



The effect of perceived organizational support on psychological employment contract breach in Nigeria public universities: The mediating effect of trust

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Abstract

Psychological employment contract breach which signifies the perception of employees regarding the non-fulfilment of employment promises by the employer influences employment relationship in organization. This paper investigated the mediating effect of trust on the relationship between perceived organizational support and psychological employment contract breach. The research draws upon quantitative method in measuring the respondent's perception and the adoption of organizational justice theory. Using proportionate stratified random sampling method, a sample size of 367 academicians that are employees of Nigeria public universities was used as respondents. Factor analysis and correlation analysis was employed to draw the relationship between the variables and the study found that there is relationship between perceived organizational and psychological employment contract breach. The analysis of data showed that the perceived organizational support has positive effect on dimension of psychological employment contract breach (employee frustration). The results also indicated that trust mediated the relationship between perceived organizational support and the dimension of psychological employment contract breach (employee frustration). It is recommended that organizational justice theory be critically considered and adhered to as it plays a critical role in the psychology of lecturers. It also recommended to that image of trust be properly maintained by the employer and that lecturers should be treated with dignity, respect, as well as creating platform for lecturer's feedback to the management on their perception regarding the organizational support.

Keywords: Contract breach, employee frustration, perceived organizational support, public universities, trust

1. Introduction

The University education serves as means of producing individuals with academic excellence because intellectual, mental and professional life of any nation rely on sound higher education. The objective of university education is centred around contributing to national development through inculcating proper value and community service; training and development, acquiring physical and intellectual skills, promoting and encouraging scholarship; strengthening and forging national development; ensuring proper interaction in both national

and international environment. Universities are well-thought-out as a stronghold for academic performance, excellence, and source of intellectualism, knowledge and above all, an appropriate location for training upcoming leaders (Philip & Adeshola, 2013; Ike, 1999, Awodiji, 2021; Abdulsalam & Mawoli, 2012; Istichomah, Suroso & Dimyati, 2018; Abdulaziz, Noman, Saeed, Ibrahim & Kaur, 2024). In accordance to this assertion, Ipinoyomi (2013), emphasized that developing nation-state particularly in Africa, put their expectations in academic institutions to campaign for their growth



and development. He also maintained that “education is the only area we think Nigeria can advance her course in the community of nations” due to the fact that it brings about appropriate development of organizational human capital, citizens and workforce in general. However, when promises are not fulfilled and factors that will motivate the lecturers are not put in place, it results to psychological contract breach, considering the fact that the greatest factor to achieve the objectives and aims of any university settings is the academician or lecturer (Valantinaite & Navickiene, 2024; Nwakpu, 2010), Unfortunately, the public universities in Nigeria is confronted with chains of challenges such as poor attitude towards work due to their poor conditions of service in the universities, government continuous meddling with smooth running of public Universities, termination of lecturers appointments without following due process, dilapidated and poor universities infrastructure, as well as, inadequate support from employer (Adegbaye, 2024; Oriere, 2016; Ogunyemi, 2016). The breach of employment contract can be linked to the continuous industrial action in the Nigeria public Universities due to that fact that the Federal Government of Nigeria (F.G.N) signed a collective agreement with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASSU) in 2009 but failed to ensure full implementation of the contract agreement. The union always based its agitation on three major issues which are: Funding of the system, autonomy of the University and terms and condition of service (Ungwona, 2016). Regarding the issue of terms and condition of service, it was agreed in the ASUU 2009 agreement that academic staff is entitled to all the accrued allowances and shall be paid accordingly. Therefore, it is imperative for organizations to consider factors that will have positive effect on employees’ perception about their employer

concerning their employment contract that is binding them. Also, it is crucial to understand that the normative terms of collective bargaining agreements such as pay, hours of work, wages, as well as other benefits associated to employment in harmony to the principles makes up an employment contract, therefore, it is lawfully enforceable by lecturers or individual personnel as their right (Brown, Deakin, Nash & Oxenbridge, 2000). Studying and knowing the consequences or antecedence of the psychological employment contract breach is crucial as organizations or employers would be properly positioned in handling the employee anticipations, and doing this would enhance the smooth implementing of the management practices that will lessen the consequence of such perception of breach in the place of work organization (Cable, 2008). This research inspects the mediating role that trust plays in the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and psychological employment contract breach using Nigeria public universities as case study. Going by previous studies findings, scholars have recommended the application of trust as mediating variable on independent variable as perceived organizational support (POS) because they maintained that it is infrequently used as mediating variable (DeConinck, 2010). Also, scholars are of the opinion that there is need for mediating variable for the purpose of explaining the relationship that exist among the independent variable and dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Thus, this paper sought to contribute to psychological employment contract breach literature by examining the variable that influences it. It also examines the appropriate variable that strengthen the relationship between the perceived organizational support and psychological employment contract breach.



