

Leave Policy and Performance of Employees in Universities in South East Nigeria: The Nexus

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of leave policy on employee performance in public universities in South East, Nigeria. The research utilized descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 4648. Freud and Williams formula was used to determine the sample size of 784. The collected data was analyzed through the use of a mean score. The z-normal distribution t-test was applied in testing the hypotheses. The findings revealed that Annual Leave had a significant positive effect on employee efficiency in public universities in South East, Nigeria, that Study Leave had a substantial impact on employee job satisfaction within public universities in South east Nigeria, and that Maternity Leave had a significant positive effect on employee job efficiency in public universities in South East, Nigeria. The study concluded that while leave policies are essential for maintaining employee well-being and ensuring operational continuity, their impact on organizational performance depends on various factors such as implementation, enforcement, and organizational culture. The study recommended among others that Given the notable impact of Annual Leave on employee efficiency in Public Universities in South East Nigeria, it's crucial to prioritize the implementation of supportive annual leave policies. This includes ensuring adequate staffing coverage during leave periods, promoting a culture of work-life balance, and providing resources for effective leave tracking and management. Additionally, regular evaluations and adjustments to leave policies should be conducted to address evolving employee needs and organizational objectives.

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1. Introduction

A leave management policy is a collection of standards and procedures developed by an organisation to control employee absences from work for a variety of reasons, including vacation, sick leave, personal leave, and other sorts of time off (Dessler, 2015). This policy covers the procedure for seeking and granting leave, as well as the rules and regulations that govern eligibility, accrual, carryover, and use of leave benefits. A leave management strategy aims to maintain uniformity, fairness, and compliance with legal obligations while successfully managing employee attendance and time off. Martochio (2017). The policy promotes a healthy work environment and maintains productivity levels inside organisations by establishing clear standards and expectations that assist prevent misunderstandings, disagreement, and misuse of leave entitlements. A leave management policy's key components typically include eligibility criteria for various types of leave, procedures for requesting and approving leave among employees, procedures for handling extended leaves of absence, and guidelines for administering leave benefits in accordance with applicable laws and regulations (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright, 2016).

Leave management rules in Nigeria's public institutions have a substantial impact on professor and staff performance. The specific environment of higher education institutions needs a complex approach to leave policies that account for the academic calendar, research obligations, and administrative responsibilities (Thulesius, 2019). An efficient leave management system in these institutions helps to create a positive working environment, promoting job satisfaction and employee well-being. Faculty members who benefit from flexible and well-communicated leave rules are better able to combine their teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. This, in turn, improves the overall quality of education and academic output. In contrast, inadequate or poorly executed leave policies can lead to increased stress, decreased productivity, and a detrimental influence on the institution's academic standing. Nigerian public universities must recognise the different requirements of its teachers and staff, including the significance of taking regular vacations for professional growth, personal reasons, or health difficulties.

Ineffective leave management rules in Nigeria's public institutions have a substantial negative impact on staff performance and the academic environment. When yearly leave, study leave, maternity leave, sick leave, and sabbatical leave policies are poorly planned or inconsistently implemented, the costs are felt throughout the institution (Aamland&Maeland, 2018). Addressing these policy deficiencies is critical to creating a favourable work environment that promotes employee well-being and, as a result, improves the overall performance and reputation of Nigeria's public universities. Investigating whether transparent and supportive leave policies link with lower absenteeism, improved productivity, and higher work satisfaction in Nigeria is critical for guiding policy changes and improving the overall operation of these institutions. A more sophisticated investigation of how transparent, supportive leave policies directly impact employee performance measures like as absenteeism, productivity, and work satisfaction is critical.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The current scenario displays several problems. Ambiguities in policy design and execution cause confusion for employees, limiting their capacity to plan and manage workloads efficiently. The lack of clarity in the application processes for annual, study, maternity, sick, and sabbatical vacations adds to employee uncertainty and unhappiness. Furthermore, the lack of adapted laws that account for the cultural and contextual subtleties of South East Nigeria reduces the overall efficacy of these legislation. Inadequate communication channels

compound the problem by making employees uninformed of their rights and responsibilities. The existing status of leave management regulations in public universities in South East Nigeria poses a significant obstacle to employee performance. Ambiguous policies, along with limited communication channels, create confusion and unhappiness among employees. Employees struggle to navigate the complexities of annual, study, maternity, sick, and sabbatical leave protocols, limiting their capacity to plan and manage workloads efficiently. The accompanying stress, burnout, and increased absenteeism have a direct impact on staff performance, potentially lowering the quality of teaching, research output, and administrative activities at these institutions.

The consequences of this mismatch between ideal and actual settings are severe. Employee performance is immediately impacted since a lack of well-defined and stated leave policy leads to increased stress, burnout, and absenteeism. This, in turn, jeopardises the quality of teaching, research output, and administrative activities at public institutions. Employee morale and work satisfaction deteriorate, which may lead to talent turnover and a negative influence on the institution's reputation. Ineffective leave management at South East Nigeria's public institutions may have a negative influence on staff performance. Ambiguous policies and communication gaps promote uncertainty, which impedes good planning. Employees who struggle to navigate leave protocols face higher stress and burnout, which leads to greater absenteeism. This reduces the quality of education, research, and administrative duties. Against this setting, the study looked at the impact of leave policies on employee performance at public universities in South East Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- i. Ascertain the effect of Annual Leave on employee efficiency in public Universities in South East, Nigeria.
- ii. Identify the effect of Study Leave on employee job satisfaction in public Universities in South East, Nigeria.
- iii. Examine the effect of Maternity Leave on employee efficiency in public Universities in South East, Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. To what extent does Annual Leave affect employee efficiency in public Universities in South East, Nigeria?
- ii. How does Study Leave affect quality of employee job satisfaction in public Universities in South East, Nigeria?
- iii. In what ways does Maternity Leave affect employee efficiency in public Universities in South East, Nigeria?

1.5 Hypotheses

- i. Annual Leave has a significant effect on employee efficiency in public Universities in South East, Nigeria.
- ii. Study Leave does have a significant effect on employee job satisfaction in public Universities in South East, Nigeria.
- iii. Maternity Leave has a significant effect on employee efficiency in public Universities in South East, Nigeria.

