



**THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY,
AKURE, NIGERIA**

**HUMAN RESOURCE AND STRATEGY:
THE BACKBONE OF GLOBAL
COMPETITIVENESS**

INAUGURAL LECTURE SERIES 202



Delivered By

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Professor of Human Resource and Strategic Management

Tuesday, 14th July, 2026



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PROTOCOLS

The Vice Chancellor

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Development)

The Registrar

Other Principal Officers of the University

Principal Officers and colleagues of sister Universities and other

Tertiary Institutions

Provost, Deans and Directors

Heads of Departments and Units

Professors and Members of Senate

Members of the University Governing Council, Past and Present

Members of FUTA Alumni Worldwide

My Lords, Spiritual and Temporal

Distinguished Academic, Administrative and Professional
Colleagues

Distinguished Guests and Friends of the University

Great FUTARIANS !!!

Gentlemen of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

PREAMBLE

It is a rare privilege to be part of this great citadel of learning, the best University of Technology in Nigeria.

Today, I stand before you to deliver the 202nd Inaugural Lecture of the University.

Figure 202 can be viewed as a reminder that progress and fruitfulness often come through unity, agreement, and dependence on God when building a solid foundation for the future.

In many cultures 7 is regarded as a number of completeness or good fortune. Some people view 14 as combining the qualities of 1

(Responsible leadership, initiative) and 4 (Stability through solid foundation and discipline). Together, they can symbolise: Making Tuesday 14th a meaningful date for reflection on freedom, purpose, new beginnings, and making progress with determination towards a goal as we have in this inaugural lecture.

My Remarkable Month of July

The month of July is a special month in my life and in the life of my family, both immediate and extended.

Remarkably, all my children were born in the month of July: on 10th July, 17th July and 17th July.

My mother went to be with the Lord in July, and my father-in-law also went to be with the Lord in July.

My husband, Professor Babatunde Ajayi, delivered his Inaugural Lecture on 12th July, 2016, exactly 10 years and 2 days.

I assumed duty as a full-time Lecturer in the Department of Project Management Technology on 17th July.

Here I stand today, 14th July 2026, to deliver the 202nd Inaugural Lecture of FUTA.

Indeed, I owe all these blessings to the grace of God's divine enablement.

This lecture occupies a unique place in the history of the University. It is the 202nd Inaugural Lecture of the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA), the 3rd in the School of Management Technology (SMAT), 2nd in the School of Logistics and Innovation Technology (SLIT) and 1st in the Department of Project Management Technology (PMT).

The Committee of Deans (COD) recommended the topic and date of today's Inaugural Lecture; the Senate, under the chairmanship of our amiable, first female Vice Chancellor, Professor Adenike Temidayo Oladiji, approved them; and the sovereign God, in His mercy, stamped and made them a reality. Man proposes, but God disposes. Blessed be His Name.

The late Mr Babatunde Afen Adebayo figuratively brought my unwilling horse to the stream of University Administration, and gave me a solid and enviable foundation in the profession, and saw me through it all until the completion of my administrative career.

After my promotion to the rank of Reader, he eagerly awaited my elevation to the position of Professor. However, death denied him the opportunity to witness its manifestation.

Previous Lectures from SMAT/SLIT

1st - Prof. Tomola Obamuyi delivered FUTA's 99th Inaugural Lecture titled "Finance, Entrepreneurship, and Institutions: The Triple Helix for Nigeria's Economic Growth" on Tuesday, June 12, 2018

2nd - Prof. Mobolaji Stephens delivered FUTA's 195th Inaugural Lecture titled "Transportation Systems and Infrastructure in Nigeria: Transport Management Approach to Enhancing Efficiency, Safety and Sustainability" on Tuesday, March 24, 2026.

My Journey: Grace, Administration and Scholarship

Madam Vice-Chancellor, every life is a book written by the finger of the Almighty, but my story is a complex, nested tapestry. It is a journey in which the classroom and the boardroom, the pen of the

administrator and the gown of the academic, beautifully converge under the sovereign guidance of El-Shaddai.

Standing before this distinguished gathering today, I am deeply conscious that this moment is not merely the celebration of an academic milestone, but the unfolding of a divine journey: a journey written by grace, sustained by mercy, and fulfilled by God's sovereign purpose.

I was born into royalty – the Adejola Olayisade Dynasty of the Odundun Ruling House of Ido-Ekiti: yet beyond earthly royalty, I count it my greatest privilege to be a daughter and princess of the Most High King. God quietly planted the seeds of purpose, resilience, and faith within me from childhood through Christian family devotion and faithful mentorship.

My character was forged by a divine blend of parental traits: the warrior spirit of my father, Michael, and the resilience, diligence, and deep Christian virtue of my mother, Felicia. My educational voyage began at Omodewa Local Authority Primary School and continued to the historic gates of Ekiti Parapo College, where we were truly collegiate.

But the road to this podium was neither straight nor smooth; it was full of turns, twists, ups, and downs. The path of preparation was rocky. Yet, where human strength faltered, Great Grace stepped in. By a miraculous move of God, after my College of Education training, I benefited from a Federal Government pilot programme that accelerated my university education at the University of Benin. Driven by an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, I proceeded to the Obafemi Awolowo University, "Great Ife", for a Master's degree in Public Administration.

Then, destiny brought me to the Federal University of Technology, Akure. Here, under the unparalleled mentorship of Professor Grace Olutunla, Professor Peter Imoudu, and the legendary Professor Patrick Oribabor of Obafemi Awolowo University, I embarked on my Ph.D. journey. I stand before you today with the immense humility of being the very **first PhD graduate in Management Science in the history of FUTA**. To fit in as a full-time lecturer after my PhD programme in a university of science and technology, I pursued an M.Phil in Business Administration at Obafemi Awolowo University.

Madam Vice-Chancellor, my heart's true delight was always the classroom. Early in my career, I began sharing knowledge by teaching Higher School Certificate students at Oyemekun Grammar School, Akure and National Teachers' Institute (NTI) students at the Akure Study Centre. I had my first taste of university lecturing through a part-time appointment with the University of Lagos COSIT programme. I was ready for the ivory tower, but God had a strategic detour in mind.

In early 1992, an advertisement for Administrative Officer position at FUTA was published. I initially waved it off; I wanted a lecture room, not an administrative office. But through the intense pressure of mentors and the voice of reason, I reluctantly submitted an application. I handled the interview casually, but GRACE secured for me an appointment as Administrative Officer. Initially, I ignored the offer, but pressure to accept the offer continued to mount from well-meaning mentors. The pressure intensified when the then Registrar, Mr. Babatunde Afen Adebayo, an astute administrator in this university, personally encouraged me to accept the offer and assume duty.

I assumed duty as an Administrative Officer I in April 1992, and what followed was a steady progression through the administrative cadre. God guided my growth until I attained the pinnacle of university administration: first, as the **Pioneer Registrar of the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE)**, and subsequently, returning home to serve as the **Registrar and Secretary to the Council, Senate, Convocation, and Congregation of this esteemed citadel, FUTA**, for a full, memorable tenure of five (5) years, followed by a one-year extension (2011-2017).

Yet, throughout my years in the Registry, the academic flame could not be quenched. Like a nested wheel within a wheel, I wore two heavy crowns simultaneously. On weekends and after administrative hours, I was in the classroom as an adjunct and part-time lecturer, teaching and supervising students across FUTA's Diploma in Business Administration, the School of Environmental Technology, and as a foundation lecturer in the School of Management Technology (SMAT). I was even divinely favoured to be part of SMAT's first team of PhD supervisors.

For years, I sought a full-time academic appointment, but the doors remained shut until God's appointed time. In July 2017, having successfully served out my term as Registrar, the deep longings of my soul were finally answered. I stepped into the classroom on full-time basis as a Senior Lecturer.

From that moment, the acceleration was divine. I later served as Acting Head of the Department of Project Management Technology in the School. On October 1, 2023, I attained the distinguished rank of full **Professor of Human Resource and Strategic Management**.

Through seasons of teaching and administration, through responsibilities, transitions, uncertainties, and opportunities, I encountered the faithfulness of God repeatedly. The classroom refined me; leadership responsibilities stretched me; mentors guided me; challenges strengthened me; and grace sustained me.

Today, I summarise this journey through G.R.A.C.E.:

G - Guided by divine wisdom,

R - Refined through trials and responsibilities,

A - Aligned with God's higher purpose,

C - Commissioned for leadership, scholarship, mentorship and service, and

E - Established by Great Grace in the fulfilment of destiny.

Indeed, mine has been a journey of convergence: where administration and scholarship, leadership and service, aspiration and divine timing all met under the sovereign orchestration of God.

As I stand before this august audience, I recognise that what once appeared as delay, interruption, or denial was, in fact, strategic preparation. God was blending administrative authority with academic excellence, governance with mentorship, and leadership with scholarship. Every detour carried direction, every delay carried development, and every closed door concealed a higher design.

How did I navigate from a primary school in Ido-Ekiti, through Secondary School teaching and administration in the Registry, to the exalted chair of a Professor? I cannot fully comprehend it, nor can I give you an adequate human answer. I can only look at this August audience today, July 14, 2026, and declare: *It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The first and greatest manager of excellence is God. From the management perspective, God is the first and greatest strategist and resources manager.

Genesis 1:28 reveals God’s vision, mission, and mandate for humanity at creation, providing a timeless framework for strategic management and competitiveness.

The Bible states:

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion...”

Genesis 1:28, often referred to as the Creation Mandate, presents humanity as purposeful, productive, innovative and responsible stewards of creation. In competitiveness language, God’s commands here point to five imperatives: fruitfulness as productivity and excellence; multiplication as growth and capacity building; replenishment as sustainability; subduing as innovation and strategic management; and dominion as ethical leadership and influence.

Table 1: Framework for Global Competitiveness

Biblical Principle	Competitive Interpretation
Fruitfulness	Productivity and excellence
Multiplication	Growth and expansion
Replenishment	Sustainability
Subduing	Innovation and strategic management
Dominion	Ethical leadership and influence

Source: Adapted from the Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version

Interpreting Genesis 1:28 in this way connects spiritual purpose with strategic management, human resource development, leadership, entrepreneurship and organisational performance. Individuals, institutions, and nations become globally relevant when they cultivate excellence, build capacity, manage resources wisely, and lead ethically.

Why Competitiveness Needs a Human Backbone

Madam Vice-Chancellor, as I reflect on the culmination of my life's work and the arc of my scholarly inquiry, I am drawn to a singular, unifying truth about the nature of success in our modern era. We live in a turbulent global economy, characterised by rapid technological shifts and unpredictable market forces. In such an environment, I submit to you this fundamental proposition: Competition in a turbulent global economy is won through an organisation's capacity to transform resources and appropriate strategy into value through people, not through resource possession alone. (Barney, 1991; Wright et al., 1994; Collings, McMackin, Nyberg, & Wright, 2021).

To navigate this discourse effectively, we must first establish a shared understanding of three foundational concepts. The first is strategy which, in the context of this lecture, is not merely a corporate document; it is a direction and a deliberate choice. It is the roadmap which an organisation uses to navigate risk and uncertainty. The second concept is this: we must redefine how we view people. When I speak of people, I refer not only to attitudes, knowledge and skills (AKS), but also to human capital, relational capital, leadership, participation, and the intricate work systems that bind them together. Lastly, there is competitiveness, which

must be understood not as a fleeting victory or a momentary market advantage, but as the sustained capacity to create value, adapt, and perform across time (Porter, 1996; Teece *et al.*, 1997; Wenzel, Stanske, & Lieberman, 2021; Sunu Widiyanto, 2021; and Teece, 2023).

Thus, global competitiveness is not merely economic rivalry; it is the fulfilment of humanity's divine mandate to be fruitful, transformative, and impactful in the world.

1.1 Conceptual Foundations of the Lecture

Strategic management has evolved from long-range planning to positioning, agility, resilience and distinctive capabilities. Chandler (1962) emphasised goals and resource allocation; Porter (1996) stressed unique positioning; Mintzberg (1987) expanded strategy to plan, pattern, position and perspective; and the resource-based and dynamic-capability perspectives locate advantage in firm-specific resources and adaptive capabilities (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2023; Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2024). This lecture treats strategy as deliberate direction, disciplined choice and effective capability execution.

Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management has evolved from personnel administration to a strategic field concerned with how people systems shape organisational performance. The Michigan model emphasised strategic fit, while the Harvard model foregrounded employee influence, work systems, reward systems, and human resource flows (Beer *et al.*, 1984; Fombrun, Tichy, & Devanna, 1984). Strategic HRM, therefore, refers to planned human

resource deployments and activities that enable organisational goals (Wright & McMahan, 1992; Collings *et al.*, 2021).

This lecture adopts an integrative, high-commitment SHRM framework: recruitment, capability building, fair appraisal, transparent communication, equitable reward, inclusion, participation, wellbeing, relational capital, knowledge sharing, retention and digital readiness.

Global competitiveness

Global competitiveness has also shifted from inherited factor endowments to productivity, institutions, infrastructure, ICT adoption, skills, labour-market conditions, business dynamism and innovation capability (Porter, 1990; World Economic Forum, 2024; IMD, 2024).

This lecture adopts a distinct human-centred, organisational-capability framework. It defines competitiveness not as a temporary market victory, but as the sustained capacity to create value, adapt and perform over time. It explicitly argues that competitive success depends on an organisation's capacity to convert resources and appropriate strategy into value through people rather than on resource possession alone (Ajayi, 1999; Ajayi, 2026).

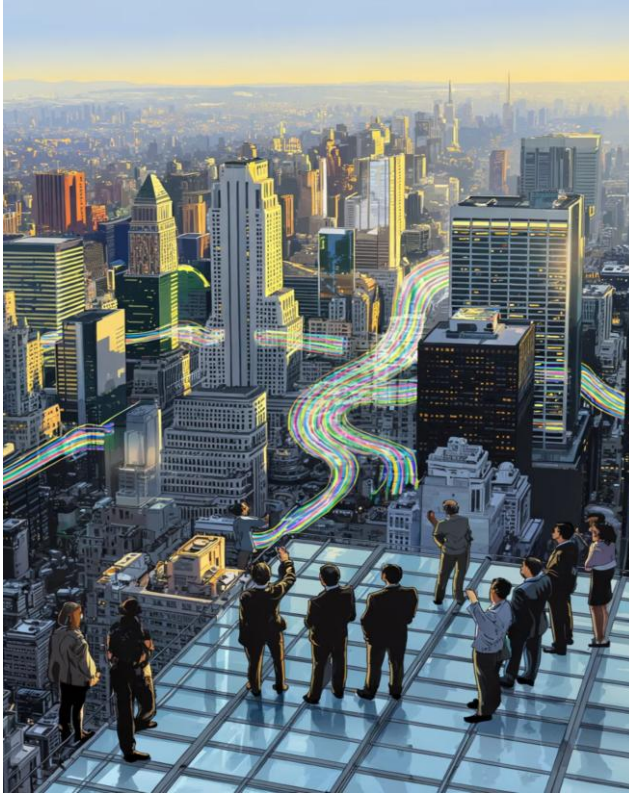


Figure 1: The Backbone of Global Competitiveness

A review of my research portfolio may appear broad, but it is coherent. Across gender participation, university administration, SHRM, organisational performance, knowledge management, digital innovation and human capital investment, the central concern has remained how people are organised, developed and engaged to make institutions competitive (Becker & Huselid, 2006; Boxall & Purcell, 2016).

My early work on gender participation, university governance and construction decision-making established that inclusion and

participation improve morale, goal congruence and productivity (Ajayi & Owoeye, 2005). Later work on training, reward, appraisal, communication, work-life balance, diversity, knowledge management, relational capital, e-health, e-recruitment and e-compensation confirmed the same principle: strategy becomes performance only when people systems are deliberately aligned with organisational purpose and strategic intent. This concept is reflected in Figure 1

Organisations succeed when they recognise that their true competitive advantage walks through their doors every morning. Strategy charts the course and sets the destination; people provide the backbone, the motion, and the resilience (Wright *et al.*, 1994). Figure 2 refers for an operating system for competitive advantage.