2. Literature Review

2.1 Psychological Employment Contract Breach

Psychological contract are obligations, trust and beliefs between employers and employees (Rousseau, 1995). While according to Morrison and Robinson (1997) psychological contract breach is the thought of having received below what was initially promised by the employer. The contract breach emanates as a result of one employer failing to fulfil the agreement embedded in the employment contract. Scholars are of the opinion that employees are increasingly influenced to perceive that their employer has failed to fulfil some of the promises made to them. Employee response to psychological contract breach can lead to several undesirable behaviours towards to employers such as counterproductive work attitudes, turnover intention and absenteeism, decreased organizational citizenship behaviours, as well as deteriorated in-role performance (Salin & Notelaers, 2017; Zhao et al., 2007). Also, a common employee reaction to breach that is harmful to the organization is withholding best performance and curtailing extra-role attitude that ought to be beneficial to the employers (Hayibor, 2017; Henderson et al., 2008; Zhao et al., 2007).

Breach of psychological contract is accountable for reduced attitudinal actions towards the employers or organizations (Robinson *et al.*, 1994; Rousseau & McLean, 1993), as well as affecting employment relationship (Robinson et al., 1994; Birtch, Chiang, Zheng, & Cai, 2024). Furthermore, considering the effect of psychological contract breach in the organization, the study by Delcampo, Rogers and Jacobson (2010) emphasized that psychological employment contract breach by the government or employer has positive relationship with the employee perceived discrimination and their feelings in the place of work. It is imperative understand that elimination of the

employees emotional state of psychological employment contract is highly connected to their feelings of support from the organization or employers, because it consist of superfluous organizational responsibilities such as job security through circumventing needless cutting down of jobs that may likely leads to sacking of employee from their respective place of work (Umar & Ringim, 2015). Thus, it has become crucial to examine employers effort that considers the employee attitude (Rousseau, 1995).

2.2 Perceived Organizational Support

In every place of work or organization, employees always have numerous and diverse relationship with important areas, and one of this relationship is what binds them with their relevant employers (Harris & Kacmar, 2018). This factor can summarily be connected to perceived organizational support (POS) which is an employee or workers perception concerning how his or her employer values their contributions at work place or organization, as well as, showing concern about their well-being (Colakoglu, Culha & Atay, 2010; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger, Malone & Presson, 2016). POS is the readiness of the employer or government to compensate their hardworking or respective employees through showing concern and care for their well-being and contributions to the organization accordingly (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Valeria; 1990; Eviana, 2024). This is due to the fact that employees have the propensity of conveying their natural features to the organization, thus ascribing such with its objectives and goals, abilities, values, and also holding malevolent or benevolent intentions towards them (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Furthermore, for organization to flourish properly as previously stated, it must consider the perceived organizational support (POS) as top most main concern



considering the fact that it has great effect on psychological employment contract breach. This is because when employer fail to fulfil its promises to employee, but with the existence of perceived organizational support, it reduces the damage that may arise as a result of breach. For example, new employees always have positive perception about perceived organizational support that is associated with high dedication to the employer which will indirectly reduce the intention to quit and retain the worker accordingly (Wuang, 1995), and this should be maintained as it goes a long way in enhancing positive behaviours at work place. This goes in accordance with findings of previous studies which revealed that perceived organizational support has a positive influence on employees' attitude and commitment, for the fact that it gives the employees sense of obligation in repaying the organization via theory of organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 1990; Arshadi, 2011). Therefore, it is obvious that perceived organizational support (POS) brings about employees' feelings of organizational commitment in returning the favourable treatment given to them by their government or employer, through increment of an intentional actions and optimistic orientation that would in turn be of benefit to the overall organization.

