensuring that all staff members, irrespective of status or demographic characteristics, have equal access to opportunities and recognition (Ajayi & Afolabi, 2023).

In Nigerian universities, fairness challenges are often rooted in hierarchical decision-making, favoritism, and opaque governance structures. These issues contribute to feelings of alienation and discontent among staff. Addressing fairness concerns requires implementing standardized and transparent policies on promotions, grievance handling, and resource distribution. Creating appeals mechanisms for contested decisions and training administrators on unbiased leadership practices are practical steps toward promoting fairness (Colquitt et al., 2013). Therefore, fairness implementation is a cornerstone of good governance that profoundly impacts staff morale. When staff perceive equity in organizational practices, they develop stronger trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, which ultimately drive institutional stability and performance.

Corporate governance practices in Nigerian universities have increasingly become the focus of academic investigation due to the growing concerns around poor leadership, declining institutional performance, and the erosion of staff morale. Governance, in this context, refers to the structures and processes through which decisions are made, resources are allocated, and accountability is enforced. In both public and private universities, weak or inconsistent governance frameworks have been identified as contributing factors to staff dissatisfaction, low productivity, and institutional instability.

A recent study by Nwachukwu (2023) argued that governance structures in eight federal and state universities across Nigeria and found that most public institutions operate within bureaucratically rigid and politically influenced frameworks. These structures often hinder institutional responsiveness and create tensions among academic and administrative staff. The study pointed to frequent government interference in the appointment of governing councils and university executives, ambiguous reporting lines, and politicized academic leadership as key challenges. Such interference undermines institutional autonomy, erodes staff trust, and contributes to organizational dysfunction.

In addition, Nwachukwu (2023) argued that the appointment of vice-chancellors and principal officers in many institutions lacks transparency and is frequently marred by favoritism, nepotism, and undue political influence. These practices violate the principle of meritocracy and demotivate qualified professionals who feel marginalized or overlooked. Conversely, universities that had functional senates and empowered internal governance structures showed stronger decision-making processes, better communication, and higher levels of staff engagement and morale.

Similarly, Ogundele (2022) conducted a comparative study on corporate governance practices in public and private universities in South-West Nigeria. The study examined the key factors influencing corporate governance in Nigerian financial and manufacturing firms. The study also examined the comparative level of compliance to the key factors of corporate governance between financial and manufacturing firms. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Primary data on corporate governance were collected through the administration of a questionnaire. The study sample was selected using a systematic random sampling technique. A total of 255 out of 270 respondents in the two sectors responded to the questionnaire, and all the analyses were based on these 255 respondents. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as simple percentages, frequency counts, and inferential statistics such as ANOVA. The research revealed that private universities tend to adopt centralized governance systems, where proprietors or boards of trustees wield significant influence over institutional affairs.

While the model promotes quick decision-making and policy enforcement, it often limits staff participation and fosters a culture of fear or silence, especially among junior staff. In contrast, public universities, although more participatory in theory, are frequently plagued by politicized leadership, inconsistent policy implementation, and labor disputes.

Furthermore, Adesina and Olumide (2023) explored governance practices in relation to institutional performance in four state universities in Nigeria. They found that weak governance, manifested in a lack of accountability, irregular council meetings, and inadequate oversight of management decisions, was significantly correlated with poor institutional outcomes such as delayed accreditation, poor infrastructure maintenance, and staff disengagement. The study emphasized that transparent budgeting, fair recruitment, and effective grievance redress mechanisms are essential for enhancing both morale and organizational performance.

On regulatory oversight, Ishaya (2023) assessed the role of the National Universities Commission (NUC) in standardizing governance practices across Nigerian universities. The study acknowledged NUC's efforts in setting benchmarks for university operations but noted that compliance is inconsistent, particularly in areas like staff recruitment, council composition, and financial disclosure. According to the study, the absence of effective monitoring mechanisms and the failure to sanction defaulting institutions have allowed governance lapses to persist, especially in public universities.

Additionally, Adebiyi (2024) studied the perceptions of academic staff on governance effectiveness in 10 universities across Nigeria. The findings revealed that staff members equate good governance with equity in promotion, open communication, inclusive policy development, and professional respect. The study also indicated that where these values are lacking, morale tends to decline sharply, often manifesting in absenteeism, poor performance, or union agitation.

Moreover, a cross-sectional analysis conducted by Ezekiel and Bello (2023) involving 450 university staff (academic and non-academic) across private universities in Delta and Edo States found that a majority of respondents reported limited involvement in decision-making and perceived leadership as autocratic or detached. While many appreciated the efficient administration and minimal strike actions in private universities, they also expressed concerns over job insecurity, lack of autonomy, and poor communication factors directly linked to governance structures.

The empirical literature on corporate governance in Nigerian universities reveals a pattern of structural weaknesses, leadership opacity, and limited participatory mechanisms, particularly in public institutions. However, the rigidity and centralized control prevalent in private universities also generate morale issues, albeit of a different nature. These studies collectively point to the urgent need for governance reform aimed at enhancing transparency, fostering inclusivity, and promoting accountability, which are the core ingredients for improving staff morale and institutional effectiveness.

Public universities in Nigeria are governed by a combination of statutory laws, policy frameworks, and institutional charters designed to promote accountability, equity, and performance. These include guidelines from bodies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), the Federal Ministry of Education, and the governing councils of each university. However, while governance structures in public universities are well-articulated on paper, implementation remains highly inconsistent and often compromised by political interference, bureaucratic inefficiency, and institutional inertia.

An investigation by Ojo (2022), involving five public universities across the South-South and South-West regions of Nigeria, evaluated governance practices using indicators such as policy transparency, stakeholder participation, ethical leadership, and financial resource management. The study found that governance in these institutions was predominantly reactive rather than proactive, with most administrative actions driven by short-term crisis management (like addressing strikes or financial deficits) instead of strategic planning and capacity building.

According to the study, one of the most significant governance lapses was the limited inclusion of staff in decision-making processes, particularly in critical areas such as promotion, disciplinary procedures, work allocation, and institutional policy reforms. Staff participants in the study expressed a strong sense of alienation, reporting that most decisions affecting their careers were made unilaterally by top management, often without consultation or explanation. This exclusionary governance style was found to directly contribute to low morale, as employees felt undervalued, unheard, and professionally stifled.

Further findings from Ojo (2022) showed that communication gaps between university leadership and staff exacerbated mistrust within the institutional environment. Poor information flow, lack of feedback mechanisms, and top-down communication styles were frequently cited as sources of institutional frustration and low engagement. These dynamics discouraged initiative-taking and weakened staff commitment to institutional goals. The study also highlighted tensions between key governance bodies, such as the Governing Council and the University Senate, which often created ambiguity in authority lines and delayed policy implementation. These inter-organ tensions, sometimes driven by politics, personality clashes, or overlapping functions, led to administrative gridlock and inconsistencies in executing personnel and financial decisions. In addition, the research showed that bureaucratic bottlenecks within public universities remain a major challenge to effective governance. Simple processes such as approvals for staff development, procurement, and departmental budgeting are often delayed due to layered clearance systems and unclear roles. These delays not only disrupt academic schedules and institutional goals but also demoralize staff, especially those striving to meet teaching, research, or administrative targets under resource-constrained conditions.

On his part, Abubakar (2023), in a separate national survey of governance reforms in federal universities, noted that, compliance with NUC policy directives is uneven, often influenced by internal politics, leadership turnover, and external government pressures. This inconsistency undermines policy credibility and creates a governance culture characterized by ambiguity, favoritism, and inefficiency.

Despite the existence of well-structured governance policies in Nigerian public universities, their actual execution frequently falls short, revealing a clear disconnect between theoretical design and operational practice. This governance failure, marked by weak participation, limited transparency, and ineffective leadership communication, continues to undermine institutional morale, create distrust among staff, and hinder the sustainable development of university systems.

In contrast to their public counterparts, private universities in Nigeria typically adopt centralized and streamlined governance systems that are tightly controlled by proprietors or boards of trustees. These governance frameworks are often rooted in corporate managerial philosophies, with an emphasis on efficiency, discipline, and performance control. While this model promotes administrative order and swift decision-making, it often raises critical concerns about staff autonomy, inclusiveness, and job security.

A study by Musa (2023), which examined governance dynamics in six private universities located across Southern Nigeria, revealed that although these institutions exhibited more operational coherence and quicker decision cycles, they were frequently characterized by limited participatory governance. The study observed that major decisions concerning employment, promotion, disciplinary actions, and strategic direction were typically made by a small executive elite, often comprised of the vice chancellor, registrar, and board members, without input from broader staff bodies or academic unions.

This top-down governance model was perceived to foster compliance and accountability, but at the cost of staff morale and organizational trust. Musa found that academic freedom was notably constrained, with lecturers and administrative personnel expected to conform to institutional directives with minimal room for dissent or independent decision-making. Staff members often reported that channels for feedback, complaints, or collaborative governance were either weak or absent, leading to a sense of alienation, especially among more senior personnel.

Interestingly, the study found divergent perceptions of governance based on staff rank and tenure. Junior staff and early-career employees often appreciated the clarity, structure, and job stability offered by private institutions. Many saw the environment as professionally organized, free from the prolonged strikes, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and politicized appointments common in public universities. However, senior academic staff, especially those accustomed to greater intellectual freedom and collegial decision-making, reported feeling stifled, undervalued, and excluded from institutional development processes.

Musa (2023) concluded that while private universities in Nigeria may appear more “corporate” and effective in their governance approach, the absence of democratic practices, lack of union representation, and rigid managerial oversight can create a climate of institutional fear, dissatisfaction, and passive disengagement. The study emphasized the need for private institutions to balance their drive for operational excellence with mechanisms that promote inclusive governance, academic voice, and professional recognition.

Supporting these findings, Ezenwa (2022) also warned that, the over-centralization of governance in private universities could potentially undermine long-term staff commitment and innovation, especially in research-intensive environments. The author advocated for the incorporation of hybrid governance models that combine administrative efficiency with participatory structures to foster staff morale, creativity, and institutional loyalty.

Overall, while private universities in Nigeria may exhibit stronger administrative control and faster decision execution, the trade-offs in terms of staff empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational climate are significant. This dichotomy underscores the critical need to examine governance structures not only in terms of operational success but also their impact on employee well-being and institutional sustainability.

Comparative studies on university governance in Nigeria have increasingly sought to delineate the operational dynamics, institutional culture, and staff welfare implications of governance models adopted by public versus private institutions. While both categories of universities function under the regulatory oversight of the National Universities Commission (NUC), their internal governance frameworks diverge significantly in terms of leadership style, decision-making processes, staff participation, and transparency. These differences, in turn, shape employee experiences and influence overall staff morale in distinct ways.

A significant contribution to this discourse is a study by Akinwale (2022), which compared corporate governance practices in four public and four private universities across the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The study employed a mixed-methods approach involving staff surveys, institutional document analysis, and key informant interviews. It assessed governance outcomes based on participatory structures, administrative efficiency, decision-making transparency, and staff perception of institutional justice. Akinwale’s findings revealed that public universities generally offer more participatory governance frameworks, particularly through structures such as academic senates, staff unions, and departmental boards.

These platforms allow for greater staff involvement in institutional decision-making and foster a sense of representation, particularly among senior academic staff. However, this inclusivity was often undermined by slow implementation processes, policy inconsistencies, and bureaucratic inertia that limited institutional agility.

On the other hand, private universities demonstrated stronger administrative control and decisiveness, often executing policies more efficiently due to centralized governance models. Leadership in these institutions, frequently vested in proprietors or governing boards, was found to be highly directive, with clear chains of command and minimal tolerance for dissent. While this approach enhanced operational order and minimized delays, it also restricted staff input, with many employees reporting that decisions regarding promotions, workload, and disciplinary actions were made without meaningful consultation.

In terms of staff morale, Akinwale (2022) observed a nuanced trend. Senior staff in public universities generally reported higher levels of job satisfaction, attributing their morale to academic freedom, union protection, and participatory governance structures. These staff members valued their ability to influence policy decisions and negotiate for better working conditions. In contrast, younger or early-career staff members tended to favor private universities, citing benefits such as timely remuneration, clearly defined roles, and career predictability as drivers of satisfaction, despite the absence of democratic governance mechanisms.

However, the study by Akinwale (2022) cautioned that neither model offered a perfect solution. Public universities struggled with inefficiency and inconsistent policy enforcement, while private institutions risked staff disengagement due to rigid managerialism and limited institutional dialogue. Akinwale (2022) proposed a hybrid governance approach, one that blends the inclusiveness and protection mechanisms of public universities with the efficiency and decisiveness of private models as the most viable path toward sustainable institutional governance and improved staff morale.

Supporting these insights, Okon and Eze (2023) highlighted that effective governance in universities must go beyond structural design to address relational dynamics, particularly communication style, leadership responsiveness, and trust-building. They argue that the long-term success of governance reforms must incorporate staff voice, professional respect, and opportunities for collective decision-making, irrespective of institutional ownership.