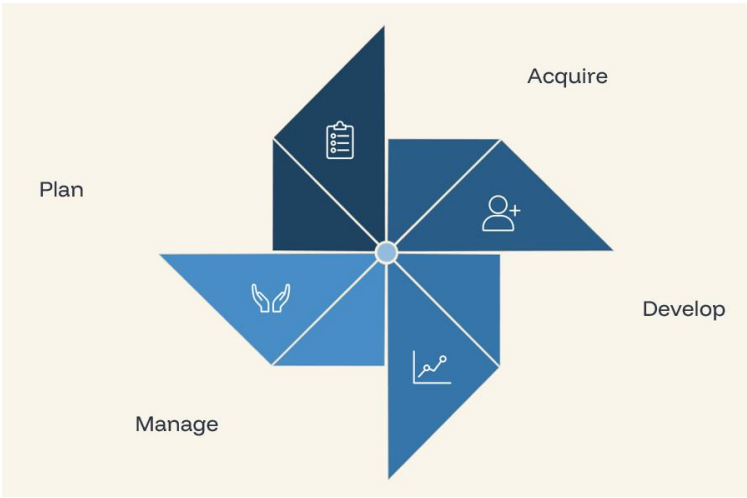


Figure 2: Human Operating System

2.0 MY SCHOLARLY JOURNEY: PARTICIPATION, STRATEGIC HRM AND DIGITAL INNOVATION

The Early Trajectory: Foundations of Participation and Governance

My early scholarly trajectory focused firmly on the foundational elements of inclusion, representation, and the mechanics of decision-making. I recognised early on that an organisation that silences segments of its population effectively amputates part of its own potential. We investigated gender participation in housing, explored gender concerns in housing and the environment, and analysed gender discrepancies in university education. This line of inquiry extended into environmental management, where we demonstrated that structural inclusivity, such as integrating a gender perspective into environmental initiatives within the Nigerian University System, is essential to sustainable institutional success (Aasa, **Ajayi**, Ogunjobi, & Akinbogun, 2019). Furthermore, we analysed the gender dynamics of social capital among entrepreneurs, revealing how the ability to leverage common interests and relational networks influences enterprise survival and poverty alleviation (**Ajayi**, 2023).

We also scrutinised the very structures of organisational governance by examining committee systems in Nigerian universities. Perhaps the most pivotal milestone of this early era was our empirical investigation into the construction industry. By studying workers' participation in construction decision-making, we empirically demonstrated that goal congruence, the alignment of individual aspirations with organisational objectives, cannot be

dictated; it must be cultivated. We established that when workers are actively integrated into the formulation of policies, their morale surges, conflicts are minimised, and overall production levels rise significantly (Ajayi & Owoeye, 2005). These early studies collectively formed the bedrock of my research philosophy. They demonstrated that participation, governance, and institutional effectiveness are inextricably linked, proving that you cannot mobilise a workforce that feels disenfranchised from the very processes that govern their daily labour.

2.1 The Middle Trajectory: Strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) and the Mechanics of Commitment

Building upon this bedrock of participation, my middle trajectory expanded into the intricate mechanics of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM). Having established that participation matters, the inquiry shifted to how organisations can systematically develop, motivate, and retain their human capital to drive productivity.

We delved deeply into the food and beverage sector, establishing a demonstrable linkage between SHRM practices, cultural orientations, employee motivation, and firm performance. It was established that HR practices such as training and compensation are not mere administrative functions but vital strategic tools for organisational leverage for effectiveness. (Akindele, Olajide, & Ajayi, 2011). Furthermore, we focused on the aviation industry, where it was further confirmed that highly skilled and trained personnel are non-negotiable for international competitiveness and that bridging the gap between expected standards and actual

performance requires deliberate manpower development (Owoputi & **Ajayi**, 2012).

Crucial to mobilising human capital is understanding what binds employees to institutions and fosters commitment. We unpacked the dynamics of organisational commitment among civil servants in Southwest Nigeria, exploring how demographic realities like gender and age influenced dedication. We found that commitment levels vary significantly across age groups, thereby demanding nuanced, targeted motivational strategies from leadership (**Ajayi**, 2017).

Our investigations into personnel capacity-building revealed the transformative power of education in the workplace. Our study established a direct relationship between comprehensive training programmes and improved performance, critical thinking, and adaptability within the university system (**Ajayi** & Okhankhuele, 2019). Commitment was also examined through the lens of workers' motivation. We confirmed that intrinsic reward systems, such as recognition, learning opportunities, and autonomy, significantly influence employee performance in tertiary institutions. (**Ajayi**, 2019). This finding was further corroborated by our study of the banking industry, which revealed that reward systems must align seamlessly with corporate culture to drive peak performance and organisational commitment. (Adigun, **Ajayi**, & Ogunjobi, 2025).

Furthermore, performance appraisal, often dreaded by employees, was another area of research focus in relation to HRM and commitment. In our assessment of the News Agency of Nigeria, we found that objectively implemented performance

appraisals serve as powerful psychological motivators that boost productivity, enhance communication skills, and build employee confidence when feedback is communicated effectively (**Ajayi & Awoyinfa**, 2020). In the industrial sector, our studies of Nigerian Breweries demonstrated that effective communication is the live wire that drives productivity, as it acts as the primary mechanism for resolving industrial conflicts, ensuring organisational harmony, and enhancing workers' motivation and performance (**Akindele & Ajayi**, 2019; **Dunmade, Kadiri, Ajayi, Omolabi, Babatunde, & Olusesi**, 2020).

The studies have demonstrated that achieving peak productivity requires a holistic approach that honours the humanity of the worker. This involves the critical necessity of robust work-life balance practices, such as flexible time and work arrangements and family support, to mitigate work overload and sustain employee well-being (**Ajayi**, 2020). Further analysis of the broader socio-economic and psychological effects of industrial activities revealed that a symbiotic relationship among stakeholders in the industrial sector, such as between host communities and organisations, is essential for workers' performance and a high level of production. This was part of our findings working in exploration communities (**Ajayi**, 2015). We also demonstrated that fostering an inclusive environment through diversity management, embracing ethnic, gender, and social diversity, exerts a significant positive effect on employee performance and innovation (**Dunmade, Ajayi, Ajao, & Asa**, 2021). Furthermore, my collaborative work established that ensuring workplace safety is indispensable for successful project execution and the protection of human resources on construction sites (**Ajayi, et al.**, 2020).

2.2 The Advanced Trajectory: Knowledge, Digital Innovation, and Project Leadership

As the global economy transitioned decisively into a knowledge-based digital paradigm, my advanced research focus pivoted to address these new and complex frontiers. The central question evolved: How do we mobilise human resources when the very nature of work, technology, and knowledge is undergoing radical transformation? This involved the architecture of knowledge itself.

Our investigations demonstrated that knowledge management is critical for enhancing job performance. Our studies demonstrated that factors such as job security, management support, and a friendly organisational culture are necessary to encourage staff to share and capture vital institutional knowledge, especially in the university system. (**Ajayi**, Adebambo, & Olusunmbola, 2020). In later studies, we found that the specific application and discovery of knowledge significantly drive academic staff performance in the university system (Ogunyemi, **Ajayi**, & Akinyemi, 2023; **Ajayi**, 2023). Deepening this inquiry, we found that human capital investment strongly predicts teaching quality, while relational capital, the networks of collaboration, partnerships, and information sharing, serve as a principal lever for improving both teaching quality and community service (Abimbola, **Ajayi**, Olowookere, & Okhankhuele, 2025a; Abimbola, **Ajayi**, Olowookere, & Okhankhuele, 2025b).

As digital systems began to permeate every sector, it was found that the intersection of human capital and digital innovation is of great importance. Technological infrastructure is meaningless

without human acceptance and skill. Our studies revealed how e-commerce models influence the financial sustainability of deposit money banks (Bedu, Abayomi, & **Ajayi**, 2022) and explored the critical nexus of cybersecurity and financial innovation (Akintoye, Ogunode, **Ajayi**, & Joshua, 2022).

It is noteworthy that our investigations into complex Information Technology projects revealed that specific leadership skills, such as strategic communication, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and visionary decision-making, are paramount for navigating uncertainty and driving project success. (Popoola, **Ajayi**, & Alade, 2024; Popoola, Alade, & **Ajayi**, 2024).

Evidence Foundation

Across these studies, one conclusion remains consistent: the way institutions organise, value, and engage people determines whether strategy becomes performance. Whether the subject is conflict management, knowledge transfer, work-life balance, digital recruitment, or construction governance, people remain the decisive variable in organisational development.

Competitiveness: Strategy Gives Direction, but People Give Motion.

Madam Vice-Chancellor, over the decades, I have observed boardrooms where brilliant visions are crafted, and shop floors where those same visions either flourish or die. This observation has led me to the unifying thesis that has guided my scholarly inquiry: **Strategy gives direction, but people give motion.**

To understand this paradigm, we must first establish an accessible definition of strategy. Strategy is not a mystical corporate secret;

it is simply the disciplined choice of where to go, how to compete, what to prioritise, and what capabilities to build. It is the architectural blueprint of an institution's future. Without aligned recruitment, continuous development, equitable reward systems, objective appraisal processes, dynamic communication frameworks, and steadfast leadership alignment, even the most elegantly designed strategies remain inert documents rather than drivers of organisational performance. Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the vital bridge spanning the perilous gap between organisational ambition and actual execution (Porter, 1996).

A strategy that does not enter the hands, heads, hearts, and habits of workers is not yet a strategy; it is only a document waiting to come to life. Today, I can affirm from my studies across diverse sectors, from manufacturing and brewing to tertiary institutions and the media, that people systems are the fundamental engines that convert organisational intention into measurable, sustainable output. (Becker & Huselid, 2006).

2.3 Strategic HRM, Capability Building, Appraisal, Communication and Reward

When an organisation charts a new strategic course, it is the workforce that must propel the ship forward. If the human resource practices are misaligned with the strategic intent, the organisation will drift. In our empirical investigation of the Nigerian food and beverage industry, we sought to understand the expository linkage between strategic human resource practices, cultural orientations, and firm performance (Akindele, Olajide, & Ajayi, 2011).

We discovered that SHRM practices, most notably training and development, alongside compensation systems, do not operate in an administrative vacuum. Instead, they act as critical levers that explain significant variances in firm performance (Akindele, Olajide, & **Ajayi**, 2011). Our findings showed that employee motivation uniquely mediates the relationship between these HR practices and the firm's ultimate success. When an organisation utilises strategic HR practices to fulfil its employees' needs equitably and fairly, it transforms the workforce into a dynamic asset capable of executing the firm's strategic objectives (Akindele, Olajide, & **Ajayi**, 2011). The strategy provided the direction for these manufacturing firms, but it was the culturally attuned mobilisation of human capital that provided the motion, proving that competitive advantage is sustained not through machinery, but through people.

An organisation cannot demand a level of execution from its people that it has not equipped them to deliver. When strategic directions shift, whether due to technological advancements or changing market forces, institutions must simultaneously elevate the capabilities of their workforce. The university system provides a perfect lens for this dynamic.

Training bridges the gap between a university's established operational standards and the actual performance of its administrators, according to our study examining the administrative staff of The Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) (**Ajayi** & Okhankhuele, 2019). We empirically established that both on-the-job and off-the-job training methods have a profound and significant effect on employees' skills, competencies, and attitudes (**Ajayi** & Okhankhuele, 2019). We

found that trained employees make fewer mistakes, adapt more readily to modern information technologies, and demonstrate greater loyalty and commitment to their work. This aligns with the biblical admonition to “study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.” (2 Tim. 2:15).

However, we also identified critical barriers, noting that a lack of adequate funds and the absence of incentives to attend training severely restrict staff from adapting to changes in their working environment (**Ajayi & Okhankhuele**, 2019). This highlights a crucial strategic failure: when an institution neglects the development of its people, it paralyses its own strategy. By investing in training, an organisation ensures that its strategic ambitions are met with the requisite human competence to realise them.

To ensure that employee efforts are directed toward the organisation’s strategic objectives, robust performance management systems must be in place. Historically, performance appraisal has been viewed with trepidation, often wielded as a punitive tool. Yet, my research advocates for a paradigm shift, framing appraisal not as a weapon, but as a compass.

In an assessment of the News Agency of Nigeria, we investigated the relationship between employee performance appraisal and productivity (**Ajayi & Awoyinfa**, 2020). The empirical evidence revealed a positive, statistically significant relationship between objective performance appraisals and employee productivity. We demonstrated that when the results of performance appraisals are communicated effectively and implemented with sincerity, they transcend mere evaluation. They become powerful psychological

motivators that enhance communication skills, foster a positive attitude toward work, and build profound confidence within the employee (**Ajayi & Awoyinfa**, 2020).

When employees are assured that their appraisals are treated with the utmost seriousness and accompanied by a constructive feedback system, they align their individual goals with the corporate strategy. This converts the strategic intentions of the organisation into measurable, high-quality output, reinforcing that a strategy that does not enter the hands, heads, hearts, and habits of workers is not yet a strategy; it is only a document waiting for life.

An organisation is a living organism. If strategy is the brain and people are the muscles, then communication is the nervous system that connects them. Without it, coordination collapses, and motion becomes chaotic. When responsibilities, lines of authority, and job descriptions are clearly defined and communicated, employees understand exactly how their daily tasks contribute to the broader organisational vision.

To investigate this relationship, we explored the impact of effective communication on productivity in Nigerian Breweries Plc. (**Akindele & Ajayi**, 2019). Our findings revealed that effective communication directly dictates the level of productivity and the output of workers. Furthermore, our research established that a lack of communication between workers and management is the primary catalyst for industrial conflicts, conflicts that derail strategic execution and drain organisational resources.

A strategy cannot survive in silence. It requires transparent, continuous dialogue to translate boardroom decisions into shop-floor reality, ensuring that the entire workforce moves in unison toward the strategic destination. The study also revealed that upward and downward communication within the brewery industry hierarchy allowed for the free exchange of ideas and the prompt resolution of grievances before they escalated.

Organisations must provide the right incentives through strategic reward systems. Strategy dictates what needs to be done, but it is the reward system that dictates whether employees will actually care enough to do it (**Ajayi**, 1999).

In examining employee performance across selected tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, we isolated the impact of intrinsic reward systems (**Ajayi**, 2019). We established that motivation as an intrinsic reward, such as consultative participation in decision-making, continuous learning opportunities, and the recognition of achievement, have a profound and positive impact on employee performance. When employees feel their contributions are valued and they are entrusted with autonomy, their psychological commitment to the institution deepens, directly driving up their measurable output.

Expanding this inquiry to the highly competitive banking industry, we assessed the factors influencing the choice of reward systems in deposit money banks in Akure. The study revealed that aligning rewards with the organisational strategy (ranked 1st) is the single most important factor influencing the choice of a reward system, followed closely by organisational culture and values which ranked 2nd (Adigun, **Ajayi**, & Ogunjobi, 2025). This

is a monumental finding. The findings demonstrate that financial and non-financial rewards should not be distributed haphazardly; they must be strategically designed to reinforce the exact behaviours and performance metrics that the organisation's overarching strategy demands. When a bank aligns its compensation framework with its strategic objectives, it ensures that the workforce is actively incentivised to propel the organisation forward.

2.4 The Human Architecture of Success

Madam Vice-Chancellor, distinguished audience, from the bottling lines of the Nigerian Breweries to the newsrooms in Abuja, from the banking halls in Akure to the administrative offices of our very own universities, the truth remains consistent. Organisations succeed not only because they possess financial capital or a compelling strategic vision, but also because they cultivate the human architecture necessary to translate that vision into reality.

Strategic Human Resource Management is not merely a supplementary administrative function. It is the very conduit through which ambition is transformed into execution. It is the process of recruiting the right people, developing their capacities, appraising their progress with empathy, communicating with them transparently, and rewarding their efforts equitably.

As leaders, scholars, and managers, we must remember that an organisation's strategic plan is merely a declaration of intent. It is a map, but a map has never moved a ship. **A strategy that does not enter the hands, heads, hearts, and habits of workers is not yet a strategy; it is only a document waiting for life.**

Strategy gives the direction, but it is the people - engaged, developed, and valued - who provide the motion.