2.3 Trust

Trust is the employee's expectations, anticipations, or beliefs concerning the likelihood that their future actions would be complimentary, advantageous, or to a greater extent, it will not harmful to their common interests in the organization (Robinson, 1996). It is also defined as an employee's prediction as it involves the insight that their respective employers will favour them and not disappoint them or do contrary, and this motivates them in putting in their best for the in attaining the overall organizational goals and objectives. Thus, it is a thing of surprise that breach of

psychological employment contract breach can destroy the earlier trust between the employer and their employee respectively (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Robinson, 1996). The notion of organizational trust has been acknowledged to be a vital component of psychological employment contract because of the reciprocated insight of mutual commitment that bounds the employee and employer (Robinson, 1996; Rousseau, 1995). It is on this note that Robinson (1996) upholds that, despite although the breach of psychological employment contract obligations or responsibilities results to unmet expectations, and that this factor alone should not be a rationalisation for the effects of employment contract breach, therefore, understanding the breach of trust itself is critical to understanding psychological employment contract breach in an organization. Additionally, when the government or employer did not fulfil their previous promises made to their employees, trust will negatively be affected (Walker, 2013; Deery et al., 2006). This is so because employees will no longer repose confidence in their employer as a result of perceived disappointment from the psychological contract. Therefore, employers should maintain certain level of trustworthy as this will reduce employee's anger, frustration, intention to quit and deviancy resulting from the perception of psychological employment contract breach. Knowing fully well that employee mistrust and anger generates to psychological employment contract breach (Morrison and Robinson, 1997).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Several researchers might have applied different methods or views in trying to find a solution to a specific problem in different circumstances. Generally, a lot of researches were carried out with several objectives and perspectives, but not much has been made to examine the relationships in a research framework as done in this study with respect to the topic of the



research alongside the theory (organizational justice theory). The concept of organizational justice theory is crucial to any organization as it smoothing the relationship between employee and employer (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994) Organizational justice deals with the fair treatment of employees in the organization (Randeree, 2008). Organizational justice theory is very crucial as an underpinning theory of the present study because lecturers want to be treated fairly by their employer; and if they do not receive fair treatment, then their perception and behaviour may be negatively affected. Psychological employment contract breach is also associated with organizational justice theory because employees who perceived injustice and unfair have the feeling of breach leading to dissatisfaction with the employer (Furham & Siegal, 2011). Trust is also a variable in the present study and researches have argued that it is a critical element lubricating the justice theory (Colquitt et al., 2001). Meanwhile perceived organizational support is another variable of the present study which also has link with organizational justice theory. This is because the support being received by employees is a key and major construct in the literature of justice (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In addition, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) revealed that perceived organizational support influences organizational justice, employers support, organizational rewards as well as job conditions.

3. Methodology

This study used quantitative method of data analysis because it enhances the testing and identifying the relationship that exist between the variables, as well as measuring the responses of the respondents (Sekeran & Bougie, 2010; Creswell, 2012). The respondents of the present study is lecturers who are employees of Nigeria public universities. The sample size of the study is 367 and it was derived using table of

Krijcie and Morgan's (1970). Although it was increased by 40% in accordance to Babbie, (2015), which makes it 513 questionnaires distributed. These participants completed three measurements of the questionnaire and 436 questioners were retrieved from the field. Most of the participants were male ($n = 265$; 61%). Regarding the respondent's educational qualification, a total of 186 (43%) of the respondents are PhD holders, 166 (38%) were in possession of Master's degree.

3.1 Perceived Organizational Support Measurement

The sources of measuring perceived organizational support is from the previous work of Eisenberger et al., (1986) which thirty six (36) items. The respondents who are lecturers in Nigeria public universities were administered questionnaire on a 5-point likert scale ranging from strong disagree to strongly agree for answering, and for the purpose of measuring their perception on support from their employer. The Cronbach's Alpha for this measurement is 0.703, indicating that the items are reliable because Hair et al. (2007) made an observation that researchers usually consider a Cronbach alpha value of 0.70 as the minimum.

3.2 Psychological Employment Contract Breach

Psychological employment contract breach was measured with 9 items that was adapted from the study of Robinson and Morrison (2000), and it recorded the cronbach's $\alpha = 0.900$ which is above benchmark of 0.70(Hair et al., 2007). Items that were used for the measurements includes the followings; not keeping promises, fulfilling promises, meeting up to promises, benefits, broken a lot of promises, feel sad, felt betrayed, breach and frustrated. They were measured on a 5-point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree in measuring the extent to which the employer have failed to fulfil promises made to employees.