Therefore, comparative studies affirm that governance frameworks, whether in public or private universities, have direct and measurable effects on staff morale. While each system presents unique strengths and challenges, the growing consensus is that balanced governance, which fosters both efficiency and inclusion, is the key to achieving institutional resilience, academic excellence, and staff well-being.

Staff morale constitutes a pivotal element in shaping institutional effectiveness, staff retention, and the overall academic climate within universities. It encompasses the psychological and emotional well-being of personnel, reflected through their job satisfaction, institutional loyalty, motivation, and performance output. In Nigeria, both academic and non-academic staff operate within complex institutional environments that are often marred by inconsistent governance, resource limitations, and weak welfare structures, which are factors that directly and indirectly affect morale.

In a recent large-scale study conducted by Uzochukwu (2023), morale levels were assessed across academic and non-academic staff in five federal and state universities in Southern Nigeria. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study revealed that academic staff generally reported lower morale levels compared to their non-academic counterparts. Academic staff cited delayed promotion processes, inadequate access to research grants, lack of scholarly recognition, and unclear advancement criteria as core demoralizing issues. These challenges were especially pronounced in state-owned universities where research funding and staff development programs were minimal or inconsistently implemented.

Conversely, non-academic staff exhibited relatively higher morale levels, particularly in administrative, registry, and technical units. This was attributed to clearer job descriptions, more structured work routines, and predictable task assignments, which helped reduce ambiguity and role overload. However, both staff categories shared concerns over poor communication from leadership, lack of transparency in institutional decisions, absence of merit-based incentives, and limited welfare initiatives. Uzochukwu concluded that perceptions of fairness, role clarity, and leadership engagement were the most significant predictors of morale, cutting across institutional types and staff classifications.

In line with the above, Hassan (2023) conducted a focused comparative study in two private universities and one public institution in Delta State, examining staff morale with a particular focus on academic employees. The study uncovered a strong sense of professional frustration among academic staff in private universities, many of whom reported restricted academic freedom, absence of mentorship, lack of career advancement pathways, and fear of voicing dissent due to authoritarian management styles. The rigidity of governance in private institutions created an environment where staff felt disposable and isolated from institutional planning or reform processes.

Nonetheless, the study also acknowledged positive morale indicators in some private universities, including modern infrastructure, structured performance appraisal systems, and regular salary disbursement. These operational strengths were especially appreciated by younger faculty and administrative staff. Yet, Hassan emphasized that financial consistency alone was insufficient to sustain morale, noting that long-term engagement and institutional loyalty depended more heavily on factors such as respect, autonomy, inclusion in governance, and recognition of contributions.

In a separate investigation focused exclusively on non-academic staff**,** Ijeoma (2022) surveyed morale patterns across three state-owned universities. The study found that morale was highest among staff in administrative and bursary units where systems for reporting, evaluation, and promotion were more organized and transparent. These units typically had clearer lines of communication and benefited from periodic staff development workshops, which improved skill acquisition and professional satisfaction.

However, the study also flagged concerns regarding a perceived elitist divide between academic and non-academic staff. Non-academic respondents reported feeling marginalized in institutional decision-making, despite being critical to university operations. Their exclusion from strategic discussions and committee appointments contributed to a sense of underappreciation and, in some cases, internal conflict within the institution. Ijeoma emphasized that working conditions, interpersonal respect, and acknowledgment of effort were more crucial for morale among non-academic staff than salary scales or institutional ranking.

Collectively, these empirical findings highlight several recurring themes:

- Morale is not solely determined by remuneration or job status; rather, it reflects a complex interaction of leadership style, organizational culture, inclusion, recognition, and growth opportunities.
- While academic staff morale is often tied to scholarly freedom, career advancement, and professional identity, non-academic staff morale is shaped more by operational clarity, fairness, and interpersonal relationships.
- Governance structures that lack transparency, consultative decision-making, and equitable policy implementation contribute to widespread dissatisfaction, disengagement, and in extreme cases, institutional unrest.

These insights reinforce the central argument that corporate governance practices, particularly those related to transparency, participation, communication, and institutional justice, serve as key levers for enhancing or diminishing staff morale. In the context of Nigerian universities, where institutional volatility is commonplace, understanding and addressing morale from both the academic and non-academic perspectives is essential for promoting sustainable organizational health and performance.

The nexus between corporate governance practices and staff morale has gained increasing attention in contemporary higher education research, particularly in the context of developing nations like Nigeria. As universities grapple with financial instability, managerial inefficiencies, and accountability gaps, researchers have begun to investigate how internal governance dynamics such as transparency, leadership style, stakeholder participation, fairness, and institutional responsiveness influence the morale, engagement, and institutional loyalty of staff members.

A study by Oladimeji (2023), examined the relationship between governance structures and staff morale across six public universities in the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Using a combination of survey instruments and focus group discussions, the study uncovered a strong positive correlation between participatory governance and staff morale. Universities that promoted inclusive decision-making, particularly through the active involvement of academic and non-academic staff in planning committees, quality assurance boards, and budget allocation panels, reported higher morale levels. Staff members expressed greater commitment and job satisfaction when promotion decisions, academic reforms, and institutional restructuring were conducted with fairness, openness, and consultation. Oladimeji concluded that governance effectiveness is not only about policy design but also about how stakeholders perceive their role and voice in institutional affairs.

In a related investigation, Nnaji (2022) conducted a comparative analysis of governance and morale across two federal and two private universities in Nigeria, employing regression analysis to test correlations between governance variables and staff morale indicators. The findings revealed that governance elements such as transparent leadership, consistent communication, performance recognition, and fairness in disciplinary systems explained up to 48% of the variance in staff morale across institutions. Interestingly, public universities in the study tended to report higher morale, largely due to the presence of active staff unions, academic freedom, and opportunities for collective bargaining. In contrast, private universities, despite their administrative efficiency, demonstrated lower morale levels due to centralized decision-making, lack of staff consultation, and weak feedback mechanisms. The study emphasized that morale is often sustained not by financial incentives alone but by the feeling of being valued, heard, and involved in institutional processes.

Further insights were provided by Bello (2022), who explored the impact of leadership styles as a dimension of governance on staff morale among academic staff in four universities across Edo and Delta States. The study differentiated between democratic, transformational, laissez-faire, and authoritarian leadership styles, finding that democratic and transformational leaders who encouraged feedback, embraced academic freedom, and involved staff in strategic decisions generated significantly higher morale levels among their faculty. These institutions also reported lower turnover rates and higher research output, demonstrating a link between morale and productivity. On the contrary, institutions with authoritarian leadership experienced high staff attrition, resistance to management, and increased complaints of favoritism and exclusion.

Also noteworthy is the work of Adigun (2023), who investigated how governance practices affected staff morale across three hierarchical tiers: junior, mid-level, and senior staff in private universities. The study found that morale was highest among staff who perceived fairness in promotion processes, regular and respectful communication from top management, and a degree of leadership accountability. Staff who were excluded from institutional discussions or subjected to arbitrary sanctions showed signs of disengagement, reduced institutional loyalty, and reluctance to take on additional responsibilities even when salaries were paid promptly. This highlights that financial stability alone is insufficient to motivate staff in the absence of inclusive and responsive governance practices.

Together, these studies provide compelling empirical evidence that corporate governance directly influences the emotional climate and operational performance of university staff. While compensation, workload, and working conditions remain important, the quality of institutional leadership, governance inclusivity, and ethical decision-making are far more significant predictors of long-term staff morale and retention.

The implications for Nigerian universities are profound. In an era of educational reform, competitive academic environments, and global institutional rankings, universities that neglect governance reform may find themselves facing not only declining staff morale but also diminished institutional credibility and effectiveness. Therefore, the evidence supports the argument that improving governance practices, especially in the areas of transparency, communication, and participatory leadership, can serve as a strategic lever for boosting staff morale and institutional resilience.

Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale Based on Experience

Staff experience plays a defining role in shaping its corporate governance culture, administrative routines, and the depth of institutional memory that guides organizational behaviour (Aziz, Hassan & Mohtar, 2023). Corporate governance in higher education, therefore, functions not only as a statutory mechanism but also as a cultural architecture whose level of internalization is strongly conditioned by institutional longevity (Torfing & Sørensen, 2023).

Where corporate governance processes have become routinized through staff experience, predictability, and trust are typically higher, and such trust is closely associated with the level of academic staff morale experienced at the institutional level (Aryee et al., 2022). From an organizational theory perspective, staff experience unveils signs of legitimacy, continuity, stability, and credibility with structural attributes that powerfully shape how staff interpret corporate governance actions and the emotional commitment they are willing to extend to the institution (Kundu & Gahlawat, 2022; Owusu & Boachie, 2023). The influence of academic staff experience and academic staff morale is primarily mediated through corporate governance-related mechanisms such as institutional legitimacy, procedural trust, psychological safety, and perceived administrative fairness. Older lecturers tend to accumulate "corporate governance legitimacy capital" over time, which makes academic staff more willing to comply with leadership decisions because such decisions are viewed as credible and procedurally grounded (Denyer & Tranfield, 2023).

The longevity of corporate governance practices also strengthens psychological safety, as older staff are better able to predict administrative outcomes and therefore experience lower uncertainty about workplace rules and sanctions (Munyenyembe & Chikoko, 2021). Younger lecturers often face legitimacy deficits because their corporate governance routines are still evolving and not yet fully internalized by academic staff, which can create ambiguity, policy volatility, and mistrust (Makinde & Olajide, 2022).

Academic staff morale rises when corporate governance is seen as fair, transparent, and consistent over time, which is a condition more easily sustained in mature universities that have developed a culture of routinized accountability and deeply embedded institutional memory (Toren & Hosain, 2023). The pathway through which staff experience influences academic staff morale is not merely chronological but structural and psychological: older academic staff enjoy higher academic staff morale not because of experience itself, but because experience facilitates corporate governance continuity, administrative predictability, and trust-based staff–management relations.

Contemporary international research indicates that staff experience consistently conditions how corporate governance reforms influence academic staff morale: established universities with longer institutional histories or experiences tend to convert corporate governance transparency and procedural reforms into larger morale gains than those newly founded (that is, older staff), because longevity augments organizational legitimacy and credibility (Fu, 2024). Cross-national reviews of higher-education change similarly show that older staff are better able to "anchor" staff expectations during periods of administrative reform or crisis, thereby reducing uncertainty and protecting staff engagement, whereas corporate governance innovations in younger staff are sometimes perceived as instability rather than improvement (Jongen, 2024).

Large-scale sectoral evidence also shows that corporate governance-related breakdowns (for example, abrupt restructuring, opaque decision-making, high staff turnover, or quitting intentions) amplify psychosocial risk and depress academic staff morale across universities internationally. Recent workforce reports document rising voluntary academic staff turnover and engagement on the job declines in higher education that are linked to corporate governance pressures and uncertainty (CUPA-HR, 2023; Deloitte, 2024).

Empirical studies further demonstrated that personal characteristics such as experience or age, visibility, and established stakeholder relationships operate through legitimacy-building corporate governance mechanisms to shape academic staff trust and wellbeing, which, in turn, mediate the academic staff morale effects of corporate governance interventions (Fu, 2024; Jongen, 2024). Taken together, the global literature suggests that staff experience acts less like a simple control variable and more like a conditioning context that amplifies or attenuates the academic staff morale influences of corporate governance practices.

Comparative studies across sub-Saharan Africa indicated that staff experience consistently shapes corporate governance capacity and academic staff outcomes. Several region-level reviews document that older staff often harbour stronger bureaucratic traditions, better-developed administrative procedures, and more durable academic norms and characteristics that help transform corporate governance reforms into tangible staff-level benefits such as increased job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational commitment (Khumalo, 2021).

Rapidly established private and faith-based universities in Africa frequently face corporate governance volatility as they scale, producing uncertainty that weakens trust and depresses academic staff morale unless deliberate institutionalization steps are taken. Empirical work from the continent links corporate governance instability (for example, shifting promotion rules, opaque decision-making) to declines in academic staff well-being and engagement, particularly during periods of fiscal stress or rapid expansion (Njabulo Khumalo, 2021).

In Nigeria, recent empirical studies and policy reports corroborate the moderating role of staff experience on corporate governance–academic staff morale pathways (Abdulkadir & Fuangfa, 2019; Koeswayoa, Haryanto & Handoyo, 2024; Muhammad et al., 2025). Sector analyses and case studies show that older staff in public universities generally retain more routinised corporate governance processes (examination boards, senate procedures, promotion pipelines). This helps sustain academic staff trust when reforms are introduced; by contrast, younger staff in newer private universities often depend heavily on the discretion of current leadership, creating leader-dependent corporate governance that can erode academic staff morale when leadership changes or when policies appear inconsistent.

The study by Uche and Onyishi (2022) found that older academic staff in public universities exhibited stronger institutional trust among academic staff because corporate governance mechanisms were predictable and consistent. They further reported that academic staff perceived the governing councils of public universities as more competent and legitimate, which enhanced academic staff morale and organizational identification. Older academic staff with a high corporate governance system seem to be more stable, and management responses are more predictable, which contributed to a higher sense of psychological safety.