Competitiveness and Inclusion

Today, we navigate a turbulent and unforgiving global economy. It is an era characterised by rapid technological disruptions, shifting economic paradigms, and fierce global rivalries. Classical models of economic advantage teach that nations and organisations compete primarily on the basis of material resources, land, capital, and physical infrastructure. But my years of research have led me to a radically different conclusion. I submit to you today a foundational proposition that must reshape our approach to development: **Competitiveness requires inclusion. No nation wins with half its talent excluded.**

Inclusion is a hard, inescapable economic necessity. Societies and institutions that systematically exclude women, the youth, older workers, civil servants, non-teaching staff, host communities, and informal entrepreneurs do not merely commit a moral failing; they actively cripple their own productive capacity and destroy their competitive positioning. For too long, inclusion has been framed primarily as a moral imperative, a matter of fairness, social justice, or corporate social responsibility. While inclusion is certainly all of those things, my scholarship suggests that we must also reframe the narrative (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Shore *et al.*, 2011).

My discrete investigations, from the construction sites of Southwestern Nigeria to the boardrooms of multinational breweries, from the volatile host communities of the Niger Delta to the digital frontiers of e-commerce, collectively build toward

this unified thesis. Competitiveness is not merely about the resources an organisation possesses, but also about the people it engages to mobilise those resources.

I recognised early on that an organisation or a nation that silences segments of its population effectively amputates its potential. Over the years, I found that structural inefficiencies arise when gender perspectives are excluded from critical domains such as housing production, environmental management, and technological adoption.

An empirical investigation into the gender influence on internet usage in Southwestern Nigeria (Alese, Owoyemi, & **Ajayi**, 2005) recognised that ICT is a universal vehicle for productivity, improvement, and innovation; however, we found that women were significantly underrepresented in leveraging this vital tool. Around the world, men have historically dominated the economy and social institutions, leaving the potential of women under-utilised. Our findings underscored the need to develop the full potential of all citizens, especially women, because gender equality and effective ICT empowerment are inextricably linked to sustainable regional development.

This early focus on gender matured into broader investigations of environmental management and social capital. In our assessment of stakeholders' participation in environmental management within the Nigerian University System, we established that gender is a distinguishing factor in determining human relationships with the environment (Aasa, **Ajayi**, Ogunjobi, & Akinbogun, 2019). We discovered that while both male and female stakeholders exhibit high levels of participation in areas

like energy saving, their approaches to waste management and transportation vary. The critical insight here is that men and women are not homogeneous groups; they bring different knowledge, needs, and innovations to natural resource management. Excluding the female perspective from environmental policy does not merely marginalise women; it results in incomplete and less effective policies that fail to achieve true environmental sustainability.

More recently, I extended this gender analysis to the areas of entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation. The social capital status of male and female micro-scale entrepreneurs was investigated (**Ajayi, 2023**). Social capital, the networks of relationships, trust, and common interest, are as important to entrepreneurship as financial capital. A concerning reality emerged: both male and female entrepreneurs in the metropolis were failing to take advantage of their social capital, recording low levels of trust, labour contribution, and membership density. When female entrepreneurs, who dominate the informal retail sectors, are excluded from robust social networks and cooperative backing, they lose access to credit, innovation, and shared resources. Economic growth that excludes gender balance is inherently unsustainable. If we exclude the collaborative power of women from our economic frameworks, we limit our collective capacity for economic growth and competitiveness; it is akin to fighting a war with one hand tied behind one's back.

2.5 The Institutional Framework: Workers' Participation and Governance

Historically, the Nigerian construction industry has been plagued by project delays, cost overruns, and industrial disharmony. To better understand this phenomenon, we conducted an empirical investigation into workers' participation in decision-making within the construction sector. (Ajayi & Owoeye, 2005). We discovered a pervasive culture of exclusion in which management often viewed workers as insufficiently equipped to engage with the complexities of modern organisational operations. However, our findings revealed a compelling counter-narrative: when workers are actively integrated into policy formulation, morale improves, conflicts are minimised, and productivity rises significantly.

We confirmed the concept of "goal congruence", the alignment of an individual's personal aspirations with the organisation's objectives. Goal congruence cannot be imposed from the boardroom; it must be cultivated through participation and inclusive dialogue. When workers are excluded from decision-making, their goals may diverge from organisational objectives, conflicts may arise, and project outcomes may suffer. This demonstrated that participation and institutional effectiveness are inextricably linked. You cannot mobilise a workforce that feels disenfranchised from the very processes that govern their daily labour.

In the civil service, we investigated the influence of gender and age on organisational commitment among civil servants in Southwest Nigeria in order to understand how demographic

factors affect loyalty and productivity. Interestingly, we found that gender does not significantly influence commitment; male and female civil servants exhibit similar levels of dedication when given equal opportunities (Ajayi, 2017). However, age groups showed significant variations. Younger workers and older workers displayed higher commitment than the middle-aged cohort, signalling that a one-size-fits-all, exclusionary policy fails to capture the hearts of the entire workforce. The study concluded that organisations should formulate inclusive policies that recognise and motivate the differing needs of various age groups, proving that recognizing and accommodating diversity is a prerequisite for maximum organisational commitment.

Madam Vice-Chancellor, the imperative of inclusion does not stop at the gates of organisations or the walls of institutions; it extends to the very territories and communities where organisations operate. For decades, Nigeria has grappled with the devastating economic and social costs of excluding host communities from the benefits of resource extraction, especially in the mining and extractive industries. The history of resource extraction in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta, has been a tragic tale of massive environmental degradation, social disequilibrium, and large-scale unemployment amidst vast wealth. This represents one of the clearest manifestations of economic exclusion.



Figure 3: The Shifting Sands of Global Competitiveness

I explored this critical issue through an in-depth assessment of the socio-economic and psychological effects of bitumen exploration on the Agbabu community in Ondo State (Ajayi, 2015). In our study, we argued that sustainable bitumen exploration requires a fundamental paradigm shift from exploitative practices to a holistic approach that achieves synergy between investors and the host communities.

When a host community is excluded from the economic dividends of the resources beneath their feet, the result is not just poverty; it is youth unrest, militancy, and the total disruption of corporate operations. A symbiotic relationship grounded in civic education, youth empowerment, micro-credit provisioning, and the genuine integration of the community's psychological and social welfare into the corporate strategy is required (**Ajayi**, 2015). If host communities are treated as mere collateral damage in the pursuit of wealth, a systemic instability is being invited. Territorial inclusion is, therefore, a stringent requirement for continuous, profitable operations and national security.

A nation that fails to include its youth in its economic and institutional frameworks actively undermines its future. As educators, our primary responsibility is to empower the next generation to drive national competitiveness. This is because we currently face a staggering crisis of youth unemployment. Recognising this challenge, we investigated entrepreneurial intentions among students in selected tertiary institutions (**Ayedun & Ajayi**, 2018). Our premise was clear: the traditional, formal labour market can no longer absorb the growing number of graduates. Therefore, economic survival requires fostering an entrepreneurial mindset. We found that the introduction of entrepreneurship education significantly increased students' awareness and interest in undertaking entrepreneurship as a career. However, we also found that many government interventions overlook the need to cultivate the attitudes and mindsets necessary for entrepreneurial success, focusing instead on bureaucratic hurdles. True generational inclusion requires providing young people with the competencies, financial support,

and enabling environment they need to convert their ideas into viable Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

This connects directly with our extensive work on Knowledge Management (KM) within the university system. We established that the intellectual capital of a university, comprising human, structural, and relational capital, constitutes one of its greatest competitive assets (Abimbola, **Ajayi**, Olowookere, & Okhankhuele, 2025). Relational capital, which represents the networks of collaboration and information sharing both internally and externally, was found to be a principal lever for improving teaching quality and community service. Furthermore, we established that factors such as job security, management support, and employee involvement are critical for creating an inclusive, friendly organisational culture where staff are willing to share, rather than hoard, their knowledge (**Ajayi**, Adebambo, & Olusunmbola, 2020). By applying knowledge discovery and application actively, academic staff elevate institutional performance (Ogunyemi, **Ajayi**, & Ayedun, 2023). Inclusion here means bringing every mind into a shared ecology of learning and innovation.

Madam Vice Chancellor and distinguished audience, as we map this historical scholarship onto current global dynamics, the urgency of this argument becomes starkly apparent. We are currently undergoing a massive transition into the digital economy, a paradigm shift driven by e-commerce, digital health, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. In this new frontier, competitive advantage accrues to those societies that deliberately widen access to technology adoption and enterprise opportunity.

Considering the financial sector, we investigated the effect of e-commerce models on the financial sustainability of Deposit Money Banks (Bedu, Abayomi, & **Ajayi**, 2022). We found that the accessibility, availability, and usability of e-commerce models jointly and positively affect the financial sustainability of these banks. However, this digital transition carries profound risks if it is not inclusive. In our exploration of cybersecurity and financial innovation, we established that rapid population growth and the drive to reduce financial exclusion make financial innovation vital (Akintoye, Ogunode, **Ajayi**, & Joshua, 2022). Yet, poor design and lopsided implementation leave the system vulnerable. We demonstrated that robust cybersecurity, supported by effective risk management and monitoring, is essential for sustaining financial innovation. If a bank pushes digital innovation but fails to include its workforce and customers in the necessary training and security awareness programmes, the technology will fail, and the institution may suffer devastating losses.

This same principle applies to public health. In evaluating employee acceptance of e-health systems in specialist hospitals in Ondo State, we discovered that the successful deployment of health technologies depends fundamentally on staff readiness and capacity to utilise them (**Ajayi**, Abasilim, & Adejumo, 2022). We found that the high cost of equipment acquisition and unreliable electricity supply were major challenges, but more importantly, if the health workers are excluded from periodic, scheduled training with clear roadmaps, the technology becomes useless. To improve healthcare delivery outcomes, top management must inclusively embrace the workforce, empowering both male and

female employees equally with digital literacy (**Ajayi**, Abasilim, & Adejumo, 2022).

Similarly, we observed that digitalising human resources profoundly impacts performance. Empirical evidence from the brewery industry revealed that e-recruitment practices significantly enhance organisational performance by optimising talent acquisition (Epebinu, **Ajayi**, Adepoju, & Jesuleye, 2022), while e-compensation management significantly improves operational accuracy and employee satisfaction (Epebinu, Adepoju, & **Ajayi**, 2023). Yet again, technology is only as effective as the people who operate, manage, and sustain it.

Even in the highly regulated, knowledge-intensive pharmaceutical industry, we have seen that failing to include and value human capital leads to devastating consequences. Our recent study on employee turnover in the pharmaceutical industry in Southwest Nigeria highlighted that high attrition rates directly disrupt production efficiency, compromise product quality through good manufacturing practice (GMP) non-compliance, and weaken customer loyalty (Amadi-Okocha, **Ajayi**, Ayedun, & Okhankhuele, 2025a). When highly skilled professionals are forced to leave due to a lack of career advancement, competitive compensation, or supportive culture, the organisation loses its most vital competitive edge. Retention is the ultimate act of inclusion. To remain competitive and effective, firms must nurture their employees' career ambitions and foster a strong, inclusive organisational culture (Amadi-Okocha, **Ajayi**, Ayedun, & Okhankhuele, 2025b). Furthermore, ensuring that external partnerships and outsourced activities are managed inclusively, mitigating risks without alienating the workforce, remains a

delicate but necessary strategic balance (Onafadeji, **Ajayi**, & Olowokere, 2023).

2.6 The Economics of Inclusion

When we deliberately widen access to education, mandate participation in decision-making, democratise technology adoption, and expand enterprise opportunities to the marginalised, we are not merely doing the right thing, we are doing the smart thing. We are unleashing dormant productive capacity and are converting latent human potential into kinetic economic motion.

Conversely, when we design systems that lock out the brilliant minds of our women, when we ignore the frustrations of our youth, treat our civil servants as mere cogs in a machine, view host communities as obstacles rather than partners, and leave our informal entrepreneurs without social and financial capital, we sabotage our own prosperity. Exclusion is an act of economic self-mutilation. It actively undermines every strategic objective a nation or an institution sets out to achieve.

I wish to affirm that strategy may be drafted in the boardrooms, and policies may be written in the corridors of power, but competitiveness is either won or lost in how we engage the everyday conduct of our people.

We can no longer afford the luxury of leaving anyone behind. If Nigeria, and indeed Africa, is to claim its rightful place in the global economic hierarchy, a radical, comprehensive ethos of inclusion must be embraced. **Exclusion is not merely unfair; it**

is economically inefficient, strategically careless, and nationally costly.

Human Capital is Built, Not Assumed.

Madam Vice-Chancellor, Principal Officers of the University, esteemed colleagues, distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen. As we progress through the narrative of my intellectual journey, having established the imperative of inclusive strategies and the foundational role of people in driving organisational motion, we arrive at the third core argument of my scholarship. This argument confronts a pervasive and dangerous misconception in modern management, a fallacy that has crippled many promising institutions. It is often assumed that recruiting talented individuals is sufficient to guarantee organisational excellence. However, my decades of empirical investigation have consistently demonstrated a profound, unyielding truth: **human capital is built, not assumed.**

In corporate boardrooms and University Senate Chambers alike, we frequently hear the refrain, "Our people are our greatest asset." Yet, without deliberate action, this remains merely aspirational language. Human capital is not a static endowment acquired at the point of recruitment. It comprises the accumulated knowledge, skills, attitudes, health, experience, and relationships that enable performance. Because the global environment is relentlessly advancing, human capability is fundamentally dynamic and constructed. It demands deliberate financial investment, unwavering institutional commitment, and continuous learning cycles. Today, I will draw upon my research portfolio across aviation, academia, and the pharmaceutical

industry to illustrate how capability develops in practice, the barriers that stifle it, the enablers that unlock it, and why treating training as an optional luxury is a recipe for organisational obsolescence (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961).

2.7 The Perils of Assumed Capability: Manpower Development in Aviation

To understand why capability is fundamentally dynamic and constructed, we must first examine what happens when an industry neglects this foundational investment. The aviation industry is one characterised by complex technologies, stringent international safety standards, and high-risk operations. It is an industry where competence cannot be assumed; it must be rigorously and continuously engineered.

In our empirical investigation into manpower development within the Nigerian aviation industry, the findings were stark and alarming. We observed a severe deficiency in manpower proficiency, revealing that over 75 percent of the staff lacked both the requisite educational background and the specialised knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of international aviation standards (Owoputi & **Ajayi**, 2012). The critical barrier identified here was not a lack of innate human potential, but a systemic failure to architect capability. Organisations were relying on outdated qualifications, assuming that past training would suffice for present and future challenges.

What this reveals about how human capital develops in practice is that capability decays if it is not actively maintained. We established that robust economies and effective institutions are built not merely through the accumulation of physical or financial

capital, but on a strict foundation of continuous information, learning, and adaptation (Owoputi & **Ajayi**, 2012). The enabler of human capital in this context is the institutionalisation of continuous learning through formal training, learning-by-doing, and strategic partnerships with specialised institutions like the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT) and federal universities. When an organisation assumes capability without investing in targeted training, it courts operational paralysis. Capability cannot be static because the technological and regulatory environment in which it operates is in a state of perpetual motion.

Moving from the skies to the ivory towers, my research further unravelled the exact mechanisms through which capability is constructed. One might assume that universities, as citadels of learning, naturally possess optimal human capital. However, academic staff are not immune to the obsolescence of skills. The acquisition of skills among academic staff is an ongoing requirement driven by robust Knowledge Management Practices (KMPs) (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

In our study across federal universities in Southwest Nigeria, we sought to understand how knowledge management translates into actual skill acquisition. We found a significant, positive relationship between academic knowledge management practices and the skill acquisition of the academic workforce (Ogunyemi, **Ajayi**, & Ayedun, 2023). Specifically, our research revealed that *knowledge application* and *knowledge discovery* are the most relevant sub-constructs of KMPs that drive academic performance.

This research translates into a vital insight: human capital develops through the deliberate structuring of knowledge flows. The barrier to capability development in many institutions is the siloing of information and a lack of support for discovering and applying new insights. When institutions fail to provide the mechanisms for experienced personnel to integrate their knowledge into the system, or when they fail to track the application of new knowledge, human capital stagnates. Conversely, the enabler is a structured environment where learning is democratized, continuously applied, and updated. Our findings dictate that training and workshops relevant to the specific, evolving needs of individual academic staff must become the focus of attention, proving that even the highest levels of intellectual capability must be continuously constructed through dynamic knowledge management. (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Grant, 1996).

To fully appreciate why human capital must be built, we must measure the tangible returns of this investment. Human capital is multidimensional, and its continuous development yields direct, measurable improvements in organisational effectiveness. We explored this by isolating the effect of human capital investment on the core performance metrics of academic staff: teaching quality, research quality, and community service.