3.3 Trust

Trust was measured using the 7 items that was adapted from the trust Scale of Robinson & Rousseau (1994) which include the following; not sure of trusting, transparent, integrity, intention, honesty, treatment and predictable. The items were measured on a 5 point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree and the reliability test result of this item scored cronbach alpha of 0.836. This shows that the items are reliable because Hair et al. (2007) made an observation that researchers usually consider a Cronbach alpha value of 0.70 as the minimum.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researcher employed the use of parametric test as the data collated was analysed through the application and use of statistical package of social science SPSS (version 24), therefore, conducted the test for reliability, factor analysis as well as conducting the multiple regression analysis so as to examine the significant influence between the independent, mediating and dependent variables respectively. This research used both inferential and descriptive statistics in analysing data accordingly. Also, the quantitative explanations of the data retrieved from respondents was enhanced through the use of descriptive statistics because it summarized a sample rather than the use the entire population (Bichi, 2004), however the inferential statistics scrutinises hypothesis, questions and models, thus making appropriate findings based on the probability of data sample that is observed (Trochim & Donnelly, 2001).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Data Screening

The outliers and missing data were executed and treated accordingly through linearity and normality test (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This study linearity test of was carried out through the application of scatter plotting, whereas, the statistical methods was employed in checking

skewness and kurtosis for the test for normality. After this analysis, the scattered plots look normal, while skewness and kurtosis values fall within the acceptable range of -1.96 and +1.96 (Afifi & Clark, 1998).

4.2 Factor Analysis

The researcher commenced by running Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) test, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and anti-image correlation in accordance with the suggestion by Hair et al. (1998). Hence, Bartlett's test must be at a significant level of less than ($p < 0.05$) (Hair et al., 2010; Field, 2009), and thus found to meet this benchmark because they scored 0.000 for each variable. The anti-image correlation matrix depicts all measures of sampling adequacy (MSA) values for all variables, and result of this study found that all are well above the acceptable level of 0.5. Lastly, the anti-image correlation was checked and all are sufficient as they fall above 0.7 being the standard benchmark.

4.3 Psychological Contract Breach

According to the result of the factor analysis, The KMO value of psychological contract breach is 858. For the aim of extracting the dimension of psychological employment contract breach, the researcher looked at the factors extracted from the Eigenvalues that recorded scores greater than 1 as well as cumulative Eigenvalues percentage that is greater than 60%. Hence, component 1 met this standard requirement and as such, the researcher selected it for psychological contract breach. Four items of the rotated component matrix were selected for this dimension. This is because they met the requirement of factor loading clustered in each factor greater than > 0.5 (Hair, Jr, et. al., 1998).



Table1. Reliability Test for psychological contract breach after Factor Analysis

Psychological Contract Breach	Cronbach's Alpha (α) after factor analysis
Factor 1 (Employees frustration)	0.880

From Table 1 above, the selected four items of psychological contract breach from the rotated component matrix was renamed "employee frustration" based on the contents of the items. The Cronbach's Alpha after factor analysis is 0.880, indicating its reliability.

4.4 Perceived Organizational Support

The result of the factor analysis revealed that KMO value of perceived organizational support is 0.768, and the researcher extracted the dimensions by considering factors with Eigenvalues that

scored greater than 1 and cumulative Eigenvalues percentage greater than 60%. Based on this, component 1 to 10 met this requirement and were selected accordingly. But after the execution rotated component matrix, only factors in component 2 are found to be reliable, and as such all factor 1, 3, 4, 5,6,7,8 9 and 10 were discarded because they did not achieve sufficient reliability value. Hence, component 2 consist of 5 reliable items

Table 2. Reliability Test for Perceived Organizational Support after Factor Analysis

Perceived Organizational Support	Cronbach's Alpha (α) after factor analysis
Factor 2(Perceived Organizational Support)	0.795

From Table 2 above, the Cronbach's Alpha value for perceived organizational support after analysis factor analysis is 0.795. It maintained the name "perceived organizational support" based on the meaning of the items.