2. Review of Related Literature

Leave Policy

Bhatia (2009) defined leave policy as an organizational document including the rules that govern employee leave management. It also defined leave as the amount of days that an employee is permitted by his or her employer to be absent from the workplace without penalty. The amount of leave days that an employee is entitled to is specified in an organization's employment terms and conditions, which adhere to international best practices (Givati& Troiano, 2012). Employers compensate for authorized periods of time away from job positions, and employees may seek leave in accordance with the organization's policies and procedures. According to Hans and Grahn (2017), a leave policy is a management permission that allows workers to take time off from work to care for themselves and their families. When employees return from leave, they are expected to be fresh, organised, and agile in order to perform better at work.

A Leave Policy is a systematic collection of guidelines and regulations developed by an organisation to control the many forms of leave that workers may take during their job term. It describes the methods, eligibility criteria, and rights for work absences, promoting openness and justice in employee time off management. A well-defined leave policy often includes many types of leave, as vacation, sick leave, maternity/paternity leave, and other special leaves. Boxall and Purcell (2003) found that a comprehensive leave policy improves employee satisfaction and organisational performance by balancing work and family life. The policy frequently mentions the procedure of seeking leave, the approval system, and any papers necessary. It promotes a healthy work-life balance, boosts employee morale, and reduces absenteeism.

Annual leave

Annual leave is defined as paid time for recreational purposes to which employees become entitled following a period of qualifying service or employment with a specific company (Work Place Information, 2002). Nigeria has been heavily affected by the British system. The provisions of the Nigerian Labour Act (2004) mostly affect blue-collar workers and are quite basic, with few government rules for businesses. The employer and employee's daily work hours must be agreed upon mutually or through collective bargaining (section 13(1) (a) (b). Section 13(3) provides for rest periods of at least one hour total if the day's labour exceeds six hours, as well as one day's rest every week (section 13(7). After twelve months of continuous employment, a worker is entitled to a yearly leave of at least six working days, which cannot be delayed for more than twelve months (section 18). Annual leave refers to the minimum amount of paid days off that organisations provide to their employees each year. Section 20 of Ghana's Labour Act 2003 (Act 651) states that every employee in any organisation is entitled to a minimum of 15 working days off with full pay for each year of continuous employment. The majority of annual leave is taken when the supervisor and the HR department agree on a date for an employee's yearly leave.

Study Leave

Study leave is a specific type of leave that allows employees to take time away from their regular duties to pursue educational or professional development activities. To ensure effective leave management, it is necessary to deploy appropriate technology for automating the leave processes; implement and communicate leave policy; and regularly monitor and evaluate the policy. Automating the leave management system will make the leave processes efficient, simple to handle, reliable and also make readily available data on leave. As leave management is digitalized, the probability for error and loss of data is reduced

Maternity Leave and Paternity

Maternity and paternity leave policies grant time off for parents welcoming a new child, whether through birth, adoption, or fostering. These policies may include both paid and unpaid leave options. Maternity and paternity leave are essential components of employee benefits that recognize and support employees during significant life events such as the birth or adoption of a child. These policies aim to provide parents with the necessary time off to care for and bond with their newborn or newly adopted child, fostering a positive work-life balance. The concept of maternity and paternity leave reflects societal and organizational acknowledgment of the importance of family and the well-being of both parents and children.

Employee Performance

The idea of performance lacks a widely agreed definition (Andersen 2010). As a result, the idea of performance has been seen from several perspectives. For example, in terms of process, performance refers to the process of changing from inputs to output with the goal of achieving a given conclusion. Mcconnel (2003) defined employee performance as an achievement that can be monitored and evaluated. Bhatia and Jain (2012) claim that performance may be measured using a combination of quality, quantity, time, and cost. Worker performance initially refers to what a worker does or does not do. Scholars (Mathis & Jackson 2009; Güngör, 2011) state that performance is linked to the quantity and quality of production, the longevity of productivity, the appearance of accomplishment, and the efficacy of work completed.

Employee performance is commonly defined as the extent to which each individual worker of an organisation contributes to the achievement of the organization's goals. According to Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011), work attendance, performance-related responsibilities, and organisationalbehaviour may all be used to evaluate various aspects of performance. Employee performance in the Nigerian Civil Service might be defined as the act of civil servants carrying out their tasks in accordance with civil service regulations in order to provide efficient services.

Employee efficiency

Efficiency has historically been characterised or defined in a variety of ways and at different times. According to the Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, the phrase refers to a situation in which an individual, organisation, factory, or other entity makes use of resources. Furthermore, an employee's efficiency is seen as a critical indicator of the quality and quantity of services provided in the workplace. It improves the ability of human resources to advance organisational aims and objectives. It translates into exceptional service delivery and engagement, which benefits the entire organisation. An employee's work performance is determined by some mix of aptitude, effort, and opportunity, but measures can be made in terms of outcomes or results achieved (Hye, 2014). Efficiency is also defined as the record of results achieved on a certain job function or activity within a given time frame (Russell, O'Connell, & McGinnity, 2009). Thus, researchers devised a working definition of employee efficiency, which was defined for the purposes of the study as meeting objectives for activities allocated to employees within a specific time frame. Workers' efficiency is connected not only to their activities, but also to their judgement and assessment processes (Kamau, Muleke, Makaya, & Wagoki, 2013). According to Mihaiu, Opreana, and Cristescu (2010), efficiency is achieved when the consequences of an activity are maximised in relation to the resources wasted, and it is assessed by comparing the gains in their efforts.

Job Satisfaction.

Satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective assessment of the quality of any connection. According to a social exchange approach, contentment is determined by two factors: the

relationship's outcomes and our overall level of comparison. (Rusbult, 1980; 1983). One is content when a connection is lucrative, which means that the benefits outweigh the expenses. One is also satisfied when a relationship meets one's wishes and expectations. Perceptions of fairness also influence satisfaction: even if a relationship offers several benefits, one may not be completely content if he feels he is being treated unfairly. In business, partners are typically unsatisfied if they view the partnership to be unfair.

Job happiness is not the same as organisational morale, which is the possession of feeling accepted by and belonging to a group of employees via adherence to similar objectives and belief in the desirability of those aims. Morale is a byproduct of the group, but work satisfaction is mostly an individual state of mind. employment satisfaction refers to how pleased a person is with his or her employment. It is a relatively new phrase, as in past centuries, the employment accessible to a given person were frequently dictated by the occupation of that person's parent. A number of things might impact a person's degree of work satisfaction. Some of these factors include pay and benefits, the perceived fairness of a company's promotion system, the quality of working conditions, leadership and social relationships, and the job itself.