The study by Nwokolo and Ibrahim (2022) found that public universities, which are older and more established, showed higher morale because academic staff believed that promotions, welfare benefits, and administrative procedures were based on long-standing rules rather than personal discretion. In many newer State universities, which are still developing, corporate governance was described as “still evolving,” and academic staff complained that “procedures change without notice,” which, in turn, lowered their morale. The authors concluded that the age or experience of a university influences the credibility of its corporate governance, which, in turn, affects academic staff morale.

Atakpu (2023) stated clearly that corporate governance maturity would be directly associated with positive staff morale. Universities that had existed for over 30 years had internalized corporate governance rituals and grievance procedures, which, in turn, fostered trust. Younger academic staff in universities may experience unclear corporate governance lines, thereby leading to ambiguous role expectations and emotional fatigue among academic staff. Academic staff would repeatedly have referenced institutional memory as a stabilizing factor. Boateng and Ofori (2021) have also argued clearly that institutional longevity creates a tradition of participatory governance that reassures employees of fairness. Academic staff morale may be high in long-established universities where corporate governance is ritualized, not improvised. Younger academic staff could be compensated for weak corporate governance credibility by relying on personal relationships with management instead of clear institutional frameworks.

Fourie and Bitzer (2021) argued clearly that older staff will retain a strong corporate governance identity over time, which translates into academic staff confidence in leadership accountability. Where corporate governance was inconsistent (especially in private restructured universities), academic staff morale will be undermined by ‘procedural uncertainty’ and ‘leadership opacity’. Yet another Kihara and Odhiambo (2022) stated clearly that academic staff repeatedly reported that predictable corporate governance processes reduce psychological stress. Younger staff may exert “leadership by trial and error,” while older staff may exert “leadership by procedure”. The difference in corporate governance stability mapped directly onto academic staff morale.

Serwadda (2022) stated clearly that Trust in governance will be positively high among older staff due to institutionalized grievance redress systems. Academic staff may view corporate governance maturity as proof that “rules will outlive individuals,” which, in turn, improves their morale. Bekele and Wondimu (2023) stated clearly that academic staff morale will relate positively with perceptions of procedural fairness, which were stronger in institutions with longer operational histories and experiences. Younger staff in institutions will display administrative volatility, which, in turn, may discourage organizational or work commitment.

Another piece of evidence by Nwagwu (2023) also stated clearly that staff experience will moderate corporate governance credibility. Older academic staff in institutions will exert higher morale due to reduced administrative anxiety. Younger staff will exhibit or experience “corporate governance discontinuity”, which, in turn, reduces academic staff morale.

The above assertion differentiates between older academic staff versus younger academic staff in institutions. Academic staff in established universities tend to report higher baseline trust in formal processes but also greater resistance to rapid procedural change, which means they value continuity and precedent. By so doing, Younger academic staff in institutions often value managerial responsiveness and innovation but report greater anxiety about policy durability and fairness, particularly around promotions and contract stability.

Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale Based on Sex

The influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale has attracted increasing scholarly interest in higher education and human resource management literature. Corporate governance practices in universities typically encompass the structures, procedures, and relationships that guide institutional decision-making, transparency, and accountability (Okeke, 2022). Academic staff morale, on the other hand, refers to the general level of enthusiasm, confidence, satisfaction, and sense of belonging that academic staff exhibits toward their institution (Ahmed, Ajoke & Mustapha, 2020). Scholars and researchers generally agreed that transparent, inclusive, and equitable corporate governance frameworks can enhance morale by strengthening perceptions of fairness, voice, and belonging among employees (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter & Ng, 2001; Mgaiwa, 2023).

From a sex perspective, the influence of corporate governance practices on the academic staff morale is often mediated by differences in access, participation, and perceived fairness within the university systems (Eagly & Karau, 2002). In addition, the work–family balance perspective provides another lens through which sex moderates the influence of corporate governance on academic staff morale. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), women are often disproportionately affected by work–family conflict. Universities that integrate family-friendly corporate governance practices such as flexible working hours, maternity leave, or reduced workload for nursing mothers may therefore enhance the morale among female staff. Conversely, rigid or gender-neutral corporate governance policies that overlook such realities may disadvantage women and dampen their morale.

Globally, several studies have highlighted that gender-inclusive corporate governance systems foster improved organizational outcomes, including academic staff morale and satisfaction. Liu, Zhu, and Chen (2024) found that board gender diversity significantly improved responsiveness to employee incentives and welfare policies. Universities with higher female representation in leadership showed stronger commitment to employee well-being, which translated into improved morale across staff populations. Similarly, Meliá-Martí, Crespo-Espert, and Menéndez-Requejo (2024) demonstrated that firms and public universities with diverse boards recorded higher employee productivity and job satisfaction due to the participatory and empathetic leadership styles associated with gender-balanced corporate governance.

In the university sector, Pruvot, Thomas, and Hernández (2023) observed that women remain under-represented in decision-making structures of universities, especially in Europe, which limits their influence on policies affecting work–life balance and professional advancement. This under-representation contributes to a gendered experience of university corporate governance that often undermines or influences female academics' sense of inclusion and job satisfaction. Similarly, Jones (2024) noted that when women are excluded from university governing councils and senate committees, they perceive corporate governance as less transparent and less supportive, resulting in comparatively lower academic staff morale and work commitment.

Sex and corporate governance interactions have become an important topic in educational administration research. For instance, Ahmed, Ajoke, and Mustapha (2020) argued that diversity dimensions, including sex, ethnicity, and religion, had a significant positive influence on academic staff morale. They further argued that inclusive corporate governance that values diversity influences interpersonal respect and teamwork, thereby enhancing academic staff morale. Although the study did not isolate gender influences specifically, it underscored the principle that gender-inclusive corporate governance environments boost academic staff morale.

Kenku, Fagbenro, and Opatola (2024) argued that female academic staff will report higher satisfaction levels than male academic staff, suggesting that sex experiences of workload, stress, and corporate governance responsiveness might mediate academic staff morale outcomes. The authors further argued that corporate governance systems that manage job tension effectively could influence academic staff morale across both genders, but more markedly among female academic staff members who often face greater role conflict.

Similarly, Obilor, Amadi, and Ahamefula (2024) argued that female academic staff may experience higher occupational stress and lower perceived organizational support than their male colleagues. They attributed this to corporate governance-related issues such as unequal access to research funding, promotion bottlenecks, and under-representation in departmental decision-making. Their study highlighted that supportive corporate governance through mentorship programmes and equitable workload distribution could mitigate stress and thereby improve morale among female staff.

Abosede (2024) reported that there was a non-significant sex difference in job satisfaction levels, suggesting that when corporate governance procedures and policies are applied uniformly, gender gaps in morale may narrow. Nevertheless, they reaffirmed that transparent corporate governance practices relating to promotion and performance appraisal could remain the most influential factors determining morale for both sexes.

The reviewed literature indicates a consistent pattern, where corporate governance systems promote inclusivity, transparency, and representation, and morale among both male and female academic staff can be improved. However, gendered experiences of corporate governance remain evident. Female academics are often underrepresented in leadership structures and decision-making bodies, limiting their influence on institutional policies (Pruvot et al., 2023; Jones, 2024). Such exclusion can lower morale by diminishing perceptions of fairness and belonging. Furthermore, corporate governance policies and procedures that fail to accommodate family and caregiving responsibilities tend to disadvantage women more acutely, as these responsibilities intersect with work demands (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Morale among female academic staff often depends on the degree to which corporate governance practices address barriers to representation, workload balance, and promotion equity. On the other hand, authors have argued that there may exist a non-significant sex difference, arguing that equitable corporate governance systems, even without explicit sex targeting, can promote comparable morale outcomes for both sexes.

Despite increasing attention, the intersection between corporate governance practices and academic staff morale based on sex remains under-researched, especially within African higher-education systems. Most existing studies focus broadly on job satisfaction or organizational commitment without isolating how corporate governance practices interact with sex to influence academic staff morale (Ahmed et al., 2020; Kenku et al., 2024). Moreover, available evidence is largely cross-sectional and descriptive, limiting causal inference. There is a clear need for longitudinal and mixed-methods studies examining how corporate governance reforms, such as improved representation of women on university councils or new family-friendly policies, influence male and female morale differently over time.

Flowing from the above assertions, it is therefore proposed that corporate governance practices such as participatory decision-making, leadership representation, promotion transparency, and family-sensitive policies will have differential impacts on academic staff morale based on sex. Specifically, it is anticipated that such practices will exert a stronger positive influence on morale among female academics, who often experience structural disadvantages and higher work–family conflict.

Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Staff Morale Based on Academic Status

The role of academic status, which is often operationalized as rank or cadre (for example, junior lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, or professor) is an important moderator in the influence of corporate governance practices of universities and academic staff morale. Scholars and researchers have argued that corporate governance practices that distribute decision-making voice, promote transparent career-advancement systems, and allocate resources equitably are likely to influence academic staff morale differently depending on the individual's status within the hierarchy.

From a theoretical perspective, two mechanisms are especially relevant. First, status differentiation influences voice and participation: senior academic staff frequently enjoy greater access to corporate governance structures (committees, boards, decision-making councils), whereas junior academic staff often have less formal voice and fewer opportunities to influence institutional direction. If corporate governance practices emphasize inclusivity and broad staff participation, they may enhance morale more for the lower-status group by offsetting structural exclusion. Therefore, if corporate governance remains elite-dominated, junior academic staff may perceive unfairness and lower academic staff morale.

Status is also closely tied to promotion, reward, and resource allocation dynamics. Corporate governance practices such as transparent promotion procedures, clear criteria for advancement, and equitable workload and resource distribution shape perceptions of procedural justice (Colquitt et al., 2001). Because junior academic staff are often further from promotion and typically bear heavier teaching or administrative loads, corporate governance practices that improve clarity and fairness in advancement may yield larger academic staff morale gains for them compared with more established senior academic staff.

Although explicitly labelled studies of “corporate governance practices × rank → morale” remain limited, the literature provides relevant findings that help infer how corporate governance practices influence staff morale by academic status. Gollagari, Birega, and Mishra (2023) found that organizational justice had a positive influence on employee commitment mediated by job satisfaction, and that academic rank significantly moderated this relationship. A moderated mediation structural equation model was used for randomly collected cross-sectional data on 285 employees from public universities in Ethiopia. Necessary condition analysis was employed to check the importance of the variables. The Gaussian copula approach was used to check endogeneity in the structural model. Necessary condition analysis confirms the importance of organizational justice and employee satisfaction as the independent variables. The Gaussian copula approach reveals no endogeneity problems in the structural model. Specifically, the beneficial influence of perceived justice on commitment was stronger for higher-rank staff. This suggests that status modifies how corporate governance-related fairness perceptions translate into academic staff morale-related outcomes.

Nchinda's (2023) study reported a significant difference in job satisfaction by academic rank and age: higher-rank academic staff reported greater job satisfaction than lower-rank academic staff. While not directly focused on corporate governance practices, this study indicates that rank matters for academic staff morale outcomes and thus is a relevant moderator when examining corporate governance practices.

Several studies highlight corporate governance-related variables (such as promotion, resources, recognition) and status differences. For example, the study by Ijon and Onah (2023) found that promotion processes, recognition, and policy clarity, which are facets of corporate governance, significantly influence morale. Although this study did not disaggregate by academic rank, it signals that corporate governance practices impacting advancement and recognition matter for academic staff morale.

Other studies reinforce that promotion and career advancement opportunities, critical components of corporate governance, are strongly associated with staff performance and satisfaction. It is expected that responsibility and career advancement can influence job performance positively. Since rank captures advancement status, this again suggests that corporate governance practices around advancement may yield status-differentiated influences on academic staff morale.

The empirical evidence suggests that academic rank/cadre is a meaningful moderator of the influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale. Specifically:

- Corporate governance practices that enhance procedural fairness (transparent promotion, voice in governance, equitable resource allocation) are likely to benefit morale across the board, but their magnitude of effect may differ by rank.

- For junior or mid-level academic staff (lower rank), improvements in corporate governance practices may produce comparatively larger morale gains, since they stand to benefit more from previously limited access, opaque advancement pathways, or high teaching/administrative loads.
- For senior academic staff (higher rank), morale may already be relatively higher due to entrenched status and access; thus, incremental corporate governance improvements may have smaller marginal influences.
- Some evidence (Gollagari, R., Birega, T., &Mishra, S., 2023) even suggests the opposite – that higher-ranked staff derive stronger benefits from corporate governance fairness (perhaps because their expectations are higher, and they engage more with corporate governance processes).

Despite these insights, significant gaps remain. First, few studies explicitly frame corporate governance practice variables (for example, board composition, staff representation, workload governance, promotion transparency) and test their interaction with academic staff status on morale. Most available work examines either academic rank → staff morale (without linking to corporate governance) or corporate governance → staff morale (without disaggregating by rank). This leaves the combined corporate governance practices × academic rank → staff morale path under-explored.