4.5 Trust

This research carried out extraction for trust from the eigenvalues putting into

attention only those factors that scores eigenvalues more or greater than 1, as well as cumulative eigenvalues percentage that is greater than 60%. Based on this assertion, component 1 met this requirement, and as such was selected for trust items in the execution of further analysis.

Table 3. Reliability Test for Trust after Factor Analysis

Trust	Cronbach's Alpha (α) after factor analysis
Factor 1 (Trust)	0.836

Table 3 above shows the Cronbach's Alpha (α) value for trust after factor analysis with the value of $\alpha=0.836$. The researcher maintained the name trust for these items in accordance to previous literatures.

4.6 Multiple Regression Analysis for Independent variables, Mediating variable (Trust) and Dependent variable (Employee frustration)

The multiple regression analysis was executed for the purpose of examining which of the independent variables predicts the dependent variables (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2010; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Before carrying out the multiple

regression analysis in this study, the researcher checked for residual violation and found none. Meaning there was no case wise diagnostics or residual violation found here (Hair et al., 2010). Also, both the VIF and tolerance values met the requirement because all the VIF values are above 1.0 while the tolerance values falls below 1.0. This indicates the non-appearance of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2010). The R² value is 0.255 which is equal to 25.5%, and it is noteworthy because it falls above 25% being the tolerance rule (Montgomery, Peck & Vinning, 2001). Model 2 scored the R² value of .456 which



is equal to 45.6%, and it is noteworthy because it falls above 25%, while the F values are also significant because they are

0.000 each, falling below P<0.05 being the acceptable standard rule (Montgomery, Peck & Vinning, 2001).

Table 4. The Result of Multiple Regression Analysis between Perceived Organizational Support, Trust and Employees Frustration.

	Model1 IV- DV	Model 2 IV-M	Model 3 M-DV	Model 4 IV-M-DV
Perceived Organizational Support	.745*			.689*
Trust		-.192*	-.257*	
F Value	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*
R ² Value	0.255*	0.456*	0.255*	0.255*

Note: Significant at P<0.05

From table 4 above, the significance level should not be above P<0.05, and the result Model 1 column indicates that perceived organizational support has positive and significant influence on employee frustration with beta value of .745*. However, from model 2 column, the regression result found that “perceived organizational support” has significant prediction on “trust” in accordance to significant level of P<0.05, and scoring the beta value of -0.192*. In the fourth model, trust mediated the relationship between perceived organizational support and employees’ frustration with beta value of .689*, as well as significant and showing beta value of -.257* in the model 3 column.

4.7 Discussion of findings

The aim of this paper is to examine the mediating influence that trust has on the association among the independent variable which is the perceived organizational support and the dependent variable which is psychological contract breach, using public universities in Nigeria as case study. The result from regression analysis of in this research showed that perceived organizational support (POS) among lecturers in Nigeria public universities considerably and positively influences the frustration among employees’ who are the lecturers.

The findings of this research shows that the greater university lecturers perceive that they are not getting adequate support from

the university or employer, the more the lectures get and feels more frustrated. This is in accordance with organizational justice theory as it influences perceived organizational support from the management or government (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Thus, as mentioned, conditions and terms of employment does not only consist monetary items, it likewise covers non-monetary terms. For instance, although in Nigeria public universities, the academicians are given staff training and development in some cases which ordinarily is thought to provide them sense of belonging as well as displaying that the organization where they worked for care about them and their future association with the organization/universities, but reverse is the case as the academicians still do not recognize that the organization/universities care for them. This is due to the fact that the release for the pursuit of additional studies/academic programme such as MSc and PhDs needs approval for study leave as well as financial sponsorship from the employer as the case may be, but unfortunately, the academicians or lecturers are being released without financial assistance or support. In some instances, the lecturers use their meagre salaries to sponsor themselves for international and local training, hence leaving them in a frustrated condition, as they still have the notion that the employer or organization do not show care towards



them. Hence, based on the above explanations, more emphasis should be placed on the financial stimulus that go together with the release of lecturers for additional training, and not the releasing of the academicians/ lecturers without making provisions for financial enticements.