Through a comprehensive evaluation of federal universities, we found that personal development, through structured training, mentorship, and capacity-building, strongly and positively influences teaching quality (Abimbola, **Ajayi**, Olowookere, & Okhankhuele, 2025a). We found that continuous personal

development has a profound and significant effect on pedagogic competence and technology-enabled delivery.

What does this reveal about human capital in practice? It reveals that excellence is engineered. The barrier to high performance is the assumption that possessing a degree equates to possessing the pedagogical and technological competencies required for modern teaching. The enabler is targeted, continual professional development. When institutions invest financially and structurally in the personal development of their staff, they transform raw intellectual potential into highly effective, technology-enabled instructional delivery and expanded community service. Capability is shown to be dynamic because the methodologies of teaching and the demands of the community are constantly evolving; therefore, the human capital addressing these demands must evolve commensurately (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

An individual's capability, no matter how highly developed, is exponentially magnified by their connections. Human capital does not exist in a vacuum; it is inextricably linked to the relationships an individual cultivates. This brings us to the critical domain of relational capital.

In our investigations, we demonstrated that intellectual capital extends beyond the individual mind to encompass the networks, collaborative partnerships, and institutional relationships that bind professionals together. Our findings demonstrated that relational capital, specifically networks and collaborations, serves as a principal lever for improving teaching quality and broader academic performance in resource-constrained systems

(Abimbola, **Ajayi**, Olowookere, & Okhankhuele, 2025a). We established that the collaboration dimension had a massive, significant positive effect on teaching quality, while information-sharing positively influenced community service (Abimbola, **Ajayi**, Olowookere, & Okhankhuele, 2025b).

The insight derived from this is profound: human capital is developed not just through isolation and study, but through interaction and synergy. The barrier to maximising capability is professional isolation and institutional silos. The enablers are collaborative platforms, international linkages, and structured knowledge-sharing mechanisms. By investing in relational capital, an organisation multiplies the effectiveness of its human capital, transforming isolated expertise into a resilient, collective institutional strength.

The question is: what happens once this precious human capital is built? In today's fluid labour market, highly skilled capability is inherently mobile. To understand the dynamics of capability retention, our research explored the highly regulated, knowledge-intensive pharmaceutical manufacturing industry in Southwest Nigeria (Hom *et al.*, 2017).

These studies laid bare the destructive impact of unmanaged employee turnover on organisational effectiveness. We found that high attrition significantly and negatively disrupts production efficiency, increases error rates, compromises product quality through GMP non-compliance, and ultimately weakens customer loyalty (Amadi-Okocha, **Ajayi**, Ayedun, & Okhankhuele, 2025). The loss of built human capital is not merely an administrative

inconvenience; it is a strategic threat that erodes the very foundation of organisational performance.

Workforce mobility is not inherently detrimental if it is deliberately structured. Our work on the pharmaceutical industry showed that internal mobility, lateral movement and promotions can strengthen effectiveness by satisfying career aspirations, deepening learning and improving alignment with organisational goals (Amadi-Okocha, Ajayi, Ayedun, & Okhankhuele, 2025).

The lesson is clear: human capital is retained when career pathways are transparent and ambition is nurtured through mentoring, mobility and supportive HR practices. Stagnant careers convert built capability into exit risk; purposeful career systems convert it into organisational advantage.

Madam Vice-Chancellor, esteemed audience, the practical lesson that emerges from these decades of empirical inquiry across aviation, academia, and pharmaceutical manufacturing is urgent and unequivocal: **organisations must cease treating training as isolated events and instead architect capability development as foundational infrastructure, as essential and ongoing as the systems that support physical operations (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).**

Table 2: Moderation Analysis

Path	Beta	STD	T STAT	P values	VIF	f Square	Rsquare	Rsquare adjusted
eCA -> dOE	0.301	0.041	7.376	0.000	1.314	0.117	0.411	0.408
eCA x Emp Mobility -> dOE	-0.057	0.030	1.901	0.057	1.143	0.009		
Emp Mobility -> dOE	0.407	0.038	10.633	0.000	1.350	0.209		

Source: Amadi-Okocha, Ajayi, Ayedun & Okhankhuele, 2025

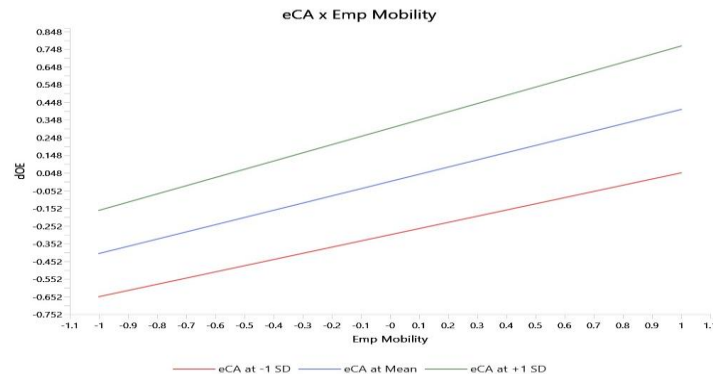


Figure 4: Slope Analysis of the Moderation

Source: Amadi-Okocha, Ajayi, Ayedun & Okhankhuele, 2025

We readily invest heavily in procuring new machinery, constructing new buildings, and upgrading our digital servers, recognising that physical and technological infrastructures require continuous maintenance, upgrades, and financial commitment. Yet, when it comes to the human mind, the only asset capable of operating this machinery, navigating regulatory complexities, and driving innovation, we often retreat into the complacency of assumed competence.

We can no longer afford to view employee development as an optional luxury, a sporadic workshop deployed only when surplus budgets allow, or a box to be checked on an annual appraisal form. It must be woven into the very fabric of the institution. Because the demands of the global economy are endlessly evolving, the capability of the workforce must be continually renewed, engaged, and protected. Human capital development is the ultimate infrastructural imperative. It demands systemic financial investment, the cultivation of deep relational networks, the alignment of career aspirations with corporate goals, and the institutionalisation of continuous learning cycles.

Let us fundamentally rethink our investments and our priorities. A nation or an enterprise does not achieve greatness merely by the possession of vast physical resources, but by the deliberate, relentless, and strategic cultivation of the people who mobilise them. Roads carry vehicles; institutions carry people; but human capital carries the destiny of both.

Knowledge, Technology, Digital Innovation and Human Resources

We live in an epoch defined by the silicon chip, the algorithm, and the boundless frontiers of the internet. It is an age in which the rhetoric of digital transformation resonates in every boardroom, government ministry, and academic senate. Yet, amidst this technological

crescendo, my scholarship has been anchored by a sobering reality. This brings me to the issue of **knowledge, technology, and digital innovation, and how they become competitive when they are functional.**

2.8 The Digital Layer: An Interconnected Landscape

It is important to understand the landscape of the digital layer that now blankets our global economy. We are witnessing an unprecedented digital transformation across every conceivable sector. In the commercial realm, e-commerce has redefined the boundaries of markets, allowing businesses to reach consumers across the globe without the need for physical storefronts. In human resources, e-recruitment platforms have digitised the very gates of our organisations, altering how we attract and select talent. In healthcare, e-health and telemedicine offer the tantalising promise of democratising medical access and streamlining patient records. In the public sector, digital innovation and business intelligence systems are increasingly deployed to automate bureaucratic processes, enhance transparency, and drive civic performance (Verhoef *et al.*, 2021; Vial, 2019).

The digital layer is not merely a collection of isolated tools; it is an interconnected ecosystem. A digitalised banking industry relies on cybersecurity; e-commerce relies on digital payment infrastructure; and e-health relies on robust data management. However, in the rush to embrace this digital utopia, a dangerous assumption has taken root. Organisations often assume that the mere acquisition of sophisticated software or the deployment of advanced hardware will automatically yield a competitive advantage. My research over the years has demonstrated otherwise. Technology, in its raw form, is inert. It is a layer of potential that must seamlessly intersect with human capability to generate real value. (Bharadwaj *et al.*, 2013; Adesida *et al.*, 2025).

2.9 The Critique of Technology Determinism

My research critiques the myth of technology determinism, asserting that digital tools do not inherently drive competitiveness. Their effectiveness hinges on a complex interplay of human and organisational factors, including user acceptance, skill development, process redesign, trust, data quality, and managerial discipline. The introduction of a digital system aims to change human behaviour, illustrated by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This model highlights that technology adoption is influenced by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. If employees feel threatened or incapable, they may resist the system. Thus, an organisation's success in leveraging technology depends on its ability to integrate it into the workforce's routines and skills, rather than the technology alone. Competitiveness arises from this integration.

2.10 The People-Technology Interface

E-Health and ICT Utilisation by Healthcare Professionals: The intersection of human capability and technology is most critical in the healthcare sector, where efficiency literally translates to saved lives. We investigated the utilisation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and employee acceptance of e-health in specialist hospitals in Ondo State, Nigeria (**Ajayi**, Abasilim, & Adejumo, 2022; Adejumo, **Ajayi**, & Abasilim, 2024). The study revealed relatively above 90% acceptance in the use of ICT in healthcare sector in Ondo State

Table 3: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis (ANOVA): Effect of Acceptance of ICT on Performance of Employees

Std. Error of the						
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig	
Estimate						
1	0.621	0.385	0.353	5.865	10.221	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Acceptance of ICT

Source: Ajayi, Abasilim and Adejumo, 2024

We found that while ICT utilisation has a strong, positive, and significant effect on employee performance, enabling better management of patient records, facilitation of telemedicine, and rapid retrieval of medical information, the actual acceptance of these technologies was fraught with human and infrastructural challenges.

Our empirical evidence revealed that the transition from a paper-based to a computerised system was hindered by the high cost of training, poor technical resource management, constant friction between hospital management and technical employees, and a lack of scheduled, periodic training with clear roadmaps for medical personnel (Ajayi, Abasilim, & Adejumo, 2022). We concluded that health technologies are only as effective as the staff's readiness and capacity to utilise them. A state-of-the-art Electronic Health Record (EHR) system is useless if the Record Officer lacks the digital skills to input data accurately, or if management policies fail to foster a positive attitude toward its use (Adejumo, Ajayi, & Abasilim, 2024). E-health does not cure patients; highly skilled, technologically empowered healthcare professionals cure patients.

The findings were highly revealing of the human element in digital transformation. We found that digital skill development had a massive, significant influence on operational efficiency and employee performance. However, in the other organisation, digital skill development alone did not significantly predict operational efficiency unless it was coupled with robust *change management* and positive *behavioural patterns* (Ajayi, Ojo, & Egbetunde, 2024). Our analysis, shown in Table 6, demonstrated that simply enhancing digital competencies without aligning them with workflow structures, operational goals, and supportive change mechanisms fails to yield meaningful efficiency gains. The technology requires a cultural foundation to take root. Furthermore, across both agencies, employee

behavioural patterns consistently emerged as the most influential predictor of customer satisfaction. The public sector's digital transformation, therefore, is not primarily a technological challenge; it is a human capital and change management challenge.

Table 4: Effectiveness of digital skill development in enhancing organisational performance

S/N		OSOPADEC		OSIRS	
		Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1	The organisation provides adequate digital skills training for employees	4.20	1st	4.00	4th
2	Digital training programs are relevant to employees' job roles.	3.89	3rd	4.1	3rd
3	Employees show a willingness to continuously improve their digital skills	3.79	4th	3.88	5th
4	The organisation's management integrates digital transformation into strategic planning	4.14	2nd	4.20	2nd
5	Resistance to digital transformation is minimal within the organisation	3.06	5th	3.73	6th
6	Digital training programs are well-monitored and evaluated by management	2.68	6th	4.43	1st

E-Commerce, Financial Inclusion, and Business Sustainability: In the realm of commerce and finance, the digital revolution has birthed e-commerce, a platform hailed as the ultimate equaliser for businesses. Yet, is business sustainability via e-commerce a myth or a reality in Nigeria? In our exploratory study on this subject, we found mixed outcomes. While e-commerce offers huge benefits for business expansion, its sustainability is severely threatened by human factors: cultural trust gaps, lack of user confidence, and a poor disposition towards online security (Akintoye, **Ajayi**, Joshua, & Okunlola, 2022). A business can build a flawless digital storefront, but if the consumer lacks trust in the digital ecosystem, the technology fails to generate revenue.

This is further corroborated by our study on the effect of e-commerce models on the financial sustainability of Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) in Akure (Bedu, Abayomi, & **Ajayi**, 2022). We measured the accessibility, availability, and usability of business-to-business (B2B), business-to-customer (B2C), and customer-to-customer (C2C) e-commerce models. Our multiple linear regression analysis showed that none of these factors, accessibility, availability, or usability, individually exerted a significant effect on the banks' financial sustainability. It was only when these three factors were *jointly* applied and supported by broader strategic management factors that they yielded a significant positive effect.

Similarly, our research into the determinants of financial inclusion among Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Southwest demonstrated that technological platforms like automated teller machines (ATMs), point of sale (POS) terminals, and mobile money are crucial (Ilori, Olowolaju, **Ajayi**, Abayomi, & Ilori, 2023). Yet, the ultimate determinant of whether an MSME is financially included relies heavily on the quality of service, usage literacy, and the

customer-friendliness of the procedures established by the banks. Technology provides the channel; human-centred service quality dictates the usage.

Our findings established that cybersecurity, proxied by rigorous risk management and active bank monitoring, had a statistically significant and positive impact on the successful deployment of financial innovation (Akintoye, Ogunode, **Ajayi**, & Joshua, 2022). What does this tell us? It tells us that cybersecurity is not merely software; it is a continuous human discipline. The technology of a POS or an ATM is only viable because human beings in risk management departments actively monitor networks, update firewalls, and enforce data quality standards. Without the human vigilance regarding cyber security, financial innovation becomes a liability rather than a competitive advantage.

E-Recruitment and Organisational Performance: Considering the very mechanism by which we bring people into our organisations. Our study on e-recruitment in the Nigerian Brewery Industry examined how the digitalisation of hiring affects organisational performance. Based on the Technology Acceptance Model, we found that e-recruitment significantly and positively affects organisational performance by tracking applicants and reducing administrative burdens. Yet, the underlying truth is that e-recruitment is merely a tool for tracking and sourcing; it requires skilled human resource professionals to design the algorithms, interpret the data, and ultimately select the talent that aligns with the organisation's culture. The digital tool accelerates the sourcing, but human strategic judgement ensures the quality of the hire (Epebinu, **Ajayi**, Adepoju, & Jesuleye, 2022).

Madam Vice-Chancellor, distinguished audience, as we synthesise these findings across healthcare, the public sector, commercial banking, and human resources, the intellectual coherence of this argument is unassailable. We cannot buy our way to competitiveness through software licenses and server farms alone. Competitiveness in the digital age is won by those organisations that invest as heavily in the digital literacy, psychological readiness, and strategic alignment of their people as they do in their IT infrastructure.

When we fail to recognise this, we fall victim to technology determinism. We end up with expensive, underutilised systems, frustrated employees, and alienated customers. But when we place people at the centre of our digital strategy, ensure user acceptance, drive skill development, redesign obsolete processes, and build unbreakable trust mechanisms, technology transcends being a mere tool. It becomes a profound multiplier of human ingenuity.

My scholarly inquiry over the years leaves me with this definitive conclusion: **Technology is a powerful accelerator, but it accelerates whatever culture, competence and strategy that already exist.** If your organisation's culture is broken, technology will only accelerate its decline. But if your people are trained, motivated, and strategically aligned, digital innovation will accelerate your path to unparalleled competitiveness (Adesida *et al.*, 2025; Adesida *et al.*, 2026).

The Ajayi Competitiveness Lens: Five Questions for Leaders

My research and inquisitive mind over the years have led to a unifying framework that answers this question and led me to what I have termed the **Ajayi Competitiveness Lens**, a five-dimensional framework for organisational leadership. This lens is built on a singular, unwavering conviction that forms the core of my lecture today: **Competitiveness**

is not an accident of aspiration; it is the outcome of disciplined alignment between purpose; people and performance.

Organisations do not succeed merely because they possess superior financial capital, brilliant visions, or abundant physical resources. They succeed because leadership deliberately answers five critical questions that bridge the gap between organisational ambition and execution. I invite you to journey with me through these five dimensions, grounded in the empirical evidence of my research career.

Dimension 1: Strategic Clarity: What exactly does the organisation want to become, and what choices must be made?