Secondly, much of the literature relies on cross-sectional designs, which limit causal inference. Longitudinal or quasi-experimental studies would better capture how changes in corporate governance practices (for example, introduction of a new promotion policy) influence academic staff morale differentially by rank. For your thesis, consider operationalizing key corporate governance practice variables (for example, frequency of staff representation in corporate governance bodies, clarity of promotion policy, and workload allocation fairness) and including academic rank as a moderator in your analytical model. Employ validated staff morale measures (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, morale scale) and test interaction terms (corporate governance practice × rank). A mixed-methods component (qualitative interviews with junior/mid/senior academic staff about their perceptions of corporate governance practices and academic staff morale) would add rich depth to these findings.

In university corporate governance systems or practices, such as transparent promotion processes, inclusive decision-making, and equitable resource allocation, are designed to enhance academic staff morale. Given their differential positions in institutional hierarchies, academic staff of different ranks experience these corporate governance practices differently: junior academic staff (lower academic rank) stand to gain proportionally more in their morale from corporate governance reforms that enhance access and fairness, while senior academic staff may already enjoy structural benefits, thereby leading to differential influence magnitudes.

Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Staff Morale Based on Marital Status

Marital status represents a key demographic variable that can influence employees' psychological responses to work and institutional management practices.

Within university systems, marital status may shape how academic staff perceive and react to corporate governance practices such as decision-making inclusiveness, fairness in workload distribution, welfare policies, and promotion systems. The influence of corporate governance practices and academic staff morale may thus differ between married and unmarried staff due to variations in social support systems, work–family balance, and institutional expectations (Okeke, 2022; Mgaiwa, 2023).

From a socio-psychological standpoint, marital status has been associated with differences in job satisfaction and staff morale because marriage often provides emotional stability and a broader support network (Helliwell & Huang, 2021). This stability can help employees cope with organizational stressors, including perceived governance inadequacies. Conversely, single or unmarried staff might experience higher flexibility and independence in job-related decisions but may also have weaker buffers against workplace stressors (Yildirim & Aycan, 2008).

The work–family interface theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) is central to understanding this dynamic. Married staff, particularly those with dependents, often experience heightened work–family conflict when corporate governance structures fail to accommodate flexible scheduling or family-friendly policies. Hence, the effectiveness of corporate governance practices in promoting academic staff morale may depend on how well they address work–family balance across marital categories. For example, corporate governance systems that enforce rigid work demands without considering family responsibilities can lower morale among married academic staff. In contrast, flexible, welfare-oriented policies can enhance motivation and institutional commitment.

Similarly, the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) suggests that employees reciprocate positive corporate governance experiences and practices (fairness, inclusiveness, and transparency) with heightened staff morale and commitment. Married academic staff may exhibit stronger reciprocity when they perceive corporate governance practices as supporting both professional and family well-being. Therefore, equitable corporate governance mechanisms that integrate personal welfare considerations may produce higher morale among married academic staff compared with their unmarried counterparts.

Globally, several studies have investigated how marital status influences the effect of institutional practices on staff morale and satisfaction. Helliwell and Huang (2021) reported that married employees generally exhibit higher life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and organizational morale due to emotional and social support mechanisms associated with marriage. This pattern was corroborated by Fotiadis et al. (2023), who found that married employees demonstrated greater organizational loyalty and morale when corporate governance systems and practices incorporated welfare initiatives, participatory decision-making, and family-friendly benefits.

In university contexts, Abugre and Nasere (2023) found that marital status moderated the influence of corporate governance practices (such as promotion transparency, communication effectiveness, and resource allocation) and academic staff satisfaction. Married academic staff members were more sensitive to corporate governance inefficiencies that influenced work–life balance, while unmarried academic staff were more influenced by fairness in career advancement and recognition. Similarly, Rajesh and Kumar (2024) found that corporate governance practices promoting participatory decision-making improved staff morale across all marital categories, but the influence was stronger among married academic staff, likely because such corporate governance practices reduced perceived conflict between professional and family obligations.

African and Nigerian literature corroborates these global findings but adds culturally specific insights. For instance, Ahmed, Ajoke, and Mustapha (2020) found that demographic variables such as gender, marital status, and work experience jointly influenced staff morale. They noted that married academic staff members tended to exhibit higher morale when corporate governance structures promoted job security, fair promotion policies, and welfare benefits. Similarly, Adeyemi and Okafor (2024) reported that welfare and reward systems are key corporate governance practices that had a stronger positive influence on morale among married academic staff compared to unmarried academic staff.

Furthermore, Olayemi and Adebisi (2023) reported higher staff morale when corporate governance structures emphasized meritocracy and performance-based promotion, suggesting that single academics may be more responsive to recognition-based corporate governance systems. The authors concluded that marital status moderates the influence of corporate governance fairness on morale; that is, corporate governance that prioritizes career advancement influences staff morale, especially for unmarried academic staff, while corporate governance that emphasizes stability and welfare improves morale for married academic staff.

Eze and Onoh (2024) discovered that work–life balance policies (a component of corporate governance practice) significantly predicted staff morale, particularly among married academic staff. Married academic staff expressed higher morale in institutions offering supportive corporate governance practices such as maternity or paternity leave, workload flexibility, and childcare support.

The reviewed literature shows consistent evidence that marital status significantly moderates the influence of corporate governance practices on staff morale. Married academic staff typically report higher morale when corporate governance systems integrate family-supportive and welfare-oriented elements, whereas unmarried academic staff often derive morale from corporate governance systems emphasizing fairness, recognition, and merit-based advancement. This implies that the corporate governance–staff morale relationship is not uniform across marital categories but depends on how corporate governance policies align with the life circumstances of staff.

Moreover, corporate governance structures that fail to recognize the diverse personal responsibilities of employees risk alienating particular groups. For example, policies requiring rigid attendance or excessive committee participation may disproportionately burden married staff with family duties, leading to lower morale. Conversely, corporate governance mechanisms that promote inclusive participation and transparent communication benefit both groups, though through different pathways, have emotional stability for married academic staff and professional fulfilment for unmarried academic staff (Rajesh & Kumar, 2024; Eze & Onoh, 2024).

Despite emerging evidence, several gaps remain. First, very few studies in Nigeria have directly modelled the interaction effect between corporate governance practices and marital status on staff morale. Most have treated marital status as a control variable rather than as a moderator. Second, studies often aggregate "married" and "unmarried" categories without exploring sub-types such as divorced, widowed, or separated, which may yield more nuanced insights. Finally, there is limited longitudinal research tracking how changes in corporate governance reforms (for example, introduction of flexible working policies) influence staff morale across marital groups over time.

For this thesis, it is therefore proposed that corporate governance practices influence academic staff morale differentially based on marital status. Married academic staff are expected to experience greater staff morale when corporate governance structures provide welfare, flexibility, and family support, whereas unmarried academic staff are more likely to report enhanced morale when corporate governance emphasizes fairness, recognition, and merit-based advancement.

Summary of Reviewed Literature

The empirical studies reviewed in this section offered a compelling body of evidence on the intricate relationship between corporate governance practices and staff morale within Nigerian universities. These insights were particularly valuable in a higher education landscape marked by increasing scrutiny on leadership practices.

Collectively, the literature underscored that governance quality, measured by indicators such as transparency, accountability, participatory decision-making, policy fairness, and communication structures, played a critical role in shaping staff morale. Staff morale, in turn, manifested in employees' job satisfaction, institutional loyalty, productivity, and willingness to innovate or remain within the system.

The review showed that private universities tended to exhibit centralized authority, limited academic freedom, minimal staff consultation, and opaque human resource management practices, all of which contribute to staff disengagement, especially among senior academic personnel. While operationally efficient, such environments may fail to foster a sense of inclusion and long-term commitment among employees.

The empirical literature further showed that academic staff morale is closely tied to recognition, research opportunities, professional growth, and freedom of expression.

Across institutions, certain governance factors emerge consistently as strong predictors of morale, particularly leadership style, fairness in promotions, regular and honest communication, and ethical policy implementation. These findings reinforced the notion that morale is not solely a function of compensation or material rewards, but also of the quality of relationships, perceptions of fairness, and institutional inclusivity.

The reviewed literature further showed that there was a significant relationship between governance quality and staff morale in university systems; it also showed that staff morale is shaped by both extrinsic factors (for example, salary, workload) and intrinsic factors (for example, recognition, autonomy, inclusion); it further showed that leadership and communication remain the most recurrent levers for improving morale, cutting across role types and institutional boundaries. This position is supported by Nwadiani (1996), who emphasized that efficient educational management, particularly in the areas of resource planning and administrative coordination, plays a crucial role in enhancing institutional effectiveness and staff productivity

These empirical insights not only validate the theoretical underpinnings and conceptual assumptions of this study but also highlight the pressing need for a comparative analysis of corporate governance and morale in the specific contexts of private universities in South-South, Nigeria.

Based on the numerous empirical studies reviewed, it is appreciated that a good number of studies have been carried out on corporate governance and its practices, and university staff morale. Despite all the empirical studies carried out on corporate governance and its practices and academic staff morale, there remained the question of whether or not corporate governance practices influence the morale of academic staff of Nigerian universities, particularly those in private universities in South-South, Nigeria, which created a gap in contemporary university and human resource management literature, which the study has filled.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, methods and procedures that were used in the study were described under the following subheadings: Design of the study, Population of the study, Sample and sampling procedures, Research instrument, Validity of the instrument, Reliability of the instrument, Method of data collection, and Method of data analysis.

Design of the Study

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The design was considered suitable for the study which assessed the influence of an independent variable (corporate governance practices) on a dependent variable (academic staff morale) in private universities in South-South, Nigeria. The variables were not manipulated.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all 3,245 academic staff in private universities in South-South Nigeria. The South-South geopolitical zone is made up of six states, namely: Edo, Delta, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Bayelsa, and Akwa-Ibom, with a total of twenty-six (26) private universities (Source: Academic Planning Units of the Universities, 2025).

Table 1: Population Distribution of the Private Universities and Academic Staff of the Universities in South-South Nigeria

States	No. of Private Universities	Number of Academic Staff
Edo	07	848
Delta	07	962
Rivers	03	416
Cross Rivers	04	385
Bayelsa	01	91
Akwa- Ibom	04	543
TOTAL	**26**	**3,245**

Source: *Compiled by the researcher from data obtained from the National Universities Commission (NUC) database (2025).*

Sample and Sampling Procedures

The sample of the study comprised 356 academic staff (Source: Taro Yamane Formula) in eleven (11) randomly selected private Universities, in the South-South

Zone of Nigeria. The multistage sampling procedure was used for the selection as follows:

Stage 1: The already existing stratification of private universities in South-South, Nigeria, along state lines (6 states), was adopted.

Stage 2: Two universities, each from Edo, Delta, Rivers, Cross-Rivers, and Akwa-Ibom States, were randomly selected using a ballot by replacement method, while in Bayelsa State, one private university was included through a census approach, as it was the only private university during the research period. The ballot method involved writing the names of all the private universities in each of the five aforementioned states on pieces of paper, which were put in different bags. After thoroughly mixing, a slip was drawn from each bag and recorded by the researcher. The drawn slip was then put back into the same bag and reshuffled for the next draw; this process was repeated by the researcher until 10 universities were selected from the five States. A total of 11 private universities were selected for the study.

Stage 3: Three faculties; the faculties of Science, Social Sciences, and Arts, were selected from each of the 11 selected universities.

Stage 4: Four departments were selected from each of the faculties listed above using a simple random technique.

Stage 5: Academic staff were randomly selected from the departments using a proportionate by size approach. In this method, the number of academic staff selected from each university (11 universities) was proportional to the staff population of the universities. This was achieved by using the population of academic staff of each of the university selected over the total population multiplied by 356. A total of 1,192 academic staff were used. This is presented on Table 3.

Table 2: Distribution of the Sampled Universities by Academic Staff in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria.

States	Number of Sampled Universities	Number of Selected Faculties (Soc. Sci, Science, and Arts)	Number of Selected Departments @4dept/Fac	Number of Academic Staff	Number of Sampled Academic Staff
Edo	2 A	3	12	73	21
	B	3	12	51	16

Delta	2 A	3	12	141	41
	B	3	12	97	29
Rivers	2 A	3	12	121	36
	B	3	12	130	38
Cross	2 A	3	12	110	36
River	B	3	12	65	21
	1 A	3	12	91	25
Bayelsa	-	-	-	-	-
	2 A	3	12	190	56
Akwa Ibom	B	3	12	123	37
Total	**11**	**33**	**132**	**1192**	**356**

Source: *Compiled by the researcher from data obtained from the Directorates of Academic Planning of the respective private universities (2025).*

Research Instruments

The instruments used for data collection were two structured questionnaires, titled 'Corporate Governance Practices Questionnaire' (CGPQ) and 'Academic Staff Morale Questionnaire' (ASMQ). The instruments were used to elicit information regarding corporate governance practices and academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria**.** The CGPQ contained four sub-headings, covering transparency=5 items, accountability=5 items, integrity=5 items, and responsibility=5 items, totaling 20 items on a modified 4-point Likert-type scale, coded as 4=Very High (VH); 3=High (H); 2=Low (L); and 1=Very Low (VL)**.** The ASMQ contained five sub-headings, covering remuneration=4 items, recognition=4 items, academic freedom=4 items, opportunities for career advancement=4 items, and working conditions=4 items, totaling 20 items on a modified 4-point Likert-type scale, coded as 4=Very High (VH); 3=High (h); 2=Low (L); and 1=Very Low (VL).