Another problem affecting the insight of the perceived organizational support by the academicians or lecturers in the Nigeria public universities is the issue of “time factor”. Regarding this factor, the academicians or lecturers at all times anticipate the management as well as government to offer timely interventions on their welfare and rights. Although the management and government is providing these supports, yet the lecturers perceived that they are not feeling such supports from their employer due to delay resulting to untimely intervention. For instance, the academicians/lecturers receive their earned allowances as well as emoluments after many years passing by without getting these entitles supports as at when due. So even when the government or their employer finally renders such supports/allowances to them, they still don't feel contented and satisfied due to the untimely intervention by the government or employer. Thus, based on this notion, the timing of the interventions is critical and should be given extreme significance when providing these provisions to the academicians or lecturers as the case may be.

The lecturers always try their best in ensuring the effective discharging of their obligations to the best of their capability, and as such expecting a reciprocated compensation for their hard work as exchange for their input. The academicians in these universities expect their employer or management to show a level of appreciation and concern over their rendered effort by fulfilling the promises made to them. This is because doing so will make them have the impression that the

employer cares for them, unfortunately, reverse is always the case as seen over time. Although these promises may be met in some instances, but there are issues of inappropriate of precedence by employers because the academicians do perceive that the employer or management do not still show concern towards them, and as such, leading to continuous frustration by lecturers. Giving the right support by the management/employer to lecturers is of paramount importance, as doing so will make them have perception that their entitlements and promises are not dishonoured. This is in cognisance with the findings of Akpan (2013), where he reiterated that the Nigerian public universities lecturers always complain regarding not being sufficiently consulted concerning the suitable organizational support been rendered to them by their employer and management of the universities. Thus, this situation led to the lecturers' feelings of rights violation which has degenerated to their frustration, thereby giving room for low commitment to the institution of learning by the lecturers.

The findings from the regression analysis of this research found that the perceived organizational support among the lecturers in Nigerian public universities has significant and positive influence on employees' frustration, and trust which is the mediating variable was found to appropriately mediate this relationship that exist between the independent and dependent variables respectively. The consequence of this findings is that the more lecturers are provided with the organizational support from their employer or management of the universities, the more they get frustrated, and the association can be reinforced with the integration of mediating variable of trust that exist between them. Thus, in a normal situation, it is anticipated that when the government or employer ensures that the academicians or lecturers perceived organizational support in their respective



universities, they are expected to be glad as well as developing positive work engagement instead of being frustrated (Merik, Ciftci & Yurtal, 2019), but reverse is the case in the findings of this present study. From the review of literatures, several past studies established that when the academicians or lecturers perceived an iota of support from the government or employer, they are encouraged and motivated to put in their best (Dulac *et al.* 2008; Robinson, 1996; Robinson and Morrison, 1995; Kurtessis *et al.*, 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Kickul *et al.*, 2004; Suazo *et al.*, 2005), as well as increasing trust in the employer (Robinson, 1996), but in dissimilarity, this research established otherwise, this is because even after universities provides support to the academicians in Nigeria, they are still not satisfied, rather, becomes more frustrated. For example, the former Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) President, Prof. Biodun Ogunyemi, stressed that numerous part of the 2009 agreement concluded by the federal government and ASUU have either not being implemented or handled with levity without ensuring the fulfilment of terms and conditions embedded in the agreements that was reached, there by deteriorating to “breach of trust”. Knowing fully well that psychological contract breach is associated with organizational justice theory because employees who perceived injustice and unfair treatment have the feeling of breach leading to dissatisfaction with the employer (Furham & Siegal, 2011).

Conversely, trust which means the notion of academicians that their employer or government will not play with their upcoming supposition, belief and expectation in the university (Robinson, 1996), always have greater worth joining together the perceived organizational support and the frustration lecturers. Therefore, it is important for the employers to sustain trust with greater sense of

obligation knowing fully well that when academicians have trust in the employer or management, it tends to increase the self-confidence in their minds, and also putting them in a state of psychological stability. This is because if lecturers develop trust in the employer and management, it erodes frustration that arises from breach of employment contract. For example, Kanyurhi *et al.*, (2024) and Trevino, Brown and Hartman, (2003), highlighted that insincerity from employer or management is the fastest way of putting an end to trust in the minds of the academicians. This is in agreement with organisational justice theory because researches have argued that Trust is a critical element lubricating the justice theory (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001).