The first dimension of the Competitiveness Lens demands strategic clarity. Strategy is not a mystical corporate secret; it is the disciplined choice of where to go, how to compete, what to prioritise, and what capabilities to build. In the absence of a clear entrepreneurial orientation, organisations drift into obsolescence (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

My research team extensively interrogated how strategic choices dictate profitability and survival. In our report on real estate sector in Southwest Nigeria, we examined the profound impact of Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) on organisational profitability as reported by Olowofeso, Ojo, & **Ajayi**, 2021; Olowofeso, **Ajayi**, & Lawal, 2022; Onafadeji, **Ajayi**, & Olowokere, 2023; Onafadeji, **Ajayi**, Olowokere, & Alarape, 2023; Oludare, **Ajayi**, & Ologunwa, 2026a.

We empirically proved that dimensions of EO, specifically innovativeness and pro-activeness, are critical predictors of a firm's financial success. Real estate developers must transcend traditional operational modes and employ entrepreneurial principles to exploit opportunities, attract customers, and outperform rivals. A firm's

capacity to anticipate future market needs and respond positively to market opportunities is what cements its competitive advantage.

Strategic clarity also requires knowing what not to do. Research on the Benin Electricity Distribution Company showed that outsourcing non-core activities can improve performance when risks are actively managed.

Through these studies, the first dimension of the lens is clear: **Competitiveness is not an accident of aspiration; it is the outcome of disciplined alignment between purpose; people and performance.** Strategic clarity provides the destination, but the journey cannot commence without the right vehicle (the people).

Dimension 2: Human Capability: Do people have the knowledge, skills, attitude, motivation and well-being to deliver that ambition?

The second dimension of the **Ajayi** Competitiveness Lens interrogates the engine of the organisation: its human capital. Strategy gives direction, but people give motion. Human capital comprises the accumulated knowledge, skills, attitudes, health, experience, and relationships that enable performance. Crucially, my scholarship has consistently demonstrated that human capital is built, not assumed.

When organisations fail to invest in human capability, the results are catastrophic. In our empirical investigation into manpower development within the Nigerian aviation industry, we found a severe dearth in manpower proficiency, revealing that over 75 percent of the staff lacked the requisite educational background and specialised knowledge to navigate international aviation standards. We established that robust economies are built not merely through physical capital, but on a strict foundation of continual learning and

adaptation (Owoputi & **Ajayi**, 2012; **Ajayi** & Okhankhuele, 2019; **Ajayi**, 2020; Abimbola, **Ajayi**, Olowookere, & Okhankhuele, 2025; Amadi-Okocha, **Ajayi**, Ayedun, & Okhankhuele, 2025a; Amadi-Okocha, **Ajayi**, Ayedun, & Okhankhuele, 2025b,)

Conversely, when capability is intentionally constructed, organisations soar. In the university system, we evaluated the effect of training on administrative staff at The Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA). We proved that both on-the-job and off-the-job training significantly enhance employee competencies, critical thinking, and their ability to embrace modern technology. Similarly, our extensive research into the performance of academic staff confirmed that personal development, through structured training and capacity-building, strongly and positively influences teaching quality, pedagogic competence, and technology-enabled instructional delivery

Furthermore, human capability is inextricably linked to employee well-being and retention. In the highly regulated, knowledge-intensive pharmaceutical manufacturing industry in Southwest Nigeria, our research laid bare the destructive impact of unmanaged employee turnover. We proved that high attrition disrupts production efficiency, compromises product quality through Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) non-compliance, and weakens customer loyalty. However, we also found that when organisations align personal career aspirations with corporate objectives through structured internal mobility, they secure and capitalise on the human capital they have painstakingly built.

We must also recognise that capability requires holistic wellness. In our assessment of the Nigerian Breweries Plc, we documented the critical importance of Work-Life Balance (WLB) practices, proving that flexible work arrangements, wellness programmes, and family responsibility support mitigate work overload and sustain employee

commitment. An exhausted, depleted workforce cannot execute a brilliant strategy.

From the studies, the second dimension of the lens is confirmed: **Strategy gives direction, but people give motion: human capital is built not assumed**

Dimension 3: Inclusion and Participation: Whose talent, voice or experience is being ignored?

The third dimension of the **Ajayi** Competitiveness Lens challenges leadership to look at the margins. No nation and no organisation can win with half its talent excluded. Inclusion is not merely a moral imperative; it is a hard, inescapable economic necessity.

My early scholarly trajectory focused firmly on the structural inefficiencies that arise when segments of the population are marginalised. By investigating workers' participation in decision-making within the Nigerian construction industry, we empirically established that goal congruence cannot be dictated from the boardroom; it must be cultivated through inclusive dialogue as reported by **Ajayi**, 1999; **Ajayi & Owoeye**, 2005; Alese, Owoyemi, & **Ajayi**, (2005); **Ajayi**, 2015; **Ajayi**, 2017; **Ajayi**, 2023; Oludare, **Ajayi**, & Ologunwa, 2026b. When workers are actively integrated into the formulation of policies, their morale surges, conflicts are minimised, and overall production levels rise significantly.

Inclusion also demands gender equity and the democratisation of access. In our early investigations into Information and Communication Technology (ICT), we examined the influence of gender on internet usage in Southwestern Nigeria, revealing the dire need to foster the full capacity of all citizens, especially women, to benefit from the global community. This focus on gender expanded

into our analysis of the social capital status of micro-scale entrepreneurs in the Akure metropolis. We found that despite operating in male and female-dominated enterprises, entrepreneurs frequently failed to take full advantage of their social capital, their networks of trust, labour contribution, and group membership (Ajayi, 2023). When we exclude the collaborative power of women and informal entrepreneurs from our economic frameworks, we are fighting the global economic war with one hand tied behind our backs.

Similarly, we must manage generational diversity. Investigating the influence of gender and age on organisational commitment among civil servants in Southwest Nigeria, we found that while gender did not significantly influence commitment, age groups showed profound variations. Younger and older workers displayed higher commitment than the middle-aged cohort, signalling that a one-size-fits-all, exclusionary policy fails to capture the hearts of the entire workforce.

Furthermore, our research extended to territorial inclusion. In assessing the socio-economic and psychological effects of bitumen exploration on host communities, we proved that excluding local communities from the economic dividends of resource extraction breeds youth unrest and disrupts corporate operations. A symbiotic relationship grounded in civic education and empowerment is mandatory for continuous, profitable operations.

Through this third lens, the signature statement rings true: **Competitiveness is not an accident of aspiration; it is the outcome of disciplined alignment between purpose, people and performance.** You cannot align your people if you are systematically ignoring their voices.

Dimension 4: Knowledge and Digital Readiness: Are we learning, sharing, measuring and adapting faster than the environment is changing?

As the global economy has decisively transitioned to a knowledge-based, digital paradigm, the fourth dimension of the Competitiveness Lens asks whether an organisation possesses the agility to adapt. Knowledge, technology, and digital innovation are only competitive when people can effectively use them.

We explored the architecture of knowledge management (KM) extensively within the university system. We proved that for universities to develop and perform their roles as national think-tanks, factors such as job security, management support, and a friendly organisational culture are necessary to encourage staff to share and capture vital institutional knowledge as reported by Vial, 2019; Bharadwaj *et al.*, 2013; **Ajayi**, Adebambo, & Olusunmbola, 2020; Ogunyemi, **Ajayi**, & Ayedun, 2023; Ojo, **Ajayi**, & Egbetunde, 2024; Abimbola, **Ajayi**, Olowookere, & Okhankhuele, 2025; Ogunyemi, **Ajayi**, & Arokoyo, 2026. Furthermore, our research team revealed that it is the specific *application* and *discovery* of knowledge, not merely its creation or storage, that significantly drives the performance of academic staff. However, knowledge does not exist in isolation; it thrives in networks. Our empirical investigations into relational capital demonstrated that networks, international linkages, and collaborative partnerships serve as principal levers for improving teaching quality, research visibility, and community service in resource-constrained systems. An organisation must build not only the individual, but also the connective tissue between individuals.

As digital systems permeate every sector, my research has vehemently critiqued "technology determinism", the flawed belief that purchasing software automatically yields competitiveness. In the public sector of

Ondo State, we investigated the impact of digital innovation on organisational performance within OSOPADEC and OSIRS. We proved that simply deploying technology is insufficient; digital skill development and robust change management are what truly translate digital innovation into operational efficiency and heightened customer satisfaction.

This reality holds true across all sectors. In healthcare, we evaluated the acceptance of e-health systems among employees in specialist hospitals, concluding that the successful deployment of health technologies relies fundamentally on the staff's readiness and capacity to utilise them, which requires periodic, scheduled training (Ajayi, Abasilim, & Adejumo, 2022; Bedu, Abayomi, & Ajayi, 2022; Akintoye, Ogunode, Ajayi, & Joshua, 2022; Adesida, Ajayi & Abayomi, 2025; Adesida, Ajayi & Abayomi, 2026). In the banking sector, our study on e-commerce models and the financial sustainability of Deposit Money Banks revealed that accessibility, availability, and usability of e-commerce must be jointly applied to exert a significant positive effect on financial sustainability. Moreover, financial innovation deployed without the human vigilance required for cybersecurity becomes a liability, exposing institutions to cyber fraud and destroying public trust. Technology is a powerful accelerator, but it accelerates whatever culture, competence, and strategy already exist.

Dimension 5: Execution Discipline: Are our appraisal, reward, communication, leadership and governance systems reinforcing the strategy?

The fifth and final dimension of the Competitiveness Lens is Execution Discipline. A strategy that does not enter the hands, heads, hearts, and habits of employees is not yet a strategy; it is only a

document waiting for life. Execution discipline asks whether the daily systems of the organisation actually reinforce the desired destination.

Firstly, how do we measure progress? Performance appraisal is often viewed with trepidation, yet our assessment of the News Agency of Nigeria established a statistically significant, positive relationship between objective performance appraisals and employee productivity. When appraisal feedback is effectively communicated and implemented, it transforms from an evaluative metric into a powerful psychological motivator that boosts communication skills, builds confidence, and aligns individual output with corporate strategy (**Ajayi**, 2019; Akindele & **Ajayi**, 2019; **Ajayi** & Awoyinfa, 2020; Dunmade, Adeyemi, Kadiri, & **Ajayi**, 2020; Adedeji & **Ajayi**, 2022; Epebinu, Adepoju, & **Ajayi**, 2023; Adigun, **Ajayi**, & Ogunjobi, 2025)

Furthermore, how do we reward effort? Strategy dictates what needs to be done, but the reward system dictates whether employees will actually care enough to do it. Investigating the tertiary education sector, we proved that intrinsic reward systems, such as consultative participation, learning opportunities, and recognition, have a profound and positive impact on employee performance. We expanded this inquiry into the banking sector, revealing that the strategic choice of a reward system is fundamentally driven by the need to align with organisational strategy and corporate culture. Furthermore, our study on the Kwara State Internal Revenue Service confirmed that fair compensation management is a positive and significant predictor of employees' work commitment and loyalty, proving that organisations that effectively manage compensation will consistently outperform those that do not. We also demonstrated that modernising this process through e-compensation management drastically elevates operational accuracy and employee satisfaction within the brewery industry.

In addition, how do we connect the parts? Communication is the nervous system of execution. Our investigations within Nigerian Breweries Plc showed that effective communication is the literal "live-wire" driving productivity, serving as the primary mechanism for resolving industrial conflicts and ensuring organisational harmony. In the construction industry, we identified that poor communication and differences among project team members are the primary causes of destructive project conflicts.

The execution of activities in an organisation requires astute leadership. In our exploration of complex Information Technology projects in Lagos State, our results revealed that specific leadership skills, such as strategic communication, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and visionary decision-making, are paramount for navigating uncertainty and driving project success, as reported in **Ajayi & Ayansiji, (2019)** and **Popoola, Alade, & Ajayi (2024)**.

Furthermore, a leader's ability to master time management directly dictates managerial effectiveness, ensuring that scarce organisational resources are converted into tangible results.

Conclusively, the five-dimensional framework for leadership and institutional performance argues that competitiveness is the outcome of disciplined alignment between purpose, people and performance as reflected in table 5.

Table 5 Five-dimensional framework for leadership and institutional performance

Dimension	Leadership question
Strategic clarity	What exactly do we want to become, and what choices must we make?
Human capability	Do people have the knowledge, skills, attitude, motivation and wellbeing to deliver that ambition?
Inclusion and participation	Whose talent, voice or experience is being ignored?
Knowledge and digital readiness	Are we learning, sharing, measuring and adapting faster than the environment is changing?
Execution discipline	Are appraisal, reward, communication, leadership and governance reinforcing the strategy?

Recommendations at a glance

The lecture closes with a practical charge: Nigeria's competitiveness will depend on institutions that think strategically, lead ethically, include deliberately, learn continuously and invest courageously in people.

Table 6: Recommendations at a glance

Stakeholder	Priority action
University system	Fund staff development as core infrastructure; reward knowledge sharing and collaboration; strengthen international linkages; build employability into curricula; support both academic and administrative staff.
Government	Adopt strategic HRM in public administration; invest in digital literacy and change management; motivate civil servants by career stage; protect staff wellbeing; design evidence-based reform.
Industry	Treat people as strategic assets; reduce avoidable turnover; align reward systems with strategy; improve communication; make appraisal developmental; support work-life balance.
Students and early-career scholars	Build skills beyond certificates; embrace digital competence, entrepreneurship, research discipline, collaboration and ethical leadership; take responsibility for lifelong learning.
Community	Demand participation in development projects; build trust-based networks; support youth and women's enterprise; collaborate with institutions and industry for shared prosperity.
Individuals	Pursue excellence as service; keep learning; build relational capital; adapt to technological change; align personal ambition with productive contribution.

2.11 The Integration of the Lens

Madam Vice-Chancellor, esteemed colleagues and distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I have taken you on a comprehensive journey through the **Ajayi** Competitiveness Lens. When we overlay these five dimensions, Strategic Clarity, Human Capability, Inclusion and Participation, Knowledge and Digital Readiness, and Execution Discipline, we see an integrated ecosystem of organisational survival. An organisation cannot possess Strategic Clarity if it lacks the execution discipline to measure and reward its goals. It cannot build robust Human Capability if it practices exclusion, marginalising the diverse talents of its workforce. It cannot achieve Knowledge and Digital Readiness if its leadership fails to communicate effectively or ignores the psychological wellbeing of its people. Every empirical study I have conducted across Nigeria's diverse economic sectors validates this systemic interdependence. Competitiveness is a profoundly human endeavour. We can procure the most advanced digital infrastructure, construct the most imposing physical edifices, and draft the most eloquent strategic plans, yet, without the empathetic, inclusive, and disciplined mobilisation of the human spirit, those resources remain inert. The defining insight is simple: **competitiveness is not an accident of aspiration; it is the outcome of disciplined alignment between purpose, people and performance.**

3.0 CONCLUSION

Madam Vice-Chancellor, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, this inaugural lecture has advanced a central proposition: Human Resource and Strategy: The Backbone of Global Competitiveness. Across the diverse studies, sectors, and experiences examined, one enduring lesson has emerged that sustainable success is not determined solely by resources, technology, policies, or strategic

plans, but by the ability of institutions, organizations, and nations to transform these assets into value through capable, motivated, and engaged people.



Figure 5: The Synergy: Strategy + People = Competitiveness

The evidence presented throughout this lecture demonstrates that competitiveness is neither accidental nor automatic. It is deliberately built through strategic clarity, human capability development, inclusion and participation, knowledge creation and sharing, digital readiness, and disciplined execution. When these elements work together, organisations become resilient, innovative, and adaptive; when they are neglected, performance, growth, and sustainability are compromised.

A recurring theme throughout the lecture has been the strategic importance of people. Workers' participation enhances commitment and productivity; training and continuous learning strengthen competence and adaptability; effective communication aligns effort and purpose; reward systems reinforce desired behaviours; and knowledge sharing expands institutional capacity. Likewise, technology and digital innovation achieve their greatest impact only

when people possess the skills, confidence, and willingness to utilize them effectively.

The lecture has further emphasized that inclusion is not merely a social ideal but an economic imperative. Nations and organizations that deliberately invest in women, youth, professionals, entrepreneurs, communities, and other often overlooked stakeholders unlock broader reservoirs of talent, creativity, and innovation. Exclusion, by contrast, weakens trust, limits opportunity, and constrains development.