Validity of the Instrument

The instruments 'CGPQ' and 'ASMQ' constructed for data collection were subjected to face and content validity by the researcher through the researcher's supervisors and one other expert in the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The face validity of the instrument was established with respect to relevance, sentence structure, and adequacy. The suggestions that were pointed out by these experts were incorporated in the final draft of the research instruments and were reproduced for answering the research questions and testing the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the research instruments, 20 copies of the CGPQ and 20 copies of the ASMQ were administered to academic staff from private universities in South-South, Nigeria. These groups of academic staff were excluded from the total number of academic staff that later made up the sample size for the study. Thereafter, Cronbach's alpha procedure was used to determine the internal consistency of the items in the research instruments. The analysis yielded the coefficients' alpha values for corporate governance practices ($\alpha = 0.867$) and academic staff morale ($\alpha = 0.896$). The coefficient values obtained were greater than 0.70, which established adequate reliability and internal consistency measures.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher personally visited the selected institutions to distribute copies of the questionnaires, with the assistance of six research assistants, who were fully briefed on the procedure, to ensure quick retrieval. In cases where physical access was limited, the questionnaires were administered through institutional authorities. This process ensured a 100% retrieval of all 356 questionnaires administered were retrieved. Respondents were given adequate time to complete the questionnaires, after which all completed copies were retrieved for analysis. The data collection process was carried out over a period of six (6) weeks, during which ethical standards were strictly maintained, including ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation throughout the study. After coding, 100% completed questionnaires were found usable for data analyses.

Method of Data Analysis

The Mean and Standard Deviation statistics were computed to answer research questions 1 and 2 and to determine the levels of corporate governance practices and academic staff morale indices. Rank order was also part of the statistics in order to answer the research questions as shown on table one (1). The range of Mean used was: 1.0 – 2.49 = Low, 2.50 – 3.49 = Moderate, & 3.50 – 4.00 = High. The decision rule for the use of Mean and Standard Deviation was based on any Mean scores equal to, or greater than 2.50, which were regarded as Very High/High, while any Mean scores less than 2.50 were regarded as Low/Very Low. Any Standard Deviation value between 0.00 and 0.96 implied that academic staff members' responses were very close. To test hypotheses 1 – 5, the data collected were converted from four (4) interval data to three (3) categorical data/frequency count. The mean values used for the categorization were: 1.0 – 1.66 = low, 1.67 – 2.33 = moderate, and 2.34 – 3.00 = high indices of corporate governance practices. These mean values were now used to obtain the frequency or headcounts of those that belong to the three (3) categories. This enabled the use of the Chi-Square statistics to test the hypotheses in order to determine the influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South, Nigeria.

For the use of the Chi-Square statistic, the probability (*p*) value less than or equal to .05 implied a significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South, Nigeria, based on the intervening variables of the study. This further affirmed that *H0* was not accepted. While the probability (*p*) value greater than .05 showed insignificant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in public and private universities in South-South, Nigeria, based on the intervening variables of the study. This further demonstrated that *H0* was accepted. Hypotheses with intervening variables such as academic experience, sex, academic status, and marital status of academic staff were also analysed with a probability (*p*) value of .000 and .000, respectively.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis and discussion of the findings of the study is presented.

Presentation of Result

Research Question 1: What is the predominant corporate governance practice in private universities in South-South Nigeria?

Table 3: Predominant Corporate Governance Practice in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria

Corporate Governance Practices	Sum	Mean	SD	Rank
Ensuring Transparency	1,150	3.23	0.70	1st
Ensuring Accountability	1,061	2.98	0.80	2nd
Ensuring Integrity	1,054	2.96	0.81	3rd
Ensuring Responsibility	1,015	2.85	0.89	4th

The information on Table 3 showed the corporate governance practices in private universities located in South-South Nigeria. The result indicated variations in the extent to which different corporate governance principles are practiced across the universities. The result also revealed that Transparency has a mean of 3.23; Accountability has a mean of 2.98, Integrity has a mean of 2.96, while Responsibility has a mean of 2.85. Transparency ranked first among the corporate governance practices, accountability ranked second, integrity ranked third, and responsibility ranked fourth, making it the least emphasized among the governance practices examined. On the whole, the data showed that transparency was the most predominant corporate governance practice, while responsibility comparatively ranked the least.

Therefore, the predominant corporate governance practice in private Universities in South-South Nigeria is ensuring transparency. This is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Bar Chart of the Predominant Corporate Governance Practice in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria

Research Question 2: What is the level of staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria?

Table 4: Level of Staff Morale in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria

Academic Staff Morale Indices	Sum	Mean	SD	Remarks
Remuneration	808	2.27	0.93	Low
Recognition	1,032	2.90	0.81	Moderate
Academic Freedom	972	2.73	0.89	Moderate
Opportunities for Career Advancement	1,064	2.99	0.82	Moderate
Working Conditions	951	2.67	0.93	Moderate
Grand mean	**965**	**2.71**	**0.88**	**Moderate**

The data on Table 4 showed the level of academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria across key morale indicators. The result indicated that Remuneration has a mean of 2.27; Recognition has a mean of 2.90, Academic Freedom has a mean of 2.73, Opportunities for Career Advancement has a mean of 2.99, while Working Conditions has a mean of 2.67. Remuneration was rated low; recognition of academic staff contributions, academic freedom, opportunities for career advancement, and working conditions were rated moderate. The overall grand mean of 2.71 revealed that the level of staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria was moderate. This is presented in Figure 2.

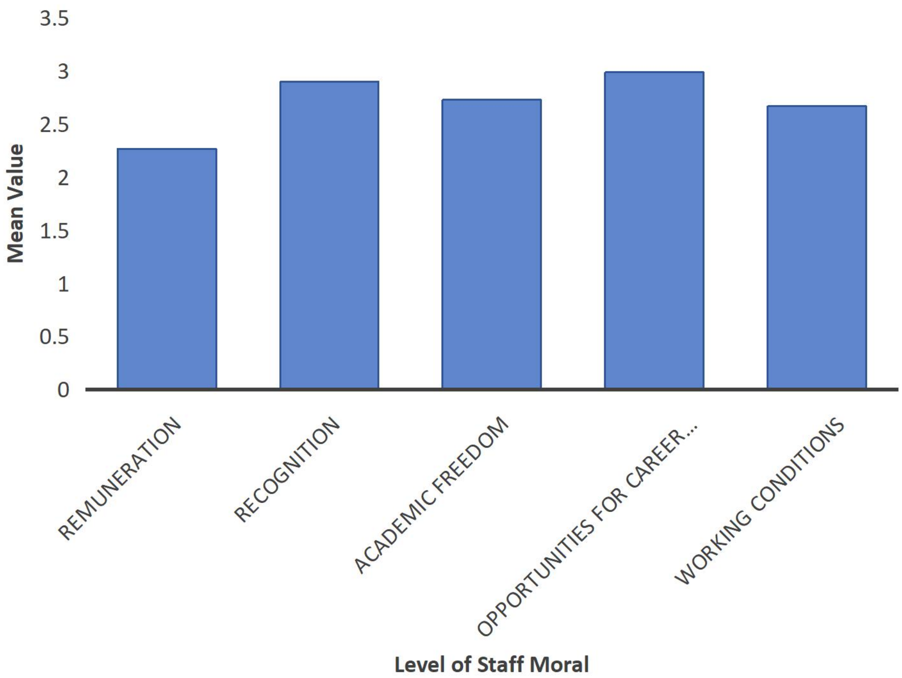

Figure 2: Bar Chart of the Level of Staff Morale in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria

Hypothesis One

Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria.

Table 5: Chi-Square Analysis of the Influence of Specific Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale

Variables	ASML	Low	Moderate	High	Total	χ^2	df	Likelihood Ratio	Linear-by-Linear	p	Remarks
Transparency	Low	9 (6.5)	67 (58.9)	20 (30.6)	96 (96.0)						
	Moderate	15 (15.7)	147 (141.6)	71 (73.6)	233 (233.0)						
	High	0 (1.7)	5 (18.5)	20 (9.6)	25 (25.0)	**36.21**	4	34.88	22.31	.000	Sig.
	Total	**24 (24.0)**	**219 (219.0)**	**111 (111.0)**	**356 (356.0)**						
Accountability	Low	43 (18.3)	44 (53.7)	5 (20.0)	92 (92.0)						
	Moderate	28 (47.5)	150 (139.0)	60 (51.5)	238 (238.0)						
	High	0 (5.2)	14 (15.3)	11 (5.7)	25 (25.0)	**68.47**	4	66.92	58.74	.000	Sig.
	Total	**71 (71.0)**	**208 (208.0)**	**76 (76.0)**	**356 (356.0)**						
Integrity	Low	39 (19.4)	52 (58.6)	5 (18.0)	96 (96.0)						
	Moderate	33 (47.5)	148 (142.9)	54 (43.9)	235 (235.0)						
	High	0 (5.1)	17 (15.5)	9 (4.8)	26 (26.0)	**47.92**	4	49.15	43.27	.000	Sig.
	Total	**72 (72.0)**	**217 (217.0)**	**68 (68.0)**	**356 (356.0)**						
Responsibility	Low	65 (31.6)	25 (48.0)	6 (16.4)	96 (96.0)						
	Moderate	52 (77.2)	142 (117.6)	41 (40.2)	235 (235.0)						
	High	0 (8.2)	11 (12.5)	14 (4.3)	25 (25.0)	**101.36**	4	98.74	75.92	.000	Sig.
	Total	**117(117.0)**	**178 (178.0)**	**61 (61.0)**	**356(3565.0)**						

Note: ASML=Academic Staff Moral Level, p=Probability Value, Sig=significant

The data on Table 5 showed the result for transparency, with a Pearson Chi-square value of 36.21 and a p-value of .000. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the result revealed that, transparency has a significant influence on academic staff morale. The likelihood ratio (34.88) and the linear-by-linear association value (22.31) also supported the presence of the influence of transparency on academic staff morale. For accountability, the Pearson Chi-square statistic obtained was 68.47 with a p-value of .000. This result showed that the probability value is less than 0.05 level of significance, which showed that accountability influences academic staff morale. The likelihood ratio statistic of 66.92 and the linear-by-linear association value of 58.74 showed the existence of the influence of accountability on academic staff morale. Similarly, the analysis of integrity revealed a Pearson Chi-square value of 47.92 with a p-value of .000. The likelihood ratio value of 49.15 and the linear-by-linear association value of 43.27 showed that a significant influence exists between accountability and academic staff morale. The result for responsibility showed the strongest influence among the variables examined. The Pearson Chi-square statistic was 101.36 with a p-value of .000. The likelihood ratio (98.74) and the linear-by-linear association value (75.92) confirmed its strong influence on academic staff morale. Overall, the results indicate that all four indices of corporate governance practices, transparency, accountability, integrity, and responsibility, did influence academic staff morale. Since the p-values for all the variables are less than the 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis that corporate governance practices will not influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria is not accepted. Corporate governance practices significantly influenced academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, with accountability showing the strongest influence.

Hypothesis Two

Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on staff experience.

Table 6: Chi-Square test of the Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria Based on Academic Staff Experience.

	Observed N		**Expected N**							
CGPASMBE	**10 years and above**	**Less than 10 years**	**10 years and above**	**Less than 10 years**	χ^2	**Likelihood Ratio**	**Linear -by-Linear**	**df**	**p**	**Remark**
Low	22	19	21.4	19.6						
Moderate	139	137	144.3	131.7	2.236	2.263	.642	2	0.327 ; 0.423	Not Significant
High	24	15	20.3	18.7						
Total	185	171	185.0	171.0						

Note. a= 0.05, N = 356, CGPASMBE=Corporate Governance Practices and Academic Staff Morale based on Experience, p=Probability Value.

Table 6 shows a Pearson Chi-square value of 2.236 and a Linear-by-Linear Association of .642, with p-values of .327 and .423 respectively. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is greater than the alpha. The hypothesis, which stated that corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on staff experience, was retained. The influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale does not significantly differ between staff with 10 years and above experience and those with less than 10 years of experience. In other words, the length of service does not appear to significantly modify how corporate governance practices relate to academic staff morale in the sampled private universities.

Hypothesis Three

Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on sex.