It is a known fact that when the suitable organizational support is not provided to the lecturers by their employer or management, they therefore perceive it as unethical organizational practices which dents the image of management trust, frustrating the lecturers and also bringing about low productivity and commitment in research, community service and teaching. For instance, the establishing of libraries in the universities is supposed to be seen as a sign of organizational support from the management of the university whereby academicians can take advantage of the facilities for doing researches, writing books and articles for publication. Hitherto, they perceived that the employer or management don't show concern about their well-being, considering the fact that they always use their personal income from meagre salaries for publication without getting research awards from the government or management as done in other parts of the world like Malaysia where the academicians are being encouraged and motivated conduct research and publications with the intervention financial incentives and research grants (Mohammed & Hamed, 2024; Othman, Mohammed, & D'Silva, 2013).



More so, it is established that trust association brings about required academicians support, learning and quality of teaching (Brockner *et al.*, 1997). It is based on this assertion that Dirks and Ferrin (2002) and Eisenberger *et al.* (1986) upheld that managerial trust leads to diverse types of reward to the lecturers working in the university. These benefits entail increased support, motivation and reduced frustration, and also bringing about good ethical conduct. Past researches have revealed that trust have a significant effect on perceived organizational support and also on the attitudes of employees towards their management or employer (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Academicians that have trust in their employer or university management do not get frustrated, rather, develop long-time reciprocal gestures (Lee, 2005; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Thus, the result of the present research is in accordance with the theory of organizational justice due to the fact that perceived organizational support (POS) is a major construct that influences the lecturers' level of fairness in their various universities (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), as it defines the daily organizational association fairness (Masterson *et al.*, 2000) and also effecting lecturers' frustration. It is a known fact that when the academicians do not get suitable support from their employer or management, it has a significant influence on their perception of justice in the Universities which in turn leads to negative working attitude (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1987; Gouldner, 1960). Scholars have maintained that the academician's insights of justice determine the rate at which they believe that the organization devoted much value and importance to their plight (Masterson *et al.*, 2000; Moorman *et al.* 1998; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), since organizational justice is essential in forecasting and predicting lecturers' attitudes (Cohen-

Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt *et al.*, 2001).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Organizations are faced with increasing demand to address the issue of employee-employer relationship in enhancing mutual obligation. Based on the previous review of literature and findings, the present research is carried out and with the objective to examine the mediating effect of trust on the relationship between perceived organizational support and psychological employment contract breach in Nigeria public universities. The empirical findings show the relationship that exist between the variables and also supported the research major theoretical view point upon which the present research is drawn. The research findings in consistent with a number of previous empirical studies carried out and also in conjunction with the present research underpinning theory. More so, even though there are previous studies that have examined psychological contract breach on job outcomes and employee-employer relationship, the present research specifically addresses the identified theoretical gaps by incorporating trust as a mediator. One important aspect of this research is that the study was carried out in Nigeria which is an African country as against most of the previous conducted in Asia and western world.

5.2 Recommendations

Theoretically, this study recommends the adherence to organizational justice theory because the theory serves as basis smooth running of organization as it influences employee job perception (Usmani & Jamal, 2013; Greenberg, 1990). The study also recommends that employers and management should try as much as possible to maintain trust considering the fact that it mediated the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee frustration. Trust therefore becomes a mechanism of maintaining the fairness as it goes with the lecturers'



perception on employer behaviour and decisions (Robinson, 1996). When lecturers have trust in management, it signifies compliance with justice theory leading to the perception of organizational support, and this tend to eliminate lecturer's frustration as well as perception of unfulfilled promises. Studies found that lecturers' perception of unfulfilled promises as well frustration emanates from loss of trust in employer, which in turn discourages lecturers in putting in their best (Mohamed, 2014). Thus, trust eliminating conflict, strikes as well as frustration (De Vries, 2015; Rousseau, 2011).

Managerially, this study recommends prompt payment of salaries, allowances, accommodation, as well as soft loans for academicians in Nigeria public universities. Promotion should be accompanied immediately with both transactional and non-transactional benefits without unnecessary delay as usual. Also, university management should always involve lecturers in decision making and constant feedback on their action or in action with reasonable justifications. The government should always be sincere to the staff union by implemented what they have signed and embedded in the collective agreement, doing so will eliminate the issue of "breach of trust" which has become the slogan of lecturers towards the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). Lecturers should be paid a competitive salary as obtainable in other African countries or other developing countries like Malaysia as this discourage lecturers quitting their jobs to travel abroad for better offers.

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