- **Universities:** The challenge is to move beyond the production of certificates toward the cultivation of capabilities, character, and lifelong learning.
- **Government:** The task is to strengthen public institutions through ethical leadership, professional development, and evidence-based policies.
- **Industry:** Sustainable profitability depends on valuing people as strategic assets and fostering workplaces that encourage innovation, collaboration, and wellbeing.
- **Students, scholars, communities, and individuals:** The future demands adaptability, entrepreneurship, digital competence, integrity, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Ultimately, the future will belong not simply to those who possess abundant resources, but to those who can organize knowledge, technology, leadership, and human talent into shared productivity and sustainable development. Nigeria's competitiveness in the twenty-first century will be secured not by slogans, infrastructure, or imported technologies alone, but by institutions that think strategically, lead ethically, learn continuously, include deliberately, and invest courageously in people.

That is where strategy meets people. That is where lasting competitiveness is built. And that is where the promise of national and organisational transformation can be fully realised.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Madam Vice-Chancellor, across all stakeholder groups, the overriding lesson is that global competitiveness is fundamentally a human-capital challenge. Sustainable success requires deliberate investment in people, inclusive participation, continuous learning, knowledge sharing, innovation, and strategic leadership. Strategy may provide direction, but people remain the engine that transforms vision into enduring competitive advantage. The following are recommended for different stakeholders.

University System: Universities should institutionalise continuous capacity development through well-funded training, mentoring, sabbaticals, and professional certification programmes that expose staff to emerging technologies and global best practices. Strong knowledge management systems should be established to support knowledge creation, sharing, and application through research collaborations, repositories, and interdisciplinary teams. Inclusive governance that involves staff, students, and other stakeholders in decision-making should be encouraged to strengthen commitment and innovation. Universities should move from certificate production to capability formation. This requires sustained investment in staff development, teaching quality, research collaboration, digital competence and relational capital. Human capital, structural capital and relational capital must be treated as core infrastructure, not as optional administrative expenditure. Universities should also invest in intellectual and relational capital by promoting local and international partnerships that enhance teaching, research, and community engagement. Furthermore, human resource practices such as

recruitment, promotion, appraisal, and rewards should be strategically aligned with institutional goals and continuous improvement.

Industry: Organisations should adopt Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices that align employee development, performance management, communication, and compensation with organisational objectives. Industry should humanise the pursuit of profit. A firm that sacrifices employee wellbeing, retention and communication for short-term gain weakens the very human base on which productivity depends. Pharmaceutical-sector evidence shows that employee turnover disrupts production efficiency, weakens compliance and damages customer loyalty. Firms should therefore build transparent career paths, internal mobility, mentoring and retention systems. Continuous learning, mentoring, succession planning, and career advancement opportunities should be prioritised to retain talent and preserve institutional knowledge. Industries should foster inclusive and diverse workplaces that encourage creativity, innovation, and employee commitment. Effective communication systems must be strengthened to improve coordination and ensure employees understand their contributions to organisational success. Digital transformation efforts should be accompanied by investments in employee training and adaptability to maximise technological benefits.

Government: Governments should place human capital development at the centre of national competitiveness strategies by investing in education, vocational training, digital literacy, and lifelong learning. Inclusive policies that empower women, youth, entrepreneurs, persons with disabilities, and underserved groups should be promoted to drive sustainable growth. Digitalisation should be accompanied by change management. Studies on public-sector digital innovation and e-health show that technology produces performance gains only when users are

trained, supported and psychologically ready to adopt new systems. Support for entrepreneurship and innovation through financing, incubation centres, and startup programmes should be expanded, while entrepreneurship education is integrated into curricula. Governments should also bridge the digital divide through investments in digital infrastructure and affordable internet access. Stronger collaboration among universities, industry, and government should be encouraged to accelerate innovation, research commercialisation, and economic development. Community participation in development projects should also be prioritised to enhance sustainability and social stability.

Students and Early-Career Scholars: Students and emerging scholars should embrace lifelong learning by continuously developing technical, professional, and digital competencies. Entrepreneurship education should be taken seriously because the formal labour market can no longer absorb all graduates. Students should learn to identify problems, develop solutions, test ideas and convert knowledge into enterprise. Active participation in professional networks, mentorship programmes, and research collaborations will strengthen career development and knowledge exchange. Digital competence, adaptability, and awareness of emerging technologies should remain priorities. Equally, important is the development of ethical leadership, teamwork, and inclusive values, while aligning personal ambitions with societal needs to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development and global competitiveness.

Communities: Communities, especially host communities, should not be treated merely as passive recipients of development. Industry and government should engage them through civic education, youth empowerment, local enterprise support, environmental responsibility and transparent benefit-sharing. Where communities are excluded from the value generated around them, trust collapses, and

development becomes unstable. Strong social networks, cooperatives, and community organisations should be encouraged to enhance trust, collaboration, entrepreneurship, and collective problem-solving. Investment in youth empowerment through mentorship, skills acquisition, vocational training, and entrepreneurship programmes is essential for long-term competitiveness. Communities should also promote gender inclusion and equal opportunities for women and marginalised groups, while embracing digital literacy and technology to improve education, healthcare, governance, and economic activities. Sustainable development practices, environmental stewardship, and responsible resource management should be prioritised to ensure future prosperity.

Individuals: Individuals should pursue lifelong learning and continuous professional development to remain relevant in a rapidly changing, technology-driven world. Adaptability, resilience, and entrepreneurial thinking are essential for navigating emerging opportunities and challenges. Developing digital competencies and entrepreneurial skills can enhance employability and productivity. Individuals should also cultivate strong professional and social networks that support collaboration, mentoring, and career growth. Ethical leadership, integrity, accountability, and responsible citizenship should guide personal and professional conduct. Furthermore, personal ambitions should be aligned with organisational, community, and societal goals to promote sustainable development and shared progress.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Today, I stand as a testimony of G.R.A.C.E.: A product of grace **Guided** by God, **Refined** through responsibility, **Aligned** to Divine purpose, **Commissioned** for service, and ultimately **Established** by Great Grace.

Therefore, I deliver this inaugural lecture with profound gratitude to God Almighty, who has remained my Navigator, Sustainer, Defender, Strength, Script Writer, Song and Drama Director throughout the journey of my life. If there is any testimony that my life bears, it is this: **destiny is not fulfilled merely by human ambition or effort, but by the mysterious workings of divine grace.** *Modupe oore, Alatitilehin koju ma ti ni.*

I stand before you today with deep humility, immense gratitude, and a strong sense of responsibility that my delivering an Inaugural Lecture is not merely a personal milestone; it is a testimony of grace, mentorship, sacrifice, and divine orchestration.

No one rises alone. Madam Vice-Chancellor, one of the greatest gifts God gives any individual is the gift of mentorship. Every meaningful journey in life is shaped by voices that guide us, hands that lift us, and examples that inspire us. Therefore, this lecture is dedicated to the timeless principles of transformational mentorship, leadership empowerment, and the indispensable virtue of helpers. My stand on this podium today is with gratitude to God and to the many individuals and institutions He has used to shape my life, career, and destiny.

A few weeks before the completion of my NYSC service, I was involved in a devastating accident that nearly left me paralysed. By God's divine grace, and through the timely intervention of the Military Hospital and the Orthopaedic Hospital in Enugu, my life was preserved. I remain deeply grateful to my fellow corps members, colleagues, the Scripture Union members in Enugu, and a dear brother, Major Seyi Obaseki—now the proprietor of Complete Child Development Center in Akure—whose

care, support, and assistance were instrumental in God's plan that I am still alive today and able to stand upright.

My Parents

My father, Prince Michael Agbajegorite Adejola Olayisade, of blessed memory, was from Odundun Royal family of Ido-Ekiti. He was a warrior true to his name, Michael. He was an action man, an epitome of diligence and a disciplinarian, a no-nonsense man. With him, one was always busy. His frequent admonition was, *“How can a living being like you, with full sense, be idle?”* To him, there was no pleasure of free time. You must always be doing something.

He loved me deeply, invested greatly in my development, and almost made a man out of me. Yet, I cannot remember him beating me. I was his *“Felele”*. His words still echo in my ears: *“Be focused. Eni ti a n wo kii woran. Omo oba kii беру. Omo oba kii sojo. Aye ole ko si. Ole nikan ni aye ko gba, gbogbo ibi lo gba alagbara.”*

Thank you, Olori Felicia Iyaniwura Adejola. Gracious, unassuming, prayerful, never given to too much talk or haste, yet a remarkable achiever. She was the embodiment of the biblical injunction that “in quietness and confidence shall be your strength” (Holy Bible, revised standard version).

Today, I recognise that I am a blend of Michael the warrior and Felicia the Felicitation; the discipline and courage of my father, and the resilience, diligence, and Christian virtues of my mother.

My elder sister, Princess Margaret Folasade Fasuyi (Eye Oja, mama Adura) and her children are deeply treasured and appreciated. She’s been playing a motherly role in my life even before our mother passed on, and she has continued to be. I am blessed and delighted to have her in my life all the way. *Agba won a dale.*

My father was the eldest son of his father's children. They were and are united and caring. I seize this opportunity to express my gratitude for the love and contributions of my siblings, paternal uncles, aunties, cousins, nephews and nieces and their families. My appreciation goes to the families of Princess Julianah Adeponmile, Princess Aderomoke Ojo, Prince Emmanuel Omolade Idowu Adejola (Our "*Baba Kekere*"), Princess Omoyelade Alaba Obasa, Princess Omoleye Adebisi, Princess Grace Folake Faleye (Mama 80), Princess Samuel Ojo Adejola, Princess Florence Oladunmade Solola, Princess Oluwafunke Abiona, Prince Moses Babatope Adejola, and Princess Bose.

There are so many relatives in my maternal side, the Awoluyi dynasty that deserve my profound appreciation. However, the limited space will not permit mentioning their names. It is my belief that posterity will remember all of them for their contributions towards my success in life.

I cannot but appreciate the support received from my late Maternal uncle, Pa James Ajayi Awoluyi, who gave me his best during my formative years.

Worthy of mention, too, is my late niece, Miss Eunice Folake Awoluyi (unfortunately, we lost her in 1979), an undergraduate student of the University of Ibadan. She is highly appreciated for instilling in me a deep sense of discipline, diligence, perseverance and dedication to duty.

My appreciation goes to my "Boys Brigade," Peter, Paul, Samuel, and Samson, with their parents, Pastor Moses Babatope and Wumi Adejola. Thanks to them for their care, warmth and ever-present love. They are all a special brand and divine gifts to my life. Thanks to them for all they do. Greater you, my beloved.

I honour Uncle Akin and Sister Ruth Akinagbe (Australia), Uncle Yomi (UK), Auntie Funmi (UK), Uncle Fadugba OlaOlu (FUTA), Seun uuu (UK), Seun Fayose, Corper Dormo, Corper Victoria, Faith, Praise Onwuka, Praise, Lekan & Funso Fayose, Wole, Arc Demola Alowolodu,

Mary, Dami, Seun Olourunfemi, Effiong Patience and others too numerous to name here. They are highly treasured chapters in my family's history. During their stay, they gave companionship, warmth, friendship, and shared experiences that remain deeply memorable. Beyond visitors, they became extended family and helped shape our home's values of love, learning, resilience, and togetherness. The bonds, lessons, and memories from those various seasons of stay are truly cherished and appreciated.

University Management

I am profoundly grateful to all the former Vice-Chancellors of this University for their contributions to the development of the FUTA brand.

I had the privilege of serving under all of them in various capacities, except the late Prof. T. I. Francis. I served as Registrar under three tenured and one acting Vice-Chancellors, making four. I also serve as Head of Administration in the Vice-Chancellor's Office under another one. These experiences enriched my career as a university administrator and later as an academic. I am grateful for their contributions to making this inaugural lecture a reality.

The late Professor A. A. Ilemobade who interviewed and appointed me as an Administrative Officer. Late Professor E. A. Adeyemi was a torchbearer pointing the way forward and an agent of peace. The time I served under him as a School Officer, when he was dean of School of Environmental Technology was a period in my life I obtained my Ph.D. during his tenure. During the tenure as acting Vice Chancellor of Professor L. B. Kolawole, I enjoyed steady career progression. I was his delight.

Professor P. O. Adeniyi physically transformed the University and fostered unity among stakeholders. A firm believer in hard work as a pathway to advancement. He added immense value to my life as the administrative head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office during his tenure.

Professor A. M. Balogun worked with great zeal and moved FUTA to enviable heights. He supported my growth both administratively and academically, particularly during the process of my Ph.D. defense in year 2000, as Dean when I served as School Officer in SAAT, and later as Registrar during his tenure as Vice-Chancellor.

I thank Professor E. A. Fasakin, Acting Vice-Chancellor, whose cooperation and maturity assisted me greatly in discharging my duties, especially during the process of appointment of a substantive Vice-Chancellor.

Late Professor Adebisi G. Daramola was a caring boss of mine, a Vice-Chancellor, and a friend to my family, especially our children. He was courageous, sincere, honest, and a system man. He further heightened the physical transformation of FUTA campus and took FUTA to the marketplace as he envisioned. He gave me solid support to be able to add value to the university and make FUTA Registry a cynosure. He was a Vice-Chancellor with a plain heart, reliable with the breast full of the milk of kindness. Through the visibility he gave me, I was able to represent him, secure the hosting rights of the conference of the Association of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (AVCNU) for FUTA in 2014.

Professor J. A. Fuwape announced my promotion to Readership and appointed me Acting Head of the Department of Project Management Technology. My gratitude goes to him

The current Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adenike Temidayo Oladiji, has expressed tremendous love to me both as a leader, boss and a sister. She fondly addresses me as “my sister and my friend”. She announced my elevation to the rank of Professor and appointed me as the pioneer Director of the FUTA Senior Citizen Directorate. I cherish her delight in me. I am deeply grateful for all she does.

Outside FUTA, I had the privilege of working with Professor O. C. Nebo, the pioneer Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti

(FUOYE), under whom I served as pioneer Registrar. He believed strongly in me and provided unwavering support during the University's take-off. During my brief tenure, I was able to produce the Conditions of Service guiding appointment of staff in the university, the Scheme of Service, and draft of the Student Handbook for the University. I am highly blessed to have him in my career path and for this I am grateful.

Deputy Vice Chancellors

I express my profound gratitude to the past and current Deputy Vice-Chancellors under whose leadership FUTA has enjoyed exemplary loyalty and dedicated service. They include late Prof. A. A. Ilemobade, Prof. L. B. Kolawole, late Prof. R. A. Ogunsusi, Prof. O. C. Ademosun, late Prof. K. O. Ipinmoroti, late Prof. T. A. Afolayan, Prof. Z. D. Adeyewa, Prof. J. A. Fadamiro, Prof. E. A. Fasakin, Prof. Olatunde Arayela, Prof. T. L. Akinbogun, Prof. D. R. Ogunsemi, Prof. P. G. Oguntunde, Prof. T. T. Amos, and Prof. S. S. Oluyamo.

Their selfless service has contributed immensely to the growth of the University and has touched my life in many ways through the various opportunities I have had to work with them. Today's milestone is, in no small measure, a reflection of their contributions to my journey within the University system.

The Registry and Registrars

Past Registrars

I give kudos to FUTA Registry, my first home in the University, an "Exporter" of Registrars and quality administrators to other sister universities and other higher institutions. I remain grateful to our forerunners for the solid foundation they laid, of which I have been a beneficiary as a University Administrator, pioneer Registrar of the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE), and the fourth substantive

Registrar of FUTA with a full term of five years and a one-year extension, and later as a lecturer.

FUTA Registry

To late Dr. B. A. Osanyinbi, the pioneer Registrar of FUTA, I am grateful for the care and mentorship he provided. Though I did not work with him formally, he was indeed a father figure to me.

Mr. Babatunde Afen Adebayo of blessed memory brought my unwilling horse to the stream of University Administration, gave me a solid and enviable foundation in administration, and saw me through to the end of my administrative career. He was indeed a mentor. I cannot forget his encouragement, support, and personal involvement in my growth. He vetted my Ph.D. proposal and looked forward to my elevation to the rank of Professor after my Readership. Alas! Man proposes, but God disposes. Death denied him the opportunity to witness the manifestation. His amiable wife, Mrs. O. A. Adebayo, “Auntie Yemisi,” has been a mentor and friend through the decades. She’s been an encourager and professional guide in university administration.