Table 7: Chi-Square test of the Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale in Private Universities in South- South Nigeria Based on Sex

	Observed N		Expected N							
CGPASMBS	Male	Female	Male	Female	χ^2	Likelihood Ratio	Linear-by-Linear	df	p	Remark
Low	27	14	25.2	15.8						
Moderate	165	111	168.5	107.5	0.569	0.603	0.073	2	.742; .788	Not Significant
High	24	15	22.3	16.7						
Total	216	140	216.0	140.0						

Note. a= 0.05, N = 356, CGPASMBS=Corporate Governance Practices and Academic Staff Morale based on Sex, p=Probability Value.

The information on Table 7 showed a Pearson Chi-square value of .596 and a Linear-by-Linear Association of .073, with p-values of .742 and .788 respectively. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is greater than the alpha. The hypothesis, which stated that corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on sex, was retained. Both male and female academic staff appeared to experience corporate governance practices in similar ways with respect to their morale in the universities studied.

Hypothesis Four

Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on academic status.

Table 8: Chi-Square test of the Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria Based on Academic Staff Status

	Observed N		Expected N							
CGPASMBASS	**Senior**	**Junior**	**Senior**	**Junior**	χ^2	**Likelihood Ratio**	**Linear-by-Linear**	**df**	**p**	**Remark**
Low	27	14	25.3	15.7						
Moderate	166	110	169.1	106.9	0.515	0.521	0.072	2	0.773; .789	Not Significant
High	24	15	22.6	16.4						
Total	217	139	217.0	139.0						

Note. a = 0.05, N =356, CGPASMBS=Corporate Governance Practices and Academic Staff Morale Based on Academic Staff Status, p=Probability Value.

On Table 8, the data showed a Pearson Chi-square value of .515 and a Linear-by-Linear Association of .072, with p-values of .773 and .789, respectively. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is greater than the alpha. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on academic status, is retained. Academic staff status does not significantly promote the influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria. Both senior and junior academic staff experience similar job morale.

Hypothesis Five

Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on marital status.

Table 9: Chi-Square test of the Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria Based on Staff Marital Status

CGPASMBMS	Observed N		Expected N		χ^2	Likelihood Ratio	Linear-by-Linear	df	P	Remark
	Married	Single	Married	Single						
Low	25	16	25.8	15.2						
Moderate	167	108	168.9	106.1	2.274	2.380	1.280	2	.321; .258	Not Significant
High	28	12	25.3	14.7						
Total	220	136	220.0	136.0						

Note. a=0.05, N=356, CGPASMBS=Corporate Governance Practices and Academic Staff Morale Based on Marital Status, p=Probability Value, NS=Not Significant

Information on Table 9 showed a Pearson Chi-square value of 2.274 and a Linear-by-Linear Association of 1.280, with p-values of .321 and .258, respectively. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is greater than the alpha. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on marital status, was retained. These results suggested that the corporate governance practices exert similar influence on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on their marital status.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings of the study, the results were discussed under the following sub-headings:

Predominant Corporate Governance Practice in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria

The first finding from the study indicated that the predominant corporate governance practice in private Universities in South-South Nigeria was ensuring transparency. This finding aligns with the findings of Okeke (2022), which reported that corporate governance practices in universities typically encompass the structures, procedures, and relationships that guide institutional decision-making, which include transparency. It also aligns with the study of Transparency International (2014), whose principles of good governance structure, described in the Transparency International's Assessment Programme of good governance arrangements, policies, and practices, reviewed both its governance arrangements and its transparency, accountability, and integrity policies and practices against a set of 12 good governance indicators. The study identified transparency and accountability best practices of corporate governance among some other areas where the programme's policies or practices could be strengthened. The findings also align with the findings of the European Training Foundation (2012c, 2012d), which reported that transparency remains an important governance practice followed by accountability and responsibility in education and training programmes.

Conversely, the finding is in contrast with Nwachukwu (2023), who notes that Private Universities often adopt more streamlined governance models with clearer hierarchies and quicker decision-making mechanisms. Though this can enhance efficiency and responsiveness, it may also limit the space for staff participation and reduce transparency if governance is overly centralized. The author further asserted that Private Universities sometimes prioritize managerial efficiency over collegial consultation, creating tensions among academic staff who feel excluded from key institutional decisions.

The finding of the study showed that private university administrators or proprietors are not fully responsible for their job responsibilities, which can be a result of several structural, ethical, and operational factors. In several contexts, particularly in developing countries, such as Nigeria, these challenges stem from a combination of proprietary control, weak regulatory oversight, and a lack of clear accountability frameworks or models (NUC, 2021). Key factors such as weak enforcement of regulations, lack of transparency, and limited stakeholder engagement hinder the full realization of effective responsibility practice in an organization (Sesay, 2024).

Other key factors contributing to the reason for private university proprietors or administrators not being fully responsible for their job responsibilities include: Proprietor interference and governance issues, lack of transparency and accountability mechanisms, conflict of interest, inadequate training and professionalism, weak internal structure and autocratic leadership, and financial constraints and resource mismanagement. Consequently, the lack of a strong accountability culture, weak regulatory monitoring (e.g., by the NUC), and unethical behaviour can lead to a gap between defined job responsibilities and actual job performance (Ogunode, Obioma & Belloh, 2024).

Level of Academic Staff Morale in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria

The second finding on the level of academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria is moderate. The finding corroborates with that of Okpu and Poazi (2024), Saksri, Chunin, and Nokchan (2018), Davinder (2014) and Atieno (2013) which revealed that the job morale of academic staff in Bayelsa State Universities was high, the level of Thai teacher morale was high, lecturers' morale in administrative matters such as supervision and curriculum planning was generally good and there was high morale among Bank Officers in Uttar Pradesh.

However, this finding of the study contradicts that of Muzenda (2021), Kumar and Velmurugan (2020), Usha, Nandhini, and Palanivelu (2017), and Palanivelu (2017), whose studies found that teachers in the Kwekwe District of the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe had low morale, low job morale among Assistant Professors of Self-financing Colleges in Thiruvaananthapuram and Kollam District, low job morale among staff, teachers in the Kwekwe District of the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe.

The finding of a moderate level of academic staff morale in private universities in Nigeria could be attributed to the sustained commitment to teaching, research, and administrative tasks despite challenges such as inadequate remuneration, low engagement, and dissatisfaction, which have great implications for performance outcomes. It can also reflect the lecturers' resilience and positive attitude towards their profession, which suggests that factors such as passion for knowledge dissemination, collegial relationships, and a sense of duty to students continue to reinforce their morale, even under less favourable working conditions.

Furthermore, the findings of the study showed that remuneration is low compared to other corporate governance practices that are moderate. For instance, remuneration is often poorly practiced in Nigerian private universities due to financial instability, heavy reliance on tuition fees, and lack of public funding (Musa, 2025). These institutions struggle with high staff turnover, inflation, and inconsistent human resource strategies, leading to low morale and weak compensation frameworks compared to the public sector (Adegoroe, Usman & Moronfoye, 2025). Other key reasons for poor remuneration practices in private universities in Nigeria include financial limitations, inconsistent HRM frameworks, lack of public funding, high turnover and low morale, and inadequate reward structures. Despite some private universities in Nigeria offering better career training programmes, the general issue or challenge remains that they struggle to sustain competitive remuneration, which has consequently led to a high rate of turnover (Yomi-Daramola, Dada & Aribaba, 2026).

Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale

The finding that corporate governance practices significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria aligns with the findings of Adeyemi and Okafor (2024), who found that universities with more participatory as well as responsive corporate governance structures tend to report greater staff engagement, better organizational resilience, and improved academic outputs. The authors reported that inclusion of staff in decision-making processes, fairness in recruitment and promotion, and consistency in communication are now widely recognized as core corporate governance principles that influence not only performance but also the morale of staff members or employees. The finding also agrees with the idea of Kafidipe et al. (2021), who asserted that corporate governance has long been recognized as a critical factor in organizational success, influencing not only financial performance but also the staff well-being, morale, and productivity of an organization. The findings also agree with a study by Adeoye and Ogundele (2023), who found that dysfunctional corporate governance structures are a key factor behind staff members' disengagement and poor institutional outcomes in several Universities across South-South, Nigeria.

The finding also aligns with the European Training Foundation (2013), Adepoju (2023), Abiola (2023) and Men et al. (2022) who reported that good governance practices, modes, and models are highly correlated with the overall performance of education and training policies, that staff morale improves when leaders actively communicate institutional direction, engage staff in decision-making, and provide timely feedback, that there is a strong positive correlation between corporate governance practices, such as transparency, and staff morale indicators, such as institutional loyalty, productivity, and willingness to recommend the institution to others as well as noting that, when corporate governance procedures and structures are perceived as fair and transparent, staff members or employees report higher levels of motivation and satisfaction, which in turn influences their morale.

The finding also conforms with the study of Paul et al. (2025), who reported that implementing transparent governance systems could represent a means of improving staff morale and institutional credibility and Ogbu and Eke (2022), who reported that accountability-oriented/driven leadership could create an environment where employees feel valued and respected, which in turn boosts staff morale.

However, based on the few results in the literature, there are suggestions that corporate governance practices do not significantly influence academic staff morale in Nigeria's private higher education context. For instance, studies in the International Society for Development and Sustainability note that high conflicts in Nigerian universities indicate a lack or absence of effective corporate governance, suggesting that, in practice, the formal corporate governance structures do not translate into higher staff morale or efficiency. As such, some dimensions of governance, such as accountability mechanisms, have been found to have a non-significant statistical relationship with employee engagement in certain university contexts (Boateng, Chilala & Arthur, 2025). Other studies show that while corporate governance is intended to impact performance, in some contexts, it fails to address fundamental issues like poor remuneration or lack of recognition, which are more direct drivers of staff morale, implying that corporate governance (as officially implemented) may not be the primary determinant of morale (Nzeadibe & Akpa, 2021; Ajibade, Aidiaborkpa, Akindele & Ogbogu, 2025). These studies have indeed suggested that where corporate governance practices are merely for compliance (paper governance) and not properly implemented, they do not have a significant positive impact on staff morale (Jongbo & Dosu, 2022). However, weakness in corporate governance appears to be a function of ineffective implementation of the codes (OECD, 2009). The pursuance of good corporate governance would therefore mainly stem from the political will of organizational managers to adhere to specified best practices.

Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale Based on Academic Staff Experience

The third finding of the study, which showed no significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale based on academic staff experience in private universities, is at variance with the finding of Serwadda (2022), who reported that trust in corporate governance practices will be positively high among older academic staff due to institutionalized grievance redress systems. The finding also conforms with the assertions of Bekele and Wondimu (2023) and Nwagwu (2023), who stated that younger academic staff members in institutions will display administrative volatility, which, in turn, may discourage organizational or work commitment, and that older academic staff in academic institutions will exert higher morale because of reduced administrative anxiety.

In contrast, studies investigating the moderating role of academic staff experience on the relationship between corporate governance practices and staff morale generally suggest that experience, along with factors like age, rank, and work environment, significantly shapes how staff perceive and respond to corporate governance practices, often rendering non-significant or conditional relationships. While research studies often show that corporate governance practices (such as transparency and accountability) generally improve morale, the effect is not uniform. Research studies further indicate that more experienced staff (higher rank, longer tenure) may have different morale responses to governance structures compared to junior staff. Some studies find that corporate governance has a ‘non-significant’ or weak relationship with employee retention and morale, particularly when high-stakes, stressful environments exist, indicating that experience might moderate this relationship to prioritize job security over governance quality.

Findings from previous studies also indicate that the influence of work stress, often driven by corporate governance issues, on job performance does not differ significantly between experienced and less experienced academic administrators, which suggests that academic staff experience does not entirely mitigate the negative influence of poor corporate governance practices. Additionally, experienced academic staff often perceive workplace ethics and governance differently from administrative staff, which affects how these practices influence their motivation and morale (Olorisade, 2014; Yolande, 2025).

Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale Based on Sex

The fourth finding reveals that sex did not significantly influence corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria. The finding is in agreement with Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), who asserted that the work–family balance perspective provides another lens through which sex moderates the influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale. They reported that women are often disproportionately affected by work–family conflict. The authors added that universities that integrate family-friendly corporate governance practices such as flexible working hours, maternity leave, or reduced workload for nursing mothers may therefore enhance the morale among female staff. Therefore, rigid or gender-neutral corporate governance policies that overlook such realities may disadvantage women and dampen their morale.