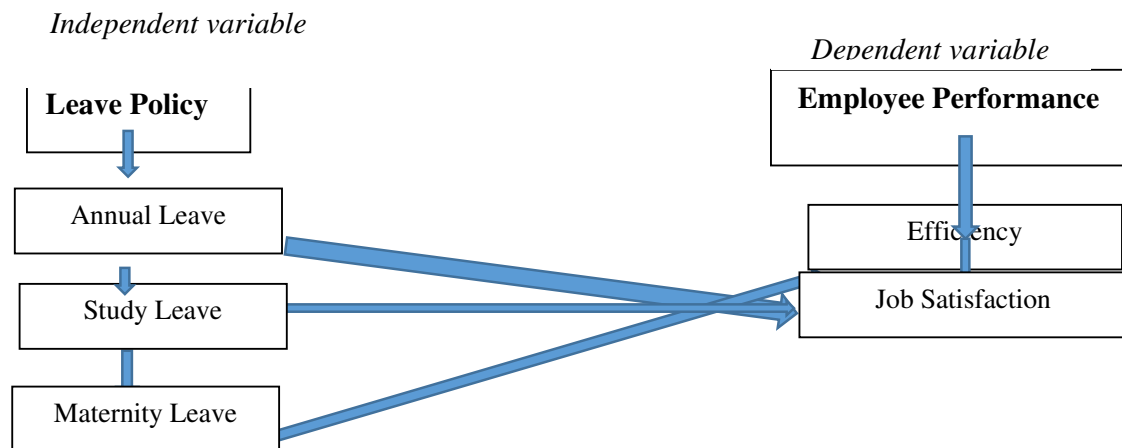


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
Source: Author's compilation 2023

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory was developed by economist Gary Becker, who received the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for his pioneering work in this subject. Becker's book "Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis," published in 1964, presented the notion.

Human capital theory states that investing in employees' skills, knowledge, and well-being leads to higher production and performance. In the context of leave policy, this idea says that giving employees time to recharge and attend to personal concerns increases their total human capital, which improves their performance upon return. The core concepts of Human Capital Theory are that individuals invest in education, training, and health to increase their productivity and economic worth. According to the notion, investments in human capital improve an individual's skills, knowledge, and general capacities in the same manner that

physical capital improves corporate efficiency. Human Capital Theory emphasises that education and training are significant investments that give dividends throughout a person's career. The idea has had a significant influence on understanding the link between education, skill development, and economic results, informing policies and discussions in education, labour, and workforce development.

Human Capital Theory is extremely pertinent to the study of the impact of leave policies on employee performance in tertiary institutions in Nigeria's South East. Gary Becker's theory states that individuals should invest in education, training, and health to increase their production and economic worth. When applied to the study of leave policies, this idea serves as a prism through which we can see how time off for personal well-being and life obligations might benefit employees' total human capital.

Understanding the link between leave policies and human capital is especially important in tertiary institutions, where faculty members are critical contributors to academic performance. A well-designed leave policy recognises the value of time off by allowing employees to recover, attend to personal needs, and maintain a good work-life balance. This, in turn, improves faculty members' general well-being and work satisfaction, and, according to Human Capital Theory, increases their productivity and effectiveness when they return to their responsibilities. In conclusion, Human Capital Theory provides a theoretical framework for analysing how leave policies, by supporting faculty members' human capital development, might favourably affect their performance in tertiary institutions in the South East. Nigeria

Empirical Review

Mohammed (2016) investigated the influence of paternity leave on employee performance at Kenya Power. A descriptive research design was used, with Kenya Power's headquarters serving as the case study. The study used quantitative research approaches. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, percentage changes, and means. The study used Pearson's correlation coefficient to identify links and correlations between variables. The analysed data is given as figures and tables. The study discovered a favourable and substantial association between paternity leave availability and the company's sense of concern for its employees, employee satisfaction, and employee commitment. The greatest association was found between perceptions of concern by the firm and employees (0.588), which was significant at the 0.05 significance level. There was a substantial negative association between the sensation of renewal and the offer of paternity leave. Furthermore, the survey discovered that, while the majority of employees were aware of paternity leave, only a small percentage decided to take it for personal reasons. Employees preferred taking various forms of leaves. Second, the study discovered a favourable substantial association between providing paternity leave and boosted individual performance (0.419), employee motivation (0.615), and employee loyalty (0.374). The study's findings suggest that providing paternity leave enhanced organisational efficiency by improving individual employee performance, motivation, and loyalty. Other advantages of paternity leave included staff retention, which was viewed as a crucial competitive advantage. The correlation between paternity leave and employee satisfaction was favourable and significant (0.523). As a result, the granting of paternity leave increased employee satisfaction. Employee motivation, perception of a child-friendly organisation, impression of organisational security, and employee loyalty were all characteristics that contributed to increased employee satisfaction during paternity leave. This survey found that staff at Kenya Power Headquarters are fully aware about paternity leave. Nonetheless, paternity leave is widely underutilised, owing in part to employees' personal choices. Other varieties of leaves were clearly preferred.

Thevanes and Mangaleswaran (2018) looked at the association between work-life balance and job performance. To fulfil the aims, primary data were obtained from 166 workers of selected private banks in Sri Lanka's Batticaloa district, using a standardised questionnaire. The data were examined using univariate and bivariate statistics. The study's findings demonstrated a favourable and substantial association between work-life balance and job performance overall. The current study is thought to be critical in comprehending the empirical information about the link between work-life balance and job performance.

Mulanya and Kagiri (2018) investigate how work-life balance influences employee performance. The study specifically looked at how flexible work schedules, job sharing, employee breaks, and employee help programmes influence employee performance in the organisation. The study used a descriptive survey and case study approach, using 68 Commission on Revenue Allocation personnel as its target population. All 68 workers from the target population were considered. The study discovered that the organisation lacked adequate flexible working options that helped with performance development. Lack of flexibility in work schedules hindered employee motivation and independence. Successful job sharing agreements met the demands of both individual employees and the work unit/department. The commission didn't promote work sharing. Staff breaks have a significant influence on staff performance. Employees felt reenergized and performed better following their yearly leave. Employees were more devoted since they were not denied benefits due to taking leave, as indicated. There was no effective employee help programmes in the organisation. The report advised that the commission implement effective flexible work schedules that allow staff to attend to both business and personal problems. There was insufficient task sharing in the commission.