Mr. A. W. O. Attoye (Acting Registrar and “the Major”) was truly a “Major General” in handling Registry matters during his tenure as Acting Registrar. Thanks to him for the herculean task of resuscitating ANUPA from its comatose state. I fondly refer to him as “Uncle Willy.” I thank him for his mentorship and appreciate him and his family for their love, support, and friendship over the years.

Late Dr. (Mrs.) Eunice Funke Oyeade, an erudite administrator and a lover of peace, handed the baton of FUTA Registry to me. I remain grateful to her for leaving the structure strong and intact, thereby providing me a solid platform for a successful tenure.

I sincerely appreciate Dr. Ayorinde Olurinde Ogunraku, an administrative guru and a distinguished builder of people. As the pioneer

Administrative Officer of FUTA, and former Registrar of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, he made remarkable contributions to the development of higher education administration in Nigeria. His greatest legacy is not in physical structures, but in the many lives he mentored and the generations of university administrators he helped to produce. Beyond the professional relationship, we share a long and enduring bond as cousins. We grew up together and have journeyed through life with many remarkable parallels. He fondly refers to me as his *alter ego*, a relationship I cherish deeply. I remain grateful for his mentorship, friendship, encouragement, and the positive impact he has had on my life and career. His dearly beloved wife, Oluwayemisi, was my childhood friend, and we remain friends to this day.

To my successors, Mr. Richard A. Arifalo and Mr. Charles O. Adeleye, I thank them for keeping the flag flying. I remain grateful for their support, encouragement, and goodwill, even long after my tenure in the Registry.

I also express my profound gratitude to all cadres in the Registry for the support, loyalty, and goodwill that made my tenure as Registrar a success and for the love and recognition still accorded me today. *Eyin naa a dagba*, and it will continue to be well with you.

To the forerunner Registrars in the Nigerian University System, I express my gratitude for the norms, ethics, culture, and traditions passed down to us and upon which the current generation continues to build. They include:

The Pioneer Registrars – 1948 – 1970

The first generation of university registrars served in the premier University of Ibadan, namely Mr. F.P.G. Hunter, Mr. W.A. Husband, and Mr. J.D. Irwin.

The Post-Independence Pioneer Registrars

Chief Nathaniel Ademolekun, D.R. Oduaran (Ibadan); Prof Vincent Chukwuemeka Ike (UNN); Chief Abudu Yesufu Eke, H.R. Balmond (OAU); Mr K.S. Flanagan and Chief Abudu Yesufu Eke (UNILAG); Dr M. Dawouna and Mr K. Lupton (ABU); Mr D.R. Oduaran (UNIBEN).

Later Entrants

University of Ibadan, Ibadan: Chief J. S. Okudu. Chief Ekanem-Ifa, Chief Dr Mrs Moji Ladipo, and Mrs. Omotayo Ikotun

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife: Mr. Theophilus Akinyele, Mrs. E. M. Ojo, and Mr. Ayorinde Ogunraku

Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye: Apostle Ajayi, Olufemi Oyewole, and Mrs. Omolara Osunsanya

University of Nigeria, Nsukka: Grace Ifeoma Adichie, Nze D.E.C Onyebuagu, Barrister Placidius C. Dioka, Anthony I. Okonta, and Dr. Chris C. Igbokwe.

Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta: Mrs. C. A. Soboyejo, Mr. Ademola Oyerinde, Mr. Matthew Odunlade Ayoola, and Dr Hakeem Adesola Adekola

University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba: Rev S. A. Osinulu, Mr. Femi Eperokun, Dr. A. A. Omotoso, Barrister Oluwarotimi Shodimu and Dr Taiwo Ipaye

Federal University of Technology, Akure: Dr. S. A. Osanyinbi, Mr. B. A. Adebayo, and Dr. (Mrs.) Funke Oyebade

Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti: Chief J.G.O. Adegbite, Chief M.O. Ogunniyi, and Dr Omojola Awosusi

University of Ilorin, Ilorin: Chief Olusola Daramola and Mr. Alao

Thanks for Dr Awosusi for his support in getting accurate information in this area.

Let me also appreciate the professional and technical staff of FUTA and the unions. I am grateful to members of ASUU for their warmth to me, even as a university administrator and more for my acceptance and support as an academic staff. Thanks to all members of SSANU, NAAT, and NASU, for their support and cooperation always. To the Students Union body (FUTASU), I thank them so much for all they do. They are simply “the best and the greatest.”

Bursars

The former and current University Bursars have contributed immensely to making my service in FUTA and beyond productive and impactful. I remain grateful to the late Mr. Adaramola, the late Mr. S. O. Abiolu, Mr. R. A. Aladetimi, Mr. J. A. Adeshoba, Dr. O. K. Oladeji (Acting), and Mr. P. O. Osadugba.

University Librarians

The University Librarians have also contributed significantly to my growth. My gratitude goes to Prince Adegbule Adesida, Mrs. A. O. Oke (Acting), Dr. Z. F. Oguntuase, Mrs. Zainab Falaye, Dr. Belau Gbadamasi, Prof. (Mrs.) O. A. Abiolu (Acting), and Dr. Akin Awoyemi. I thank them for their support and contributions, which I have enjoyed while serving the University in various capacities.

Provost, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, and Academic Colleagues

I acknowledge all past and current Provosts, Deans, Directors, and Heads of Departments/Units in the University. I have had the privilege of serving with many of them at various levels. My association with them has been of tremendous value to my life and career. Permit me to use the

Chairman, Committee of Deans, Prof B. K Alese and the former Dean of my HOD. Domestic, Prof T. O. Adebayo, as a point of contact to this wonderful group.

The **School of Logistics and Innovation Technology (SLIT)**, the fastest-growing School, the envy of its peers, and a convergence of iconic managers is a home. Congratulations on your escape from the snare of the fowlers - delisting. The snare is broken; you have escaped, having been re-enlisted. Your acceleration shall know no bounds. Thanks to my academic and professional colleagues in the school. As a member and a former Acting Head of Department, I have enjoyed and continue to enjoy your support and camaraderie. They include Professors Simon-Oke (Dean), T. M. Obamuyi, A. F. Lawal, K.T. Gbadamosi, O. J. Ojo, E. N. Olowokere, T. O. Fakokunde, P. S. Olowolaju, M. S. Stephens, O. A. Jesuleye, A. D. Dada, M. A. Abayomi, T. Egbetunde, R. J. Kolawole, M. A. Adewole and the Sub-Dean, Dr. F. F. Ogunyemi.

I also appreciate the Heads of Department: Prof O. J. Ojo, Drs. A. N. Abasilim, D. B. Ilori, A. A. Faiyetole, O. T. Okahankhuele, and A. O. Oloruntuyi.

I thank the Department of Project Management Technology family. I am grateful to everyone in the Department for accepting, loving, encouraging, and caring for me. This has contributed immensely to my academic success and to my service as Head of Department, thanks. My many thanks go to the upcoming Professors in the Department, which include: Dr. O. P. Ologunwa, Dr. A. O. Adepoju, Dr. (Mrs.) V. O. Ogunjobi, Dr. K. T. Alade, Dr. A. A. Omonori, Mr. K. J. Ekundayo, Mr. O. G. Sunday, Mr. J. A. Ologun, and Mrs. Hannah Ajibola, our dutiful Departmental Secretary. My appreciation goes to other colleagues for their goodwill corporation, love and support for me before they left the department: Dr. O. D. Eniowo, Dr. H. O. Adebambo, and Dr. Engr. H. I. Babalola and Dr. O. A. Aladejebi. I wish all members success in all their endeavours.

I am grateful to the past and current Deans, Heads of Departments, colleagues, and students at the School of Environmental Technology for their encouragement and support. As a two-term School Officer, I was privileged to work and interact with inspiring leaders who supported my academic development, especially during the school's formative years. My appreciation goes particularly to Professors E. A. Adeyemi (Late), D. Olanrewaju, Fatuyi, D. R. Ogunsemi, Omole, and others who gave me opportunities to lecture courses as a Part-Time and Adjunct Lecturer.

My sincere appreciation goes to all my teachers and lecturers at various stages of my academic journey. I thank them for providing academic leadership and for enlightening me both in the classroom and through practical experiences. I remain grateful for the lessons and opportunities they shared with me.

To the “University Carpenters,” who use modern technology to manage forests and refine wood, the colleagues of my “*HOD Domestic*” in the Department of Forestry and Wood Technology, I express my sincere appreciation for the honour, care, and regard they have consistently shown my husband and me over the years.

To my colleagues in the Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD), FUTA branch, and members of CEGIST, FUTA, I am most grateful for your acceptance, love, and support over the years.

I owe Professor Oribabor, a renowned Management expert, so much in my academic growth. His mentorship as my lecturer at OAU, as the Supervisor of my doctoral research, and later as the Supervisor of my M.Phil. thesis gave me a sound footing and has gone a long way toward building my intellectual capacity as well as my academic and administrative competence.

Thanks to his dynamic mentorship, I specialised in Human Resource and Strategic Management. When I returned to him with a desire to broaden

my scope in Management Science through an additional degree, he chose an M.Phil. in Business Administration for me. Since I had already taken some Business Administration courses during my MPA programme, he insisted that I borrow relevant courses from Technology Policy and Planning Unit now African Institute for Science Policy and Innovation (AISPI) and the Faculty of Social Sciences so as to be adequately prepared for a future academic career in a University of Science and Technology, should I eventually secure a full-time lecturing appointment. That decision gave my academic work a clearer direction and a firmer footing.

At this point, I note and appreciate those who contributed in one way or another to the process, production, and presentation of this inaugural lecture. In addition to those I have mentioned earlier in this discourse, were Professors Peter and Biola Aborisade, Tolu Olaleye, Oyedapo Fagbenro, Tunde Arayela, Debo Adeyewa, Titi and Pastor Fola Adebayo, Peter and Mrs. Funbi Ayodeji, A. O. Dada, Bola Ojokoh, Rotimi and Sade Dahunsi, B. O and B. J Akinyele, Peter and Mrs. Aarinola Ola, E. O. Adeparusi, Drs. A. O. Adepoju, Niyi Onafadeji, F. F. Ogunyemi, P. O. Tolani, Taiwo Ayedun, and Aasa Olaoluwa; Mr. and Mrs. Segun and Sola Alogba, Dr. S. O. Lawal, Mr. Abdulateef Lamidi, Mr. Temitope Oyetomi; Mrs. Bimbo Okun Ayodele, among many others.

My appreciation goes to colleagues and friends in sister universities and other academic institutions for their recognition, mentorship, partnership, and support. These include Professors Kunle Ogunbameru, Z. O Akindele (VC RUN), I. T. and Dr. (Mrs.) Akindele, Siyanbolas, I. R. Akintoye, Olusola Ologunde, Modupe Adebo, Aribisala (Federal University of Technology, Iyin-Ekiti), and Asaolu, Fagbenle, and O. M. Ajayi, Dr. E. O. Dumade and his team, Mr. Adeyemo Johnson.

I am equally grateful to the authorities of the University of Ghana, University of Ibadan, University of Benin, Obafemi Awolowo University, Osun State University, Ekiti State University, Adekunle

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My special appreciation goes to the staff and students of the Faculty of Management and the Department of Business Administration at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, for their love, support, and contributions during my Sabbatical Appointment.

Churches and Ministries

A product of God's faithfulness, I had the unique privilege of encountering Jesus Christ as a little girl. From family devotions to growing up in the Sunday School of St. John's Anglican Church, Ido-Ekiti, under a teacher who had the touch of Christ and a committed Scripture Union member, God began laying the foundation for my Christian journey. The journey later extended to St. David's Anglican Church, Ido Ekiti, to Anglican Churches in Ijan Ekiti, Akure Diocese and beyond. My ministry in Christian and youth work has been one of the greatest platforms through which God has moulded my life and enabled me to impact others. Through service, leadership, mentorship, and fellowship in various churches, Christian ministries, youth organisations, and faith-based groups, I have been privileged both to receive and to give. These include the various Units and strata of Scripture Union Children, Youth, Campus and Pilgrim Fellowship/Groups. Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES), Christian Embassy Int. represented by the Board of Trustees – Bro. Tunde Adesida, Bro. Remi Adewumi, Bro. Akin Lasehinde, Sis. Mabel Olabode, Sis. Funmi Olaosebikan, the Board of Missions and the Youth Co-ordinator, Bro. Ireti Adesida; Gospel Students Fellowship of the Gospel Faith Mission International; Joint Christian Campus Fellowship (JCCF), Redeemed Christian Church of

God, Children Evangelism Ministry (CEM), Deeper Life Fellowship, Children Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), Youth for Christ (YFC), Chapel of Faith (COF), Agape Christian Assembly, Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) Glory of God “Isegun Repete”, WOSEM and CAC Oke Itura, CAC Worldwide, and others. Through these platforms, God planted, nurtured, and multiplied the seed of greatness in my life and in the lives of many others. I remain grateful to the many friends, pastors, mentors, and encouragers whom God brought my way through these fellowships and ministries.

Members of other Student groups: National Association of Ondo-Ekiti Christian students, Joint Christian Campus Fellowship, Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical students, Scripture Union Campus Fellowship, Man O War Student Union, National Association of Project Management Students (NAPMATS), Association of Logistics and Innovation Technology Students, SIFE/ENACTUS.

I thank the numerous Christian leaders whom God used to nourish me spiritually and provide the encouragement, guidance, and inspiration needed to run the race of life. Their teachings, prayers, and interest in my success gave me the impetus to grow, lead, and bear fruit, part of which is manifest today despite the many waters that have passed under the bridge. I remain grateful for allowing God to use them in the process of making me.

Among these Christian leaders are Pastor Enoch Adeboye, General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, and the numerous associates and ministers of the RCCG whom God has brought my way over the years; Pastor W. F. Kumuyi, General Superintendent of the Deeper Life Bible Church; Leaders of Scripture Union (SU) Nigeria represented by Rt. Revd. Dr. Francis Bankole, Prof. Jide Faleye, Bro. Stephen & Sis. Funmi Oluwalowo, Bro. Kingsley Ibekwe, Rt. Revd. Stephen Fagbemi, Engr. Niyi & Bolade Adeyanju, Prof. Soga Fasoranbaku, Bro. Israel Akhaine, Mama Olori Dorcas Fesobi, Evang.

Sola & Sis. Toyin Oki, Bro. Jones Ogunmusire, late Very Reverend Olukuade, Venerable Omoju, Venerable Orogun, Eng John and Sis Gladys Enaburekhan, Venerable Akin and Mama Titi Laseinde, Venerable Kola Omoju, Bro. Julius and Sis Solape Jemilugba, Evangelist Funsho and Sis Modupe Awoku, Engr. Mike and Sis Dele Dada, Prof. Oluayo and Funso Olusoji Bello, Pastor E. O. Abina, General Overseer of the Gospel Faith Mission International, Pastor Michael Aremu Olatunji, Regional Pastor, GOFAMINT, Uncle Samuel Okomoleyin, National Overseer, African Mission of GOFAMINT, Pastors Seyi and Bola Osanyinbi, Late Pastor Orogun of the Deeper Life Bible Church, Ido-Ekiti, Bishops Felix and Funke Adejumo of Agape Christian Assembly, Bishop Daniel Olujimade of Emmanuel St. Sabba Evangelical Mission, Pastors M. K. and Gladys Adaramola of Life Bible Church, Bishop Oyedepo of Winners Chapel, Rev Kunle and Modupe Salami of Chapel of His Glory, Bishop Ayo and Rev. (Mrs.) Yinka of Chapel of Victory, Port Harcourt, Elder Joseph & Rev. Mother Victoria Makanjuola in Ado-Ekiti, Pastors B. J. Simi Adaramola of God's Grace Fellowship Church, Eng. and Deaconess Charles and Motunrayo Adegbilero, Emmanuel Adaramola of Emmanuel Foundation, Bishop Suuru Afolabi, Bishop Dan and Dr. Mrs. Adekunbi Obaisi, Baba Abel Taiwo Ojo of CAC Covenant Church, Ibadan. My appreciation also goes to Pastors Ayo Adeyemo, Asubiojo, and Oladiji; Pastor Ayo and Evang Tope Owoeye of Christ Mercy Land, Pastors John and Comfort Oladeji, Pastor Monday and Prof Toyin Agbonifo, Mama Ekundayo Iluyomade; Dr. Tunde and Sis. Toyin Adu, Pastor Ajao, Pastor Adebiyi, Rev. Enoch Idowu of SEPCAM, Pastors Jide and Omolola; Pastors Dare and Helen Olatunde, Pharm. Bisi Adeyewa, Rev. Kayode and Pastor Titi Adeosun, Pastors Gabriel and Racheal Ayeleso, Pastor and Mrs. Righteous Ojo, Sir Dr. Ayo and Deaconess Akinyede,

Specifically, I wish to thank Bro. Tunde and Sis. Beatrice Adesida for their parental roles, leadership, assistance and mentorship over the year.