The study however disagrees with Liu, Zhu, and Chen (2024), who found that gender diversity significantly improved responsiveness to employee incentives and welfare policies. The authors added that universities with higher female representation in leadership showed stronger commitment to employee well-being, which translated into improved morale across staff populations. Similarly, the finding disagrees with Jones (2024), who noted that when women are excluded from university governing councils and senate committees, they perceive corporate governance practices as less transparent and less supportive, resulting in comparatively lower academic staff morale and work commitment. The finding also disagrees with the view of Ahmed et al. (2020), who argued that diversity dimensions, including sex, had a significant positive influence on academic staff morale. The finding is also at variance with the views of Kenku, Fagbenro, Opatola (2024), and Obilor et al. (2024), who reported that job satisfaction or organizational commitment with the incorporation of corporate governance practices interact with sex to influence academic staff morale, that female academic staff will report higher satisfaction levels than male academic staff, suggesting that sex experiences of workload, stress, and corporate governance responsiveness might mediate or moderate academic staff morale outcomes.

The finding of this study that sex did not significantly influence corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria aligns with some previous studies. For instance, the study by Sesay (2024) revealed that gender does not significantly influence corporate governance practices on employee morale and productivity at United Bank for Africa, Sierra Leone. However, research suggests that gender or sex diversity on corporate boards does not always significantly influence corporate governance practices on employee or staff morale for several key reasons, often linked to the tokenism of female directors, the insignificant effect of a single woman on board dynamics, and the need for a critical mass (at least three women) to drive meaningful policy changes (Suwongrat, Pattanaporn & Pornsit, 2021; Melia-Martí, Tormo-Carbo´ & Fernandez-Guada, 2024).

Based on empirical research findings, gender does not always significantly influence corporate governance practices. For instance, if women on boards are viewed as "tokens" (often only one female member) rather than having a voice, they have an insignificant impact on corporate decision-making (Melia-Martí, et al., 2024). The tendency of male decision-makers to appoint similar individuals (homophily) can result in female directors being marginalized or categorized as out-group members, limiting their impact on policies that could influence employee morale. Some studies find women are often focused on corporate tasks like marketing or human resources, but not necessarily in roles that determine overall company-wide employee morale, salary structures, or employee-friendly policies. If board gender diversity is not associated with improved firm financial performance, it may have a reduced impact on corporate decisions that affect employee-friendly policies and overall morale (Melia-Martí, et al., 2024). Employee morale and performance are more often influenced by immediate organizational politics and perceptions of organizational fairness, rather than the gender composition of a distant board. Board gender diversity has different impacts across industries, being more significant in consumer-retail or service industries, while showing no significant impact in sectors like infrastructure (Babarinde, Ojo, Omoyele & Aigbedion, 2022).

Some studies have found a positive relationship between the presence of female board members and performance in general (Hernández-Nicolás et al., 2019; Hernández Ortiz et al., 2020), while other studies have proven it to be negative (Burress & Cook, 2010; Masuku et al., 2016). Yet others found it a non-significant (Esteban-Salvador et al.,2019; Huang et al., 2015; Meliá-Martí et al., 2019). More specifically, the study by Melia-Martí et al. (2024) empirically found that the presence of a female CEO positively and significantly moderates the influence of board gender diversity on employee productivity. Their study also empirically found that the presence of a female Chair positively and significantly moderates the influence of board gender diversity on employee productivity. These results imply that linear models may not accurately support the influence of board gender diversity on employee productivity.

Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale Based on Academic Staff Status

This finding showed that there was no significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale based on academic staff status in private universities in South-South Nigeria. The finding is not in agreement with the work of Gollagari, Birega, and Mishra (2023) who found that organizational justice had a positive influence on employee commitment mediated by job satisfaction, and that academic rank significantly moderated this relationship. The finding also conforms with the work of Nchinda (2023), who reported a significant difference in job satisfaction by academic rank and age: higher-rank academic staff reported greater job satisfaction than lower-rank academic staff. The author added that while not directly focused on corporate governance practices, this study indicates that rank matters for academic staff morale outcomes and thus is a relevant moderator when examining corporate governance practices.

Studies that investigated the moderating role of Academic Staff Status (for example, tenure vs. non-tenure, seniority levels, or academic vs. administrative roles) on the relationship between corporate governance and staff morale and job performance indicate that status acts as a critical, often significant, moderator in university settings. While some corporate governance practices may have a non-significant, weak, or even negative direct impact on morale, the effect often varies significantly when categorized by staff seniority or type (Okyere & Saani, 2023; Mitalo & Wanyama, 2025).

While talent management practices (part of good governance) might have a significant direct effect, studies have shown that the moderating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between management practices and performance is not statistically significant for specific staff categories, regardless of whether they are academic or administrative. A study noted that a lack of academic freedom, recognition, and promotional opportunities (components of governance-related staff support) contributes to staff dissatisfaction. The researcher further showed that proper work ethics (integrity) moderates the relationship between management and staff morale, which suggested that when governance fails, high ethical conduct can act as a buffer (Kakkayi, Mwazuna, Agaba & Munyambonera, 2025).

Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale Based on Staff Marital Status

The finding of the study showed that there was no significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on staff marital status agrees with Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), who argued that married staff, particularly those with dependents, often experience heightened work–family conflict when corporate governance structures fail to accommodate flexible scheduling or family-friendly policies. Conversely, married academic staff may exhibit stronger reciprocity when they perceive corporate governance practices as supporting both professional and family well-being. Therefore, equitable corporate governance mechanisms that integrate personal welfare considerations may produce higher morale among married academic staff compared with their unmarried counterparts.

The finding, however, disagrees with Helliwell and Huang (2021), who reported that married employees generally exhibit higher life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and organizational morale due to emotional and social support mechanisms associated with marriage. This pattern was corroborated by Fotiadis et al. (2023), who found that married employees demonstrated greater organizational loyalty and morale when corporate governance systems and practices incorporated welfare initiatives, participatory decision-making, and family-friendly benefits. In university contexts, Abugre and Nasere (2023) found that marital status moderated the influence of corporate governance practices (such as promotion transparency, communication effectiveness, and resource allocation) and academic staff satisfaction. Married academic staff members were more sensitive to corporate governance inefficiencies that influenced work–life balance, while unmarried academic staff were more influenced by fairness in career advancement and recognition. Similarly, the finding is not in agreement with the work of Rajesh and Kumar (2024), who found that corporate governance practices promoting participatory decision-making improved staff morale across all marital categories, but the influence was stronger among married academic staff, likely because such corporate governance practices reduced perceived conflict between professional and family obligations.

It can therefore be concluded that the effectiveness of corporate governance practices in promoting academic staff morale may actually depend on how well they address work–family balance across marital categories. For example, corporate governance systems that enforce rigid work demands without considering family responsibilities can lower morale among married academic staff. In contrast, flexible, welfare-oriented policies can enhance motivation and institutional commitment.

However, the finding of this study that marital status did not significantly influence corporate governance practices on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria aligns with some studies. Studies on the moderating role of marital status, specifically regarding a non-significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale, are a niche area within organizational behaviour. While many studies find that corporate governance practices (such as transparency and accountability) do significantly influence staff morale, satisfaction, and engagement, some research identifies non-significant relationships where marital status may then act as a critical moderating variable (Okyere & Saani, 2023).

Empirically, the study by Sesay (2024) revealed that marital status does not significantly influence corporate governance practices on employee morale and productivity at United Bank for Africa, Sierra Leone. However, research suggests that marital status on corporate boards does not always significantly influence corporate governance practices on employee or staff morale for several reasons, often linked to the tokenism of female directors. Employees or staff who are single may be more sensitive to specific organizational interventions or self-care practices compared to their married counterparts. This suggests that if a corporate governance practice fails to impact the general population (non-significant influence), it may still have a significant effect on a specific subset (e.g., only married or only single staff) (Roopendra & Rashmi, 2021; Sanjana & Ahamed, 2025).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, summary, conclusion, implications of findings, recommendations, contribution to knowledge, and suggestions for further studies, are presented.

Summary

The study investigated the influence of corporate governance practices on the academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria. Seven research questions were raised for the study, out of which five were formulated into hypotheses and tested at 0.05 level of significance, as follows:

1. What is the predominant corporate governance practice in private universities in South-South Nigeria?
2. What is the level of staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria?
3. Will corporate governance practices influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria?
4. Will corporate governance practices influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on age?
5. Will corporate governance practices influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on sex?
6. Will corporate governance practices influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on academic status?

7. Will corporate governance practices influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria based on marital status?

1. Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria.
2. Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on age.
3. Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on sex.
4. Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on academic status.
5. Corporate governance practices will not significantly influence academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria, based on marital status.

The research design was a descriptive survey design with a population of 3,245 academic staff in the private universities in South-South Nigeria (Academic Planning Divisions of the South-South Universities, 2025). The Universities were made up of a total of twenty-six (26) private universities in six states in South-South Nigeria, namely: Edo, Delta, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Bayelsa, and Akwa-Ibom. The sample size of the study was 1,192 academic staff. A total of 356 academic staff served as respondents based on their observations on corporate governance practices and academic staff morale. The Multi-Stage Sampling procedure was adopted for the study to get data from the sampled universities and their academic staff. Structured questionnaires, titled 'Corporate Governance Practices Questionnaire' (CGPQ) and

‘Academic Staff Moral Questionnaire’ (ASMQ) were used to solicit responses on observed corporate governance practices and academic staff morale for the study. The face and content validity of the instruments were done by the researcher, the researcher’s supervisors, and two (2) lecturers in the Department of Educational Management at the University of Benin for their inputs, advice, and suggestions. The reliability values of the items in the questionnaire were 0.87, indicating that the instruments were reliable. Data collected were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as Mean and Standard Deviation. Chi-square statistics was used to test the hypotheses.

1. The predominant corporate governance practice in private universities in South-South Nigeria was ensuring transparency
2. The level of academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria is moderate.
3. There was no significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale based on experience in private universities in South-South Nigeria.
4. There was no significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale based on age in private universities in South-South Nigeria.
5. There was no significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale based on sex in private universities in South-South Nigeria.

6. There was no significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale based on academic status in private universities in South-South Nigeria.
7. There was no significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale based on marital status in private universities in South-South Nigeria.

Conclusion

The predominant corporate governance practice was ensuring transparency, and the level of academic staff morale in the universities was moderate. The study determined that corporate governance practices significantly influenced academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria. However, there was no significant influence of corporate governance practices on academic staff morale based on experience, sex, academic status, or marital status.

Implications of Findings to Educational Administration

The findings of this study have far-reaching implications for educational administration, particularly in deepening understanding of how corporate governance practices shape academic staff morale in private universities. The results underscore the critical role of governance principles such as transparency, accountability, integrity, and responsibility in fostering and sustaining high levels of morale among academic staff. This suggests that effective institutional leadership is not only administrative but also ethical, requiring deliberate efforts to build trust, fairness, and openness within university systems.

In addition, the study highlighted the centrality of staff welfare in institutional effectiveness. University administrators and leaders must prioritize adequate and competitive remuneration, as well as implement structured systems for recognition, academic freedom, and career advancement. In addition, the provision of conducive working conditions, including supportive policies, access to resources, and a collaborative work environment, is essential for enhancing staff motivation and overall job satisfaction.

The findings also imply that governance practices should be applied equitably across all categories of academic staff, irrespective of experience, age, sex, academic status, or marital status. This reinforces the need for inclusive and non-discriminatory administrative frameworks that promote fairness and equal opportunity within the academic workforce.

Overall, educational administrators are required to adopt a holistic and responsive approach to governance, one that integrates sound managerial practices with a strong commitment to staff well-being. Such an approach is fundamental to improving morale, enhancing productivity, and achieving sustainable institutional development in private universities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. University administrators and managers should sustain the practice of transparency while being more responsive to the needs of staff members by being accountable and leading with integrity.

2. Proprietors of private universities should boost the level of academic staff morale from moderate to higher levels by ensuring that they are well their remunerated, give them a sense of recognition, uphold academic freedom, and give them opportunities for career advancement, as well as putting in place conducive working conditions.
3. University administrators should be more responsive to the yearnings of the academic staff, especially in terms of their remuneration, to ensure a high level of morale.
4. University administrators should note that irrespective of the experience, age, sex, academic and marital status, academic staff members should be well remunerated, recognized, given academic freedom, given opportunities for career advancement, and ensure conducive working conditions for all staff members.

Contributions to Knowledge

This study has established how corporate governance practices function within the university systems, particularly how these practices influence academic staff morale in private universities. It provides empirical evidence on the influence of corporate governance practices, namely transparency, accountability, integrity/fairness, and responsibility, on academic staff morale in private universities in South-South Nigeria. It offers a context-specific understanding of how corporate governance operates within private universities in South-South Nigeria, thereby enriching existing literature with localized insights. It identifies and ranks corporate governance practices, highlighting transparency as the most predominant practice and responsibility as the least emphasized, thus, contributing a comparative perspective to governance studies.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study applied Stakeholder Theory and Motivation-Hygiene Theory within the context of private universities in Nigeria, thereby bridging the gap between theoretical constructs and practical realities.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The following areas are suggested for further research.

- Job Characteristics as Predictors of Academic Staff Morale in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria.
- Influence of Corporate Governance Practices and Academic Staff Morale in Public Universities in South-South, Nigeria.
- Comparative Study of the Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale in Public and Private Universities in South-South, Nigeria.