Kadnan (2019) tested the relationship between work-life balance, happiness, and employee performance using a questionnaire-based survey of 289 employees from the Med Pharma and Pharmaceutical industries in Jordan. Multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses. The findings suggested that work-life balance and happiness had a favourable and significant impact on employee performance. However, work happiness has little effect on employee performance. The findings have huge implications for Jordan's pharmaceutical industry sector. Sentot, Anna, Ismail, and Fam Soo (2020) worked on a leave management information system that utilises Inside DPS software to improve human resource management efficiency. The study was designed using an embedded mixed technique, namely quantitative-qualitative-quantitative. The questionnaire, a quantitative instrument, was developed based on earlier research (MSQ), delivered to 250 workers, and 198 sets of analysed multiple linear regression. The questionnaire was delivered twice, before and after qualitative research. Interviews, observations, and document collection were conducted with HR managers, IT managers, and chosen personnel. This study discovered evidence that MIS InsideDPS software may help HRD performance improve, which is accompanied by greater employee satisfaction. The technological implications of this study's conclusions include the need for a more comprehensive web-based MIS programme in the organisation.

Kadiri et al. (2020) investigated the impact of yearly leave use on the productive work habits of government officials in Kwara state. The study was conducted using a survey design. The study's population consists of 276 officials who are in charge of job scheduling, job assignment, and performance assessment for all public workers employed by the Kwara State Government's nineteen (19) ministries and four (4) departments. The study's sample size was based on a census of 276 respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that the variable change in productive work habits of a government worker is accounted for by the leave policy.

The study revealed that taking yearly leave had a considerable impact on the productive work habits of government officials in Kwara State.

Pradhan and Vishal (2020) investigated the effects of vacation on employee stress, health, well-being, and productivity. A study of 75 employees in India was conducted to analyse their culture, stressors, and holiday patterns. The key indicator of our findings was a survey of persons working in the Indian subcontinent. The opinions of participants were examined to determine a link between employee health and well-being and productivity. Benefits of greater insurance for employees. Improved insurance procedures would result in increased employee engagement, retention, and productivity. This interpretive sociology might assist businesses in developing a more productive workforce. The researchers used academic theories to analyse the current state of employees working in India, as well as assess their existing perceived workplace environments. During the holidays, which were the most popular leisure activity in our poll, we tried to design a better model to accomplish employee health and wellness.

Kapo, Alan, and Pei-Lee (2020) investigated how a work-life balance arrangement affects organisational performance. A meta-analysis. This study conducted a meta-analysis on 202 data from 58 published studies to assess the association between work-life balance arrangements and organisational success. Six viewpoints were used to assess organisational performance: career motivation, employee attendance, employee recruiting, employee retention, organisational commitment, and productivity. The study found a favourable correlation between work-life balance arrangements and organisational success (OR: 1.181, 95% CI: 1.125-1.240, $p < 0.001$). Only career motivation, employee attendance, employee recruitment, and employee retention had a significant relationship with the work-life balance arrangement. Gender, sector, and employee hierarchy were the moderators that influenced the link between work-life balance arrangements and organisational performance. The findings make theoretical recommendations on the efficiency of the work-life balance arrangement in terms of the six aspects of organisational performance.

Akom, Obeng-Sarpong, Aflakpui, and Sarpong (2021) investigated the relationship between leave management practices and administrative staff performance: evidence from a Ghanaian tertiary institution. The goal of this study was to gather feedback from employees on leave management strategies and how they affect performance. Using Yamane's (1967) sample determination formula, 96 University administrators were chosen from a population of 200 to participate in the study. Data collection was mostly conducted via a self-administered questionnaire. The findings were analysed using regression to determine the cause-and-effect connection between leave management and employee performance. The hypothesis that the predictor has no linear connection with the dependent variable was rejected. The study indicates that there is a linear link between the predictor (leave system) and the dependent variable (staff performance). The study found that the University's leave application process is more manual than computerised and bureaucratic. It is also irregularly distributed throughout the year, but is highly weighted towards the latter two quarters of the year, when the bulk of employees (86%) take their annual leave.

Ashita (2022) investigated Employee Leave Management in SAP. The research used the ASAP Implementation Methodology for SAP. The Accelerated SAP methodology, often known as the ASAP methodology, is one of SAP's most powerful and critical technologies for improved and enhanced deployment. The ASAP approach is an effective tool for overcoming any time restrictions that may arise during development. The ASAP approach determines the relative timeliness of critical deliveries within each phase. This solution displays the order of

deliverables within a phase of a project in the event of an extension, even when the project's length is not specified. The study concluded that the leave management system is more efficient and user-friendly. Furthermore, the system is designed to meet the key objectives of the leave management system, which include supporting users in preserving records, utilising the programme, managing members efficiently, and managing employee leaves.

Edoho, Arikpo, and Olabisi (2022) explored yearly leave as a technique for motivating and increasing employee productivity in educational institutions. The survey research design was used for the investigation. A random sample of 792 respondents was drawn from a population of 8,112 administrative workers. Data was collected mostly through a questionnaire. The instrument underwent face validation. The instrument's dependability was estimated using the Cronbach-Alpha reliability approach. The statistical approaches used in the study were Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression. The hypothesis was evaluated at the 0.05 level of significance. The study's findings demonstrated that taking yearly vacation had a considerable impact on employee productivity.

Katia et al. (2022) investigated supplemental family leave provision and employee performance: Disentangling availability and utilisation. Drawing on signalling theory arguments, we investigate whether the benefits of providing longer or better paid family leave on performance exist for all employees, or if they are limited to the group of employees who have previously taken advantage of the supplemental leave or are likely to do so again. Furthermore, the mechanism described by organisational support theory, which predicts that supplementary leave would improve employee performance by strengthening affective organisational commitment, is examined. The assumptions are investigated using European multilevel organisation data (Van der Lippe et al., 2016a) from 11,011 employees across 869 departments or teams and 259 organisations. The findings show that perceived availability of supplementary family leave has a favourable relationship with employees' contextual performance, partly due to increased organisational engagement. This impact exists regardless of the actual use of family leave and is not affected by variables related to future usage, such as having young children, being of reproductive age, or being female.

