COLLEGE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
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RT: Internal Communication Strategies as Predictors of Loyalty and Productivity among Academics of Selected Ogun State, Nigeria

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AB: Employee loyalty and productivity are crucial to the growth of every organisation. Studies reveal that employees' loyalty and productivity are increasingly on the decline which is suggestive of excessive workload, tight deadlines, ineffective communication from the employer and lack of proper feedback mechanism. This reality is fast becoming a trend particularly in private universities where academics are not permitted to have advocacy groups. Meanwhile, the deployment of internal communication strategies (ICS) by organisations has been connected with employees aligning themselves with the vision and brand of their employers, thereby gaining a sense of belonging and appreciation. Compared to other sectors, there is a dearth of empirical studies on the deployment of ICS (corporate information, co-worker communication, personal feedback) and its implications on employee loyalty and productivity in Nigerian private universities. Therefore, the study examined ICS as predictor of loyalty and productivity among academics of selected private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

The study adopted the exploratory sequential research design. The population comprised five heads of communication units and 1,400 academics of Babcock University, Bells University of Technology, Covenant University, Crawford University and Crescent University in Ogun State. Total enumeration was applied for the qualitative aspect, while the sample size of 301 academics was derived for the quantitative aspect using Cochran's formula. Simple random sampling technique was utilised to select the final respondents. A validated interview guide and questionnaire were used to gather data. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for

the constructs in the questionnaire ranged from 0.71 to 0.97. The response rate was 71.8%. The qualitative data were analysed thematically while the quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential (multiple linear regression) statistics at 5% level of significance.

Findings revealed that the internal communication strategies of corporate information and co-worker communication and personal feedback were strongly deployed in the universities. Academics generally indicated that they were loyal ($\bar{x}$ = 3.18) and productive ($\bar{x}$ = 3.15). It was also revealed that internal communication strategies are significant predictors of employee loyalty ($Adj.R^2$ = 0.27, F(5, 210) = 17.07, p < 0.05) and employee productivity ($Adj.R^2$ = 0.35, F(5, 210) = 23.60, p < 0.05). Further findings revealed that co-worker communication (β = 0.16, t = 2.47, p < 0.05) significantly predicted employee loyalty, while corporate information (β = 0.01, t = 0.16, p > 0.05) and personal feedback (β = 0.11, t = 1.51, p > 0.05) did not. Meanwhile, corporate information (β = 0.21, t = 3.26, p < 0.05) and personal feedback (β = 0.19, t = 2.95, p < 0.05) significantly influenced employee productivity while, co-worker communication (β = 0.03, t = 0.42, p > 0.05) did not.

The study concluded that internal communication strategies predicted the loyalty and productivity of academics of the selected private universities in Ogun State. It was recommended that the heads of communication units in private universities should creatively employ ICS and, particularly, improve on personal feedback and corporate information strategies in terms of timing and information quality.

Keywords: Academics, Communication channels, Employee loyalty, Employee productivity, Internal communication strategies, Perception

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