The Chapel of Faith at FUTA has been my supportive and congenial family. I deeply appreciate the Council, Chaplains (former and current – Very Rev Dr Chris Nwagurum Godspower), and the entire Members of the Chapel over the years. I am especially grateful to the Pioneer Chaplain, Emeritus Professor (Venerable) Akin Laseinde, and his wife; the Chapel Council Chairmen (former and current); the Chapel men and women fellowships; the Youth Fellowship members and Leaders; the Children's and Teenagers' Church; the Ushering Unit; and everyone.

To my Friends

Every journey is shaped by the people who walk alongside us during our formative years. As I reflect on my life's journey, I remember with gratitude the friends whose companionship, encouragement, and shared experiences helped shape my outlook and character.

From my childhood days in Ido-Ekiti to the various stages of my life, I have been blessed with numerous friends whose counsel, support, and belief in me have come at crucial moments. To all my friends from those formative years and beyond, I remain deeply grateful. Their impact is woven into the fabric of my story, and I cherish the role they have played in my journey.

Some stood by me during seasons of uncertainty, while others celebrated my victories as though they were their own. The values, lessons, and experiences we shared continue to influence the person I have become.

My sincere appreciation goes to my senior academic colleagues, mentors, and others whose contributions have greatly enriched my life throughout my gradual transformation and academic journey. Among these active players are Professors **Adamolekun**; P. A. Aborisade; Pastor and Titi Adebayo; S. and V. U. Ola, late Prof. S. O. Ewuola; Isiaka Adekunle Amoo; I. A. Fuwape, Oluwadare Ajewole; Ganiyu Oboh; Prof. Ayo Olajuyigbe; Prof. and Mrs. Fagbenro; late Prof. S. B. Adejuyigbe and wife (Eye Ayo); Prof. S. O. Akindele (VC Run) and wife; Prof. Asaolu

(now Vice-Chancellor, University of Ilesha); Profs. S. T. & M. O. Oni, Folashade Adejuyigbe; A. Oshodi; late K. O. Ipinmoroti; S. O. Popoola, Kunle Ogunbameru; B. K. Alese; D. R. Ogunsemi, Kayode Arogundade; Ayo Ajayi; Rotimi Adewumi, Arc. Monisade Adegbe and their spouses and Cornelius Owoeye.

Colleagues, Bosses, and Associates

No meaningful journey is undertaken alone. I have been privileged to work alongside remarkable colleagues, supportive supervisors, inspiring leaders, and dedicated associates whose professionalism, guidance, and friendship enriched both my personal and professional growth. Through collaboration, mentorship, and shared aspirations, they have contributed significantly to the experiences and achievements I value today.

My bosses and colleagues at the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Akure, include Dele Angulu (General Manager), Sunny Agbontaen, Egwaoje Deji, Layi Ademokoya, Sola Atere, Mr. Charles Omodugba, Dele Ogundana, Kayode Afolabi, Lara Olagboyegun, Grace Olufunmi, late Bisi Arije, and Egun Olukayode, Yoruba Translator, among others in the Newsroom. They were caring and protective, especially during the turbulent political period of 1983–1984 in Ondo State. Charles, Dele, and Lara, we survived Okeigbo, Benin, and the Situation Office in Ijapo while carrying out our duties in search of news. The working relationship was exceptional. My love for the classroom eventually snatched me away from you.

My appreciation also goes to my colleagues, friends and students at Fiwasaye Girls' Grammar School, Akure and Oyemekun Grammar School, Akure. I particularly appreciate our drama group, with Mama Aladegbaye, the Principal, and Aunty Jumoke Adekola serving as points of contact for the entire group. At Oyemekun Grammar School, I had a memorable stay in every sphere of life. Indeed, Oyemekun was my

springboard. I extend my appreciation through Oga Layo Ariyo, and Baba Modupe Ayodele and their spouses to the entire group.

Pastor Mrs. Winifred Ajoke Oluwaleimu (of blessed memory) and family provided a refuge for a few of my friends and me during our youthful years in Akure. She later handed our care to her daughter, Auntie Olu Oyeyinka. We remain grateful to the family for the value added to my life that is speaking today.

I am sincerely grateful to my special Akure families, particularly the family of Baba Albert & Mama Juliana Ige, who have been a special blessing to me and my family. The family is fully represented here today. Ven. Jimi Ige, thank you.

I am most grateful to the family of my Daddy & Mummy, Francis and Bisi Akinlabi of Ado Ekiti, who have played a significant role as parents in the Lord.

I also appreciate the family of Pastor Prince Noah Adegbare and Mama Ejide Alowolodu of Ikere-Ekiti, who have remained committed partners in progress in the journey of our family.

My sports coaches and teammates deserve my appreciation for the *esprit de corps* and the spirit of sportsmanship we shared over the years, through whose efforts and God's grace I was able to win trophies and medals at different levels of competitions.

Divine Benefactor - Clan

I have been blessed with relationships with a special group of people whom I refer to as my benefactor clan. At various stages of my life's journey, I have enjoyed and enjoying tremendous support from these offspring of Oke-Imesi, Ekiti, and other destiny helpers whom God brought my way. They include:

Late Mr. Titiloye was my English and Class Teacher at Grade II. During my admission process, he noted that my results qualified me for higher education and directed my steps towards further studies. The rest, as they say, is history. I pray that your seeds and generations will never be stranded for this and the many other sacrifices you made in helping other people's children.

Chief and Chief (Mrs.) Bayo and Moni Adeniran were my English and Literature teachers throughout my years in the secondary school. They were mentors, supporters, and caregivers beyond the classroom. They made it possible and easy for me to combine the academic demands of school with the responsibilities of serving simultaneously as Senior Prefect Girl and Games Prefect Girl in my final year. I admired this exceptional couple, who were loved by all students of Ekiti Parapo College, Ido-Ekiti. Their example inspired me to work hard, win the prize for the best student in Literature, specialise in English Language at my first degree, and aspire to become a teacher like them. May their light never go dim.

Professor Cecilia Olufunmilayo Daramola has been a trustworthy, dependable, and reliable friend with a heart of gold. I thank Funmi and her family for their immense contribution to making this day a reality. Our friendship predates my relationship with her late husband, Prof. Adebisi G. Daramola, my caring Oga, Vice-Chancellor, and friend of my family especially our children.

Venerable Adetunji contributed immensely to my career and academic progression as my Principal at Oyemekun Grammar School, Akure. I enjoyed his fatherly love and great support, especially during my youthful struggles to combine various endeavours with school work and state commissioned extra teaching responsibilities in the Government house.

Professor Niyi Okunlola has been an academic pillar to me throughout my journey. When he observed that my administrative responsibilities

were limiting my ability to undertake fieldwork effectively, he secured a research assistant for my data collection and he himself vetted my data analyses, reports, and manuscripts for publication. I remain deeply grateful to him and his wife for their love, care, and support for my family.

Arc. Dr. Adegun, the young shall grow, has been of immense support to me and a burden-bearer within the relatively short time he has spent at FUTA. I thank him for the important roles he continues to play.

My deep appreciation goes to Dr. Akin and Princess Tola Odetola for their unique contributions to my family's well-being over the years. They have always been there for us and have never grown weary of helping. Greater success and more grease to their elbow.

All my friends from childhood to date have been wonderful. At this moment, I remember with gratitude to my late friends, Prof. (Mrs.) Mosun Olufayo, Dr. (Mrs.) Taye Arayela, Engr. Paul Idowu Dahunsi, Bro Elisha Akinyede, and Rev. Dr. Kunle Salami. The memory of the just is blessed. I recall with nostalgia our years of striving together to succeed in life and become God's pride. I thank God for blessing my life through them. May the Lord bless and preserve their survivors and sustain their legacies.

Old Students Association

To all my seniors, schoolmates and juniors at every stage of my academic journey, I am grateful for their encouragement in my growth and development.

Old Students Association

My profound appreciation goes to members of the Ekiti Parapo College Old Students' Association. It was at Ekiti Parapo College, Ido-Ekiti, that I met many of my youthful friends. Since then, we have remained a strong team, making waves together. My special thanks go to my 1971/75 set.

My experience with the 1972/76 set, whom I refer to as my divine associates, has been wonderful. It was in that set that I served simultaneously as Senior Prefect Girl and Games Prefect Girl. Serving currently as an executive member of the set's Old Students' Association has further strengthened me personally. My bond with the Alumni Association at the higher levels of my academic journey has remained strong. I am indeed grateful to Uniben (Unibest) Alumni Association, OAU (Great Ife) Alumni Association and FUTA (The Greatest of all – Great Futarians) Alumni Association. I have been able to stand the test of time through my bond of unity, love and support with them.

Every child and seed of greatness whom the Lord has given me the opportunity to influence is blessed. My Seeds of Greatness include my academic children, Bible Club children (in particular, Seeds of Greatness Bible Club, Aule GRA, Akure), Sunday School children, children connected through Christian fellowships and social networks, and many others, in addition to my biological children. By God's grace, their tomorrow is great and blessed; they shall get there. I thank them for being part of my growth and a source of pride to me.

I also acknowledge with gratitude my students, past and present, at the secondary, undergraduate, Master's, and Ph.D. levels, who are too numerous to mention. They have contributed immensely to my life, professional experience, research and indeed, to the success of this inaugural lecture. I am particularly delighted that many of my former students have risen to distinguished positions in academia and beyond. While I took a detour into university administration, some followed the traditional academic path and attained the rank of Professor ahead of me; today, I am privileged to count some among my senior academic colleagues. I remain grateful for their collaboration, encouragement, friendship, and the respect they continue to accord me. Their success is one of the most rewarding dividends of my years in teaching. My prayer is that they will be greater than I am. I appreciate and love them dearly.

Aule, GRA, Akure Community

My appreciation goes to the landlords and tenants of Aule GRA Akure for the spirit of good neighbourliness enjoyed by my family and me. My special appreciation to our co-landlords in No. 1 God's Favour Street; Engr. Dr. Adeniyi and Mrs Adetayo Adesida, and Mr. Gbenga and Mrs. Odufa Orukotan. They and their family have been a wonderful company to me – Adefemi and Temiloluwa Adesida, and Oluwashindara and Oluwatimilehin Orukotan are my glorious “grandchildren through them”. I thank them for the love, peace, and joy we share together.

SU/TGWM Drama Ministers

My sincere appreciation goes to SU/TGWM Drama Ministers, a group brought together by the power of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of building up God's children in godliness using their God-given talents in theatre arts as end-time soldiers to complement the work of God's ministers in edifying and equipping the household of faith.

Living out the message we preached, the members loved and supported one another according to the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. By God's grace, we have remained connected over the years, whether in drama ministry, the pulpit, missions, professional careers, or other areas of service.

Among these fellow labourers are Bro. Avirho Daviewhare, Late Bro. Peter Abidoeye, Sis. Moji Awoku, Late Bro. Lekan Awoku, Bro. Segun Ogunyemi, Bro. Deoye Irelewuyi, Bro. Tayo Adu, Sis. Bade Akinsanmi, Sis. Funmi Olubode-Sawe, Bro. Dotun Adewale, Sis. Tope Ojolo, Sis. Ronke Atandeyi, Sis. Ronke Apata, Sis. Moji Ogali, Sis. Wumi Adeloye, Sis. Taiwo Akindeko, Bro. Wunmi Adeloye, Bro. Gbenga Olajide, Bro. Kayode Olajide, Bro. Dimoji, Bro. Caleb Sawe, Sis. Adekeye Akeroro, Sis. Sade Arowosafe, Bro. Festus Olajide, Bro. David Okunlola, Bro. Tunji Junaid, Bro. Olubode Sawe, Late Bro. Elisha Akinyode, Bro. Ope Fadare, Sis. Funbi Akinyemi and Late Bro. Tosin Arowolo.

Senior Citizens' Directorate

I appreciate members of the FUTA Senior Citizens. I have enjoyed their cooperation and maturity in the management of the affairs of the Directorate. I pray for quality longevity and good health for every member. I place on record the activities of the diligent and loyal staff of the Directorate, as well as the independent individuals around the Directorate, for these, I am grateful.

Protocol Directorate and Publications Committee

I express my sincere gratitude to the University Publications Committee, led by Prof. A. Y. B. Anifowose, for their thoughtful editorial contributions to this lecture manuscript. I am equally grateful to the Corporate Communications and Protocol Units under the leadership of Mr. Adegbenro Adebajo (a.k.a. Obanijesu) for their professional facilitation and coordination of the process of and success of the delivery of this 202nd Inaugural Lecture series of this great University.

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My in-laws deserve my deepest appreciation for warmly accepting and welcoming me as “Omonijan,”

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My appreciation goes to my friends from my early days in secondary school, who later became my beloved in-laws. They are Chief Ayo Daramola, Aunties Kate Ajayi, Tunke Kowe, Prof Janet Titilayo Bamgbose, Uncle Yinka Pereao, and others.

To all my benefactors whose names are not mentioned here, I sincerely appreciate you.

Please bear with me for the constraints of space and time, which make it impossible to mention all the individuals whose goodness I have enjoyed over the years. God, the rewarder of all men, who sees every contribution, will thank and reward you on my behalf.

Children

To my bundles of joy, God's heritage, and my Seeds of Greatness, Oluwakayode Temiloluwa Ajayi, Oluwagbenga Oluwabusayo Ajayi, and Ifeoluwa Ayomiposi Onaopemipo Ajayi, I am grateful to them for making me a proud mother of a threefold cord that is not easily broken (*Aaro meta kii da obe nu*). I remain eternally grateful to God for making you such wonderful gifts in my life, covering and beautifying me. I thank them for their sacrifices, contributions, and unwavering support through thick and thin in making this glorious day a reality. I appreciate every one of them.

Husband

Special thanks go to my beloved husband, “Baba Miliki,” integrity personified, Professor Babatunde Ajayi, “Baba Carpenter”, for the peace I have enjoyed through the years. He shared with me the rigours of my academic journey and promotion from the middle level to the peak of both my academic and administrative careers.

He has been my strength, pillar of support, co-achiever, quiet consultant, and a devoted father. I pray for good health for him and that he will continually enjoy the labour of his hands. Thanks for exhibiting Christ-like virtues and for never seeing me as a competitor, but rather as value addition.

I still remember how glorious it was when we had our Ph.D. convocation ceremony on the same day. It became a talk of the town, a media headline, and a memorable story both at home and abroad. I am highly appreciative of his person for allowing me to be myself through the different stages and dimensions of my transformation and life's journey, in season and out of season. *Olowo ori mi, e se o.*

Ten years ago, on this same podium, while delivering his inaugural lecture, described me as, and I quote, “...my **darling... value-added**

wife..." By the grace of God, I pledge to continue to uphold that description and to become even better.

Oruko n roni oriki n ro Eniyan

My name is Modupe, As a child, I often wondered why my parents were full of "thanks/ gratitude," especially with my younger brother bearing the name "Babatope." When I inquired, I was told that I was an added value, a special gift from God, indeed, Modupeoreoluwa.

In any situations, my mother's first prayer point on any issue concerning me (when complex or knotty) was always "Iwo Olorun to koju si mi se lore, je ki n le dupe jale lori Ore re-Modupe".

The confession of my parents concerning me worked for them, and it has since become my own confession. I believe that my name shall remain a praise until I meet my Creator. Therefore, I have a covenant with God, which I hold tenaciously for fulfilment. This conviction informs my commitment to giving my best in every assignment He permits me to undertake and to ensuring good success in all that I do.

To all my Stakeholders

What next?

By the grace of God, who has enabled me to deliver this value addition and brought me thus far, I declare that I will hereafter be a greater value addition and a global strategic competitive advantage to you. So help me God.

Now unto the King eternal, Immortal, Invisible; the only wise God be all honour and praise forever.

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