Ayankoya and Osimen (2023) conducted a study on Employee Welfare and Organisational Performance: A Study of Maternity Leave Policy at Covenant University, Nigeria. As a result, both primary and secondary data were gathered through literature searches, questionnaires, and interviews. The data collected was evaluated using frequency, percentage, and correlation analysis. The study found that maternity leave policy has a statistically significant weak and positive link with organisational performance, and that increasing maternity leave policy will result in a small rise in organisational performance. As a result, the report advises that Covenant University reconsider and reinstate full compensation for maternity leave. The study finds that the maternity leave policy improves employee welfare and has a direct impact on organisational performance.

Ayankoya and Osimen (2023) investigated the relationship between employee wellbeing and organisational performance in a study of maternity leave policy at Covenant University in Nigeria. The study followed the social construct theory. Both primary and secondary data were gathered through literature searches, questionnaires, and interviews. The data collected was evaluated using frequency, percentage, and correlation analysis. The study found that maternity leave policy has a statistically significant weak and positive association with organisational performance, and that increasing maternity leave policy will result in a small rise in organisational performance. The study concluded that employee wellbeing, as boosted

by the maternity leave policy, had a direct relationship with organisational success.

3.Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was used to investigate the effect of leave policies on employee performance in South East Nigeria. A descriptive survey design entails collecting and analysing data in a systematic manner to describe the current status and characteristics of leave policies, as well as their impact on employee performance. The study used structured questionnaires to gather quantitative data from academic and non-academic staff across multiple tertiary institutions, including the ChukwuemekaOdumegwuOjukwu University Igbariam, Anambra State, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State and the Federal University of Technology Owerri (FUTO).

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in South East, Nigeria, with a focus on the impact of leave policies on employee performance in selected academic institutions there. Nigeria's South East area is a geopolitical zone with a rich cultural history and economic significance. This area, which includes five states—Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo—has a diversified population, with a strong Igbo influence. The South East is known for its entrepreneurial spirit and plays an important role in Nigeria's economy, notably in business, trade, and manufacturing. The region is home to numerous well-known educational institutions, which contribute considerably to the country's intellectual and cultural scene. Despite these issues, the South East remains a lively and resilient area with a rich history and current contributions to Nigeria's growth.

Sources of Data

The two main sources of data gathering for the study were primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources: Primary data are those that a researcher collects directly through observation, interviews, and/or surveys. The primary data for this study were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, and a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to students at the study's participating institutions, as well as academic and non-academic professionals.

Secondary Sources: The researcher looked for secondary sources of information, such as books, encyclopaedias, newspapers, magazines, websites, journals, and other people's project reports on relevant topics.

Population of the Study

The target population of the study is 4648.

Table 3.1: The distribution of the population size

Institutions	Population	Percentage
Federal University of Technology, Owerri	1348	29
ChukwuemekaOdumegwuOjukwu University Igbariam	1421	31
Enugu State University of Science and Technology	1879	40
TOTAL	4648	100

Source: Human Resources Department and Nominal Roll for 2023

Sample Size Determination

The researcher used Freud and Williams' (1986) statistical sampling formula to choose a sample size from a finite population of respondents for the study. Therefore, substituting this

population figure into the above formulae using 3% (0.03) sampling error, the researcher obtained:

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= \frac{(1.881)^2(4648)(0.6)(0.4)}{4648(0.03)^2 + (1.881)^2(0.6)(0.4)} \\
 n &= \frac{3.538161(4648)(0.24)}{4648(0.0009) + (3.538161)(0.24)} \\
 &= \frac{3946.8894}{4.1882 + 0.84915936} \\
 &= \frac{3946.8894}{5.03235936} \\
 &= 784.26 \cong 784
 \end{aligned}$$

Sampling Technique

The sampling approach used to investigate the influence of leave policy on employee performance in South East Nigeria is stratified random sampling. This system provides participation from all three universities: Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, and Federal University of Technology Owerri. To use this method, each university was treated as an independent strata. Each layer was divided into sub-strata. The departments were classified according to their administrative tasks, such as academic, administrative, etc. Then, a random sample of departments from each institution was chosen proportionally to their size within each stratum. This ensures that departments of different sizes and roles are covered in the research. Finally, the sample includes all staff personnel participating in administrative tasks connected to leave management regulations (Personnel Department). A total of 784 respondents were chosen from diverse departments at selected public institutions.

Method for Data Collection

Structured questionnaire with Likert scales was used to obtain responses on the influence of leave policies on employee performance. Part A of the questionnaire collects demographic information, including age, gender, position, and tenure. Part B comprises Likert scale questions based on research inquiries, which allow respondents to agree or disagree with claims about the impact of leave policies. The Likert scale has five options: "Strongly Agreed," "Agreed," "Undecided," "Disagreed," and "Strongly Disagreed." This method guarantees a systematic and quantitative approach to analysing participants' perspectives, allowing for a more nuanced investigation of the relationship between demographic characteristics and attitudes about the influence of leave policies on employee performance.

Methods for Data Analysis

The study's data were presented using descriptive statistics such as tables, frequencies and percentages, means, standard deviations, and charts. The study hypotheses were tested using an inferential statistical approach known as the independent sample t-test. The one-sample t-test is one of the common t-variations used to determine if the sample mean varies substantially from the population mean. The t-statistic is determined using the observed/calculated sample mean, the theoretical population mean, the sample standard deviation, and the sample size.

4.Data Presentation and Analysis

Data Analysis

Research Question One: What is the effect of Annual Leave on employee efficiency in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Effect of Annual Leave on employee efficiency in public universities in South East, Nigeria

S/N		N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Annual leave provides employees with the opportunity to rest and recharge, which enhance their overall well-being and productivity.	601	2205.00	3.6689	1.42074	Accepted
2	Annual leave gives employees a chance to disconnect from work-related stressors and engage in activities that promote relaxation and enjoyment.	601	2268.00	3.7737	1.45214	Accepted
3	When employees feel supported in managing their personal responsibilities alongside their professional obligations, they maintain a positive attitude towards their work.	601	2293.00	3.8153	1.46088	Accepted
4	Providing annual leave demonstrates an organization's commitment to the well-being of its employees, which help to improve work efficiency	601	2199.00	3.6589	1.24035	Accepted
5	Annual leave is essential for promoting employee well-being and work-life balance, its impact on efficiency in public universities	601	2044.00	3.4010	1.47330	Accepted
	Valid N (listwise)	601				