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APPENDIX I

Letter of Introduction from the Department of Educational Management

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (DEM)
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF THE HEAD DEPARTMENT

P.M.B. 1154
Telephone: (052) 602963, 602975
Cable & Telegrams: Uniben Benin
Telex: 41365 Uniben NG.
Extensions 2706, 2258

Our Ref: FE/DEM/VOL.1/112/174

Your Ref:

Date: 22nd January, 2026.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Letter of Introduction: Mr. Vinton ITOYA

This is to inform you that the postgraduate student (name above) is from the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City. He needs data for his project titled: **Influence of Corporate Governance Practices on Academic Staff Morale in Private Universities in South-South Nigeria.**

Kindly render him your assistance.

Thank you.

Prof. W.A. Iguodala
Head of Department
+2348023436888
wilfred.iguodala@uniben.edu

OFFICE OF THE HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY
Sign
Date

APPENDIX II

Department of Educational Management,

Faculty of Education,
University of Benin,
Benin City, Edo State.

21st November, 2025.

Dear Respondent(s),

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

This questionnaire is an academic research instrument designed solely for eliciting responses from academic staff on corporate governance practices and morale in public and private universities in Edo and Delta States for a Ph.D. thesis.

You are kindly requested to carefully read through and faithfully supply the data as required. Any information supplied will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

ITOYA, Vinton-Okoedo
(Researcher)

APPENDIX III

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRACTICES QUESTIONNAIRE (CGPQ)

(To be completed by Academic Staff)

Please tick [√] as appropriate:

SECTION A: Demographic Data of Academic Staff
1) Academic Staff Experience: 5 years and above ( ) less than 5 years ( )
2) Academic Staff Sex: Male ( ) Female ( )
3) Academic Staff Status: Senior staff ( ) junior staff ( )
4) Academic Staff Marital Status: Married ( ) Single ( )

Instruction: Kindly rate as applicable using the following Likert scale:

Very High (VH) 4
High (H) 3
Low (L) 2
Very Low (VL) 1

SECTION B: CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRACTICES

Rate the corporate governance practices of the management of your university

S/N	ITEMS	VH	H	L	VL
	Transparency				
1.	Ensuring that relevant information is conveyed to academic staff through official memoranda.				
2.	Ensuring that relevant information is easily accessible by academic staff.				
3.	Ensuring that relevant information for academic staff is timely.				
4.	Ensuring that relevant information for academic staff is updated regularly.				
5.	Ensuring that academic staff are involved in the decision-making process.				
	Accountability				
6.	Ensuring that financial disbursement for research is often documented in financial reports.				
7.	Ensuring that financial disbursement for community services is often documented in financial reports.				
8.	Ensuring that financial disbursement for career development is often documented in financial reports.				
9.	Ensuring that financial disbursement for infrastructural development is often documented in financial reports.				
10.	Ensuring that financial disbursement for accreditation purposes is often documented in financial reports.				
	Integrity				
11.	Ensuring that approved building codes are followed in infrastructural development.				
12.	Ensuring that codes of conduct documents are available to all academic				

	staff members.				
13.	Ensuring that codes of conduct are enforced adequately.				
14.	Ensuring that academic staff are given adequate orientation on codes of conduct.				
15.	Ensuring that the integrity of the recruitment process of academic staff is ensured.				
	Responsibility				
16.	Ensuring that academic staff are adequately remunerated for their work.				
19.	Ensuring that academic staff adhere to institutional rules and regulations.				
18.	Ensuring that adequate facilities are provided for academic staff to perform their job responsibilities.				
19.	Ensuring the adequate recruitment of academic staff.				
20.	Ensuring that academic staff carry out community services.				

SECTION C: ACADEMIC STAFF MORALE QUESTIONNAIRE (ASMQ)

To what extent do you agree with the following item statements regarding the indices of academic staff morale?

S/N	ITEMS	VH	H	L	VL
	Remuneration				
1.	Satisfaction with monthly salary.				
2.	Satisfaction with promotion policies.				
3.	Satisfaction that current salary meets the national minimum standard.				
4.	Satisfaction with the welfare package.				
	Recognition				
5.	Satisfaction with being a part of my university.				
6.	Satisfaction that my university recognizes my contributions.				
7.	Satisfaction with spirit of teamwork among academic staff in my university.				
8.	Satisfaction with motivation to perform my job responsibilities effectively.				
	Academic Freedom				
9.	Satisfaction with freedom to control how I carry out my work.				
10.	Satisfaction with being allowed to independently manage available resources for my work.				
11.	Disatisfaction with being hampered by guidelines that I hardly bring original ideas to my work.				
12.	Satisfaction with the freedom to exercise my judgment.				
	Opportunities for Career Advancement				
13.	Satisfaction with opportunities to acquire (learn) new skills.				
14.	Satisfaction with opportunities to continually upgrade/update myself.				

15.	Satisfaction with the opportunities for career advancement at my job.				
16.	Satisfaction with the way my university provides career opportunities.				
	Working Conditions				
17.	Satisfaction with the working conditions on my job (e.g., state-of-the-art facilities).				
18.	Satisfaction with the rules/procedures of my university.				
19.	Satisfaction with my working hours.				
20.	Satisfaction with my workload.				

APPENDIX IV

ANALYSIS OUTPUTS

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Academic_moral * Trans_aca	350	98.3%	6	1.7%	356	100.0%
Academic_moral * Accunt_acad	345	96.9%	11	3.1%	356	100.0%
Academic_moral * Interg_acad	345	96.9%	11	3.1%	356	100.0%
Academic_moral * Respons_acad	347	97.5%	9	2.5%	356	100.0%

Academic_moral * Trans_aca

Crosstab

			Trans_aca			Total
			Low	Moderate	High	
Academic_moral	Low	Count	9	66	20	95
		Expected Count	6.5	58.6	29.9	95.0
	Moderate	Count	15	145	70	230
		Expected Count	15.8	141.9	72.3	230.0
	High	Count	0	5	20	25
		Expected Count	1.7	15.4	7.9	25.0
Total		Count	24	216	110	350
		Expected Count	24.0	216.0	110.0	350.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32.835[a]	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	31.705	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.024	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	350		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.71.

Academic_moral * Accunt_acad

Crosstab

	Accunt_acad			Total
	Low	Moderate	High	

Academic_moral	Low	Count	42	43	5	90
		Expected Count	18.0	52.7	19.3	90.0
	Moderate	Count	27	145	58	230
		Expected Count	46.0	134.7	49.3	230.0
	High	Count	0	14	11	25
		Expected Count	5.0	14.6	5.4	25.0
Total		Count	69	202	74	345
		Expected Count	69.0	202.0	74.0	345.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	65.502[a]	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	66.180	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	56.106	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	345		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.00.

Academic_moral * Interg_acad

Crosstab

			Interg_acad			
			Low	Moderate	High	Total
Academic_moral	Low	Count	38	50	5	93
		Expected Count	18.9	56.3	17.8	93.0
	Moderate	Count	32	143	52	227
		Expected Count	46.1	137.5	43.4	227.0
	High	Count	0	16	9	25
		Expected Count	5.1	15.1	4.8	25.0
Total		Count	70	209	66	345
		Expected Count	70.0	209.0	66.0	345.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	44.347[a]	4	.000

Likelihood Ratio	48.328	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	41.085	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	345		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.78.

Academic_moral * Respons_acad

Crosstab

			Respons_acad			
			Low	Moderate	High	Total
Academic_moral	Low	Count	63	24	6	93
		Expected Count	30.6	46.4	16.1	93.0
	Moderate	Count	51	138	40	229
		Expected Count	75.2	114.2	39.6	229.0
	High	Count	0	11	14	25
		Expected Count	8.2	12.5	4.3	25.0
Total		Count	114	173	60	347
		Expected Count	114.0	173.0	60.0	347.0

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	94.399[a]	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	91.374	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	72.864	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	347		

a. 1 cells (11.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.32.

APPENDIX V

RELIABILITY OUTPUTS

Reliability Outputs for Corporate Governance Practices Questionnaire

```
Warning # 849 in column 23.  Text: en_NG
The LOCALE subcommand of the SET command has an invalid parameter.  It could
not be mapped to a valid backend locale.
COMPUTE TRANS_5=q1 + q2 + q3 + q4 + q5.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE ACC_5=q6 + q7 + q8 + q9 + q10.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE INTEG_5=q11 + q12 + q13 + q14 + q15.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE RESP_5=q16 + q17 + q18 + q19 + q20.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE OCGP_20=q1 + q2 + q3 + q4 + q5 + q6 + q7 + q8 + q9 + q10 + q11 + q12 + q13
+ q14 + q15 +
    q16 + q17 + q18 + q19 + q20.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE REMUN_4=q21 + q22 + q23 + q24.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE RECOG_4=q25 + q26 + q27 + q28.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE ACADF_4=q29 + q30 + q31 + q32.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE OPORTCD_4=q33 + q34 + q35 + q36.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE WORKC_4=q37 + q38 + q39 + q40.
EXECUTE.
COMPUTE OASM_20=q21 + q22 + q23 + q24 + q25 + q26 + q27 + q28 + q29 + q30 + q31 +
q32 + q33 + q34 +
    q35 + q36 + q37 + q38 + q39 + q40.
EXECUTE.
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=q1 q2 q3 q4 q5
  /SCALE('TRANS') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE.
```

Reliability

[DataSet0]

Scale: TRANSPARENCY

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	344	96.9
	Excluded[a]	11	3.1
	Total	355	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.755	5

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
16.1512	6.327	2.51534	5

```
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=q6 q7 q8 q9 q10
  /SCALE('ACC') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE.
```

Reliability

Scale: ACCOUNTABILITY

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	341	96.1
	Excluded[a]	14	3.9
	Total	355	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.851	5

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
14.9032	10.023	3.16591	5

```
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=q11 q12 q13 q14 q15
  /SCALE('INTEG') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE.
```

Reliability

Scale: INTEGRITY

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	343	96.6
	Excluded[a]	12	3.4
	Total	355	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.811	5

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
14.8251	9.291	3.04811	5

```
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=q16 q17 q18 q19 q20
  /SCALE('RESP') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE.
```

Reliability

Scale: RESPONSIBILITY

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	342	96.3
	Excluded[a]	13	3.7
	Total	355	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items

.730	5

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
14.2836	9.447	3.07363	5

```
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=q1 q2 q3 q4 q5 q6 q7 q8 q9 q10 q11 q12 q13 q14 q15 q16 q17 q18 q19 q20
  /SCALE('OCGP') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE.
```

Reliability

Scale: OVERALL CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRACTICES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	318	89.6
	Excluded[a]	37	10.4
	Total	355	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.867	20

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
60.5409	73.372	8.56575	20

```
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=q21 q22 q23 q24
  /SCALE('REMU') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE.
```

Reliability Outputs for Academic Staff Moral Questionnaire

Scale: REMUNERATION

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	346	97.5
	Excluded[a]	9	2.5
	Total	355	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.837	4

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
9.0838	9.381	3.06290	4

```
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=q25 q26 q27 q28
  /SCALE('RECOG') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE.
```

Reliability

Scale: RECOGNITION

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	345	97.2
	Excluded[a]	10	2.8
	Total	355	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.801	4

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items

11.6087	6.640	2.57683	4

```
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=q29 q30 q31 q32
  /SCALE('ACADF') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE.
```

Reliability

Scale: ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	338	95.2
	Excluded[a]	17	4.8
	Total	355	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.717	4

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
10.9527	6.265	2.50296	4

```
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=q33 q34 q35 q36
  /SCALE('OPORTCA') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE.
```

Reliability

Scale: OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	347	97.7
	Excluded[a]	8	2.3
	Total	355	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.862	4

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
11.9539	7.663	2.76814	4

```
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=q37 q38 q39 q40
  /SCALE('WORKCON') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE.
```

Reliability

Scale: WORKING CONDITIONS

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	352	99.2
	Excluded[a]	3	.8
	Total	355	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.860	4

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
10.6733	9.691	3.11299	4

```
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=q21 q22 q23 q24 q25 q26 q27 q28 q29 q30 q31 q32 q33 q34 q35 q36 q37
q38 q39 q40
  /SCALE('OASM') ALL
  /MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE.
```

Reliability

Scale: OVERALL ACADEMIC STAFF MORALE INDICES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	318	89.6
	Excluded[a]	37	10.4
	Total	355	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.896	20

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
54.0157	103.599	10.17837	20

APPENDIX VI

Using the Taro Yamane formula is

n = N / (1 + N(e^2)

where:

- n = sample size

- N = population size (3245 in this case)

- e = margin of error (we'll assume 5% or 0.05, since it's not given)

Plugging in the numbers:

n = 3245 / (1 + 3245(0.05^2)

n ≈ 3245 / (1 + 3245(0.0025)

n ≈ 3245 / (1 + 8.1125)

n ≈ 3245 / 9.1125

n ≈ 356.16

So, the sample size is approximately 356