Source: Field Survey 2024 and SPSS Result Output 23.0

Table 1 shows the descriptive data on the effect of annual leave on staff efficiency in public universities in South East Nigeria. The items and replies are organised as follows:

The mean score for item number one is 3.6689, with a standard deviation of 1.42074, indicating that the respondents' replies are favourable. The variable's mean score is 3.6689. The standard deviation equals 1.42074. The least possible score is 1.00, while the maximum score is 5.00. This reveals that respondents felt that annual vacation allows employees to rest and rejuvenate, improving their general well-being and productivity. The standard deviations for particular assertions are close, indicating limited diversity among respondents' replies. This suggests that respondents believe that annual leave allows employees to rest and rejuvenate, improving their general well-being and productivity. The findings of item number two showed that the mean score is 3.7737, the standard deviation is 1.45214, and the total is 2268.00. This demonstrates that the respondents' attitudes are positive. The variable's total mean score is 3.7737, with a standard deviation of 1.45214, indicating that respondents believed that annual vacation allows employees to detach from work-related pressures and engage in activities that encourage relaxation and enjoyment. The standard deviations for particular assertions are close, indicating limited diversity among respondents' replies. This suggests that respondents believe that when employees feel supported in balancing their personal and professional duties, they keep a favourable attitude towards their job. The findings from item number three indicated that the mean score is 3.8153, the standard deviation is 1.46088, and the total is 2293.00, indicating that respondents are positive about the item. The variable's overall mean score is 3.8153, with a standard deviation of 1.46088, indicating that respondents are adamant that providing yearly leave displays an organization's dedication to its employees' well-being, which helps to increase work efficiency. The findings from item number four showed that the mean score is 3.6589 and the standard deviation is 1.24035, with a total of 2199.00 indicating

that respondents are quite favourable with the item. The variable's total mean score is 3.6589, with a standard deviation of 1.24035, indicating that respondents believed that annual leave is crucial for improving employee well-being and work-life balance, as well as its influence on efficiency in public universities. Furthermore, item number five has a mean score of 3.4010, a standard deviation of 1.47330, and a total of 2199.00, indicating that respondents are quite favourable about the item. According to the respondents, annual leave is vital for boosting employee well-being and work-life balance, as well as for improving efficiency in public institutions.

Research Question Two: How does Study Leave affect quality of employee job satisfaction in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Effect of Study Leave on quality of employee job satisfaction in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

S/N		N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	DECISION
1	Study leave provides employees with opportunities to enhance their skills, knowledge, and qualifications through further education or training programs thereby increasing their job satisfaction	601	2269.00	3.7754	1.41697	Accepted
2	Employees who are supported in their pursuit of higher education or specialized training feel satisfied with their job and committed to their institution.	601	2381.00	3.9617	1.36633	Accepted
3	Employees who have the opportunity to take study leave experience reduced stress and burnout, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction	601	2205.00	3.6689	1.42074	Accepted
4	Employees who are granted study leave often return to their roles with renewed enthusiasm, energy, and commitment.	601	2268.00	3.7737	1.45214	Accepted
5	Public universities that offer study leave as a benefit demonstrate greater employee loyalty, increased retention rates, and a more stable workforce	601	2293.00	3.8153	1.46088	Accepted
	Valid N (listwise)	601				

Source: Field Survey 2024 and SPSS Result Output 23.0

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of respondents' responses on the influence of Study Leave on the quality of employee job satisfaction at public universities in South East Nigeria. The items and replies are organised as follows:

The replies to item number one yielded a mean score of 3.7754 and a standard deviation of 1.41697, indicating that respondents' reactions likely to be positive. The variable's mean score is 3.7754. The standard deviation equals 1.41697. The total is 2269.00. This reveals that respondents felt that study leave allows employees to improve their skills, knowledge, and certifications through further education or training programmes, resulting in increased job satisfaction. The standard deviations for particular assertions are close, indicating limited diversity among respondents' replies. The findings of item two showed that the mean score is 3.9617, the standard deviation is 1.36633, and the total is 1.36633. This demonstrates that the respondents' attitudes are positive. The total mean score for the variable is 3.9617, with a standard deviation of 1.36633, indicating that respondents believed that employees who are supported in their pursuit of higher education or specialised training are content with their jobs and devoted to their institution.

The findings from item number three indicated that the mean score is 3.6689 and the standard deviation is 1.42074, with a total of 2205.00, indicating that respondents had a positive attitude towards the item. The variable's total mean score is 3.6689, with a standard deviation of

1.42074, indicating that respondents are strongly convinced that employees who can take study leave feel less stress and burnout, resulting in improved work satisfaction. The findings from item number four showed that the mean score is 3.7737 and the standard deviation is 1.45214, with a total of 2268.00 indicating that respondents are quite favourable with the item. The total mean score for the variable is 3.7737, with a standard deviation of 1.45214, indicating that respondents believed that employees who are granted study leave frequently return to their positions with increased passion, energy, and dedication. The results of item number five, with a mean score of 3.8153, a standard deviation of 1.46088, and a total of 2293.00, indicate that respondents are adamant that public universities that offer study leave as a benefit demonstrate greater employee loyalty, higher retention rates, and a more stable workforce.

Research Question Three: How does Maternity Leave affect employee efficiency in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Table 3: How Maternity Leave affect employee job efficiency in public universities in South East, Nigeria

S/N		N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Maternity leave policies that provide adequate time off for new mothers help in retaining talented female employees	601	2268.00	3.7737	1.45214	Accepted
2	Offering maternity leave demonstrates that the university values the well-being of its employees and recognizes the importance of family life	601	2293.00	3.8153	1.46088	Accepted
3	Maternity leave allows female employees to take the necessary time off to care for their newborns without the added stress of work responsibilities.	601	2199.00	3.6589	1.24035	Accepted
4	Maternity leave contributes to a better work-life balance for female employees, enabling them to fulfill their caregiving responsibilities while maintaining their career aspirations	601	2044.00	3.4010	1.47330	Accepted
5	Maternity leave allows new mothers to recover from childbirth, bond with their infants, and establish breastfeeding routines, all of which are crucial for their health and well-being.	601	2269.00	3.7754	1.41697	Accepted
	Valid N (listwise)	601				

Source: Field Survey 2024 and SPSS Result Output 23.0

Table 3 shows descriptive information on how Maternity Leave affects employee work effectiveness at public universities in South East Nigeria. The items and replies are organised as follows:

The mean score for item number one is 3.7737, with a standard deviation of 1.45214, indicating that the respondents' replies are favourable. The variable has an overall mean score of 3.7737 and a standard deviation of 2268.00. This demonstrates that respondents felt that maternity leave policies that give enough time off for new moms contribute to the retention of bright female employees. The findings of question number two showed that the mean score is 3.8153, the standard deviation is 1.46088, and the total is 2293.00. This demonstrates that the respondents' attitudes are positive. The total mean score for the variable is 3.8153, with a standard deviation of 1.46088, indicating that respondents felt that providing maternity leave showed that the university appreciates its workers' well-being and recognises the importance of family life. The findings from item number three indicated that the mean score is 3.6589, the standard deviation is 1.24035, and the total is 2199.00, indicating that respondents are positive about the item. The variable's total mean score is 3.6589, with a standard deviation of 1.24035, indicating that respondents are strongly confident that maternity leave allows female employees to take the required time off to care for their babies without adding stress to their work duties.

The findings from item number four showed that the mean score is 3.4010 and the standard deviation is 1.47330, with a total of 2199.00 indicating that respondents are very favourable with the item. The overall mean score for the variable is 1.47330, and the standard deviation is 1.47330, indicating that respondents agreed that maternity leave contributes to a better work-life balance for female employees, allowing them to fulfil their caregiving responsibilities while pursuing their career goals. The results of question number five, with a mean score of 3.7754 and a standard deviation of 1.41697, and a total of 2269.00, show that the respondents are solid in their conviction. It is clear that respondents believed that maternity leave enabled new mothers to recuperate from delivery, bond with their children, and develop nursing rituals, all of which are critical for their health and well-being.

4.3 Test of Hypotheses

The five research hypotheses presented in this study were examined via an independent sample t-test.

Inferential statistical methods, such as the independent sample t-test. The one-sample t-test was a type of t-variation test that was used to determine if the sample differed substantially from the population. The one-sample t-test formula took into account the observed sample mean, hypothesised population mean, sample standard deviation, and sample size. It is denoted mathematically by the following:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

$$df = n_1 + n_2 - 1$$

$$n = \sum_{k=1}^n (x_1 - \pi)^2 / (n_1 - 1)$$

$$n = \sum_{k=1}^n (x_2 - \pi)^2 / (n_2 - 1)$$

where

t	=	Student's t-test
x1	=	mean of first group
x2	=	mean of second group
s1	=	standard deviation of group 1
s2	=	standard deviation of group 2
n1	=	number of observations in group 1
n2	=	number of observations in group 2

Decision Rule:

1. Reject Ho if the P-Value cal < 0.05 at 5% level of significance.
2. Otherwise, accept the null hypothesis (Ho).

Test of Hypothesis One

Restatement of Hypothesis One

Ho: Annual Leave has no significant effect on employee efficiency in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Table 4: One-Sample Statistics

	Test Value = 0					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Annual leave provides employees with the opportunity to rest and recharge, which enhance their overall well-being and productivity.	63.308	600	.000	3.66889	3.5551	3.7827
Annual leave gives employees a chance to disconnect from work-related stressors and engage in activities that promote relaxation and enjoyment.	63.709	600	.000	3.77371	3.6574	3.8900

Tables 4 give the results of the t-test analysis, which are discussed below. The independent sample t-test in table 4 yielded a mean value of 3.7737, a standard deviation of 1.45214, and a t-value of 63.308, which is significant at .000. Because .000 is less than 0.05, the p-value of .000 is statistically significant at the .05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Decision: Based on the sample t-test analysis in Table 4 with a t-value of 63.308 and a P-value of 0.00, it was discovered that Annual Leave has a significant effect on employee efficiency, and this influence is statistically significant at the 5% level of significance because the P-value is within the 5% significance level. This finding shows that we should adopt alternative hypothesis one (H1), which argues that annual leave has a considerable beneficial influence on staff efficiency in public universities in South East Nigeria.

4.3.2 Test of Hypothesis Two

Restatement of Hypothesis Two

Ho: Study Leave does not have a significant effect on employee job satisfaction in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Table 5: One-Sample Statistics

	Test Value = 0					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Study leave provides employees with opportunities to enhance their skills, knowledge, and qualifications through further education or training programs thereby increasing their job satisfaction	65.319	600	.000	3.77537	3.6619	3.8889
Employees who are supported in their pursuit of higher education or specialized training feel satisfied with their job and committed to their institution.	71.083	600	.000	3.96173	3.8523	4.0712

Tables 5 give the results of the t-test analysis, which are discussed below.

Table 5 shows an independent sample t-test with a mean value of 3.9617, a standard deviation of 1.36633, and a t-value of 71.083, which is significant at .000. Because .000 is less than 0.05, the p-value of .000 is statistically significant at the .05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Decision: Based on the sample t-test analysis in Table 5, with a t-value of 71.083 and a P-value of 0.00, it was discovered that Study Leave has a significant effect on employee job satisfaction, and this influence is statistically significant at the 5% level of significance because the P-value

is within the 5% significance level. This finding shows that we should adopt alternative hypothesis two (H2), which asserts that Study Leave has a considerable positive influence on employee job satisfaction in public universities in South East Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis Three

Restatement of Hypothesis Three

Ho: Maternity Leave has no significant effect on employee efficiency in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Table 6: One-Sample Statistics

	Test Value = 0					
	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Maternity leave policies that provide adequate time off for new mothers help in retaining talented female employees	72.318	600	.000	3.65890	3.5595	3.7583
Offering maternity leave demonstrates that the university values the well-being of its employees and recognizes the importance of family life	56.592	600	.000	3.40100	3.2830	3.5190

Tables 6 give the results of the t-test analysis, which are discussed below.

Table 6 shows an independent sample t-test with a mean value of 3.4010, a standard deviation of 1.47330, and a t-value of 56.592, which is significant at .000. Because .000 is less than 0.05, the p-value of .000 is statistically significant at the .05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Decision: Based on the independent sample t-test, which yielded a mean value of 3.4010, a standard deviation of 1.47330, and a t-value of 56.592 in Table 9, it was determined that Maternity Leave has a significant effect on employee efficiency, and this influence is statistically significant at the 5% level of significance because the P-value is within the 5% significance level. This finding shows that we should adopt alternative hypothesis one (H1), which asserts that maternity leave has a considerable beneficial influence on staff efficiency in public universities in South East Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The study sought to investigate the impact of leave rules on employee performance at public institutions in South East Nigeria. The study's findings were addressed in relation to the outcomes of the tested hypotheses and the evaluated empirical literature.

The study's primary goal was to determine the impact of annual leave on employee performance at public institutions in South East Nigeria. Given the sign that the sample t-test analysis in Table 5 based on the independent sample t-test, gave a Mean value of 3.7737, the Standard Deviation of 1.45214, t-value of 63.308, and this is significant at .000, it was found that Annual Leave has a significant positive effect on employee efficiency in public universities in South East Nigeria. The findings, which indicate that annual leave has a considerable beneficial influence on staff efficiency in public universities in Southeast Nigeria, are interesting and provide unique insights into the dynamics of workforce management in academic institutions. This discovery emphasises the need of proper rest and rejuvenation in ensuring peak staff performance and productivity.

This study has significant implications, including the identification of annual leave as a critical component of employee well-being and organisational performance. Organisations may reduce burnout, increase job happiness, and eventually improve overall productivity by providing staff with adequate time off to recover and attend to personal affairs. In the setting of public institutions, where staff frequently face heavy workloads and tremendous pressure to satisfy academic and administrative objectives, guaranteeing access to enough annual leave becomes critical to maintaining a healthy and engaged workforce. Furthermore, the findings emphasise the need of strategic human resource management techniques customised to the unique environment of public institutions in Southeast Nigeria. This might entail examining existing rules on annual leave allocation, ensuring openness and justice in its distribution, and developing a culture that promotes work-life balance.

One of the study's aims was to determine the impact of Study Leave on employee job satisfaction at public institutions in South East Nigeria. The hypothesis two result found that Study Leave has a considerable beneficial influence on employee work satisfaction at public universities in South East Nigeria. Table 7 demonstrates this, with a mean value of 3.9617, a standard deviation of 1.36633, a t-value of 71.083, and a significance level of .000. The discovery that Study Leave has a significant influence on employee job happiness at public institutions in Southeast Nigeria is an important result that sheds light on the complex interaction between educational possibilities and labour contentment. This research emphasises the importance of continual learning and professional development in increasing employee engagement and fulfilment. One of the most important ramifications of this research is the acknowledgment of Study Leave as an effective instrument for cultivating a supportive and growth-oriented organisational culture. By offering employees chances to improve their knowledge, skills, and qualifications through Study Leave, public universities may not only increase their workforce's intellectual capital but also demonstrate a commitment to investing in their employees' long-term professional development. This, in turn, may boost morale, improve loyalty, and lead to greater levels of work satisfaction among employees.

Maternity Leave and Employee Efficiency.

The third objective of the study was to investigate the influence of maternity leave on staff effectiveness at public institutions in South East Nigeria. According to the sample t-test analysis in Table 9, with a t-value of 56.592 and a P-value of 0.00, Maternity Leave has a substantial positive influence on staff efficiency at public universities in South East Nigeria. The discovery that Maternity Leave has a significant influence on staff efficiency at public institutions in Southeast Nigeria emphasises the importance of family support policies and worker productivity. This research emphasises the necessity of recognising and accommodating employees' specific requirements during major life events such as delivery, with far-reaching consequences for organisational success and employee well-being.

One important takeaway from this research is the recognition of Maternity Leave as a critical component of a supportive and inclusive corporate culture. Public universities may boost their staff members' physical and emotional health by allowing female employees enough time off to recuperate from delivery, bond with their babies, and adjust to their new family dynamics. This can lead to better work satisfaction, lower stress levels, and higher retention rates among female employees.

5. Summary of Findings

The following were the findings from the study:

- i. From the study, it was discovered that Annual Leave has a significant positive effect on employee efficiency in public universities in South East, Nigeria. (this is where the

- independent sample t-test gave a Mean value of 3.7737, the Standard Deviation of 1.45214, t-value of 63.308, and this is significant at .000).
- ii. The findings from the hypothesis two indicated that Study Leave has a substantial impact on employee job satisfaction within public universities in Southeast Nigeria, (this is where independent sample t-test gave Mean value of 3.9617, the Standard Deviation of 1.36633, t-value of 71.083, and this is significant at .000). This means that study leave is a crucial finding that sheds light on the intricate relationship between educational opportunities and workforce contentment
 - iii. Equally, the finding of hypothesis three affirmed that the Maternity Leave has a significant positive effect on employee efficiency in public universities in South East, Nigeria. (based on the result of independent sample t-test with a Mean value of 3.4010, the Standard Deviation of 1.47330, t-value of 56.592). One key implication of this finding is the acknowledgment of Maternity Leave as a fundamental component of a supportive and inclusive workplace culture.

Conclusion

To summarise, the impact of leave management rules on organisational performance at Nigeria's public institutions is complex. While leave policies are critical for employee well-being and operational continuity, their influence on organisational performance is determined by a variety of factors, including adoption, enforcement, and organisational culture. This study highlights the importance of good leave management techniques in improving employee happiness, productivity, and overall organisational effectiveness. However, problems including bureaucratic processes, insufficient resources, and cultural opposition may impede the effective implementation of leave policies. As a result, public universities in Nigeria must prioritise the establishment of transparent, fair, and supportive leave management systems that are aligned with the organization's aims and values. By addressing these obstacles and cultivating an accountability and flexibility culture, universities may maximise the beneficial impact of leave policies on organisational performance while also contributing to academic excellence and institutional success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following suggestions were issued:

- i. Annual leave has a major beneficial impact on staff productivity at public institutions in South East Nigeria. Therefore, university administrations should prioritise fair and transparent leave management practices. This involves assuring appropriate personnel during leave periods, encouraging work-life balance, and providing resources for effective leave monitoring and management. Furthermore, frequent assessments and modifications to leave policies should be carried out to suit changing employee demands and organisational goals.
- ii. Study Leave has a significant influence on employee work satisfaction at public institutions in Southeast Nigeria. University management should give sufficient resources through TETFUND for professional development opportunities. Supporting study leave programmes, including financial aid and coaching, can boost employee morale and productivity. Furthermore, creating a supportive workplace that promotes continual learning and career growth will result in a more engaged and pleased team.
- iii. Public universities in South East Nigeria should introduce supportive maternity leave policies, since it has a major beneficial influence on employee work efficiency. This involves fostering a culture of understanding and empathy for nursing moms, which can lead to increased work satisfaction and general well-being within the university community.

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