

FACTORS AFFECTING JOB PERFORMANCE OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN SELECTED PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the factors affecting the job performance of academic staff in universities in southwestern Nigeria. This was with a view to providing information on the factors affecting job performance of academic staff. The study adopted the survey research design. Primary data was collected through administration of questionnaire. Secondary data were gathered from journals, internet materials etc. The study population comprised of 2,122 academic staff from the two universities: University of Ibadan, Ibadan; and Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba-Akoko that were selected for the study. The respondents were selected using simple random sampling technique with a sampling fraction. In all, 210 respondents comprising 153 academic staff from the University of Ibadan and 58 academic staff from the Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba-Akoko. The data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean and regression analysis. Findings revealed that factors affecting academic staff performance include funding (3.65), physical environment (3.07) and reward incentives (2.98). In addition, the inferential statistics support the descriptive statistics showing that funding ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$), physical environment ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$) and reward incentives ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$) are factors affecting job performance of academic staff. On the other hand, the findings revealed that human environment does not significantly affect performance of academic staff positively ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$). The study concluded that factor affecting job performance of academic staffs include funding, physical environment, reward incentive, and not necessarily human environment.

Keywords: Performance, University, Academic staff, Factors, Academic staff performance

Introduction

Job performance in organisations has a significant impact on business success or failure (Al-Jedaia & Mehrez, 2020). Universities, just like any other organisation, depend on the performance of their employees to achieve their strategic goals, which in education are predominantly about imparting knowledge to its students (Ali, Raheem, Wahaz & Imammudin, 2014). Academic personnel are the most important factor in fulfilling institutional goals (Abubakar, Soba & Yusuf, 2022). Therefore, the motivation of academic staff in institutions is one of the most sensitive issues that

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determine the level of effort that academic staff invests in their institutions to commit to good performance.

In Nigeria, according to the National Policy on Education (NPE), the goals of the university shall be to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training, developing the intellectual capacity of the individuals to understand their local and external environment, to acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable the individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society (Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009). For the university to fulfill the aforementioned goals, it requires the operation of human elements of varying professions within it (Oluwafisayo, 2022).

The delivery of the goals of the university system effectively and efficiently is largely dependent on competent and knowledgeable in its workforce. The academic staff of the university translates the educational programmes of the university system into practical learning experiences through teaching and research (Aguba, 2004). Effective performance of the academic staff leads to the realisation of the broad objective of the university system in Nigeria, as the academics remain an important strength of the system (Oluwafisayo, 2022).

According to Issah (2023), one of the key causes of poor institutional performance is a lack of employee incentives from management. Moreover, management incentives to achieve goals might affect the connection between an institution and its members, resulting in the nature of performance output. Numerous studies have been conducted on academic staff performance (Kestrim & Engelbert, 2024; Chigo, 2024). According to Ogunode et al., (2023), the Nigerian education system will continue to face low performance by academic professionals in view of the management of the factors that propel their efficiency and effectiveness.

In recent times, the performance of academic staff in Nigeria has been adjudged to be on the decline, with its attendant implication on the overall goal of the university Babangida, Ibrahim, Usman, and Ibrahim (2023). In order to control and manage this trend, there is a need to find out the contributory factors that have led to the decline in job performance, hence this study.

Literature Review

Performance of Academic Staff

Academic staff performance refers to how effectively and efficiently academic workers perform their professional tasks; such as teaching, research, mentoring, and administration. According to Josiah et al. (2023), the effectiveness of academic staff is determined by their ability to provide high-quality education, conduct productive research, and contribute to institutional development. Musa (2024) defines academic staff performance as the amount to which lecturers carry out their academic roles and responsibilities, using metrics including student evaluation, research output, and participation in scholarly activities. Similarly, Omale et al. (2023) defined academic performance as a comprehensive assessment of staff contributions to teaching,

research, community services, and professional growth within an institution. These definitions emphasise that academic staff effectiveness extends beyond classroom instruction to encompass larger contributions to institutional and societal objectives.

Academic staff performance is critical to the success of higher education institutions, because it has a direct impact on educational and research outcomes. High-performing professors not only increase student outcomes, but also enhance their schools' prestige through papers, grants, and collaborations (Zegullaj et al., 2024). Effective performance management, which includes clear expectations, recognition, and developmental support, is essential for maintaining academic achievement (Omale et al., 2023). Furthermore, fair and consistent performance evaluation can drive academic staff to innovate, engage in lifelong learning, and maintain high professional standards (Musa, 2024). Thus, assessing and improving academic staff performance is critical to achieving quality and sustainability in higher education.

Job performance has been defined as a person's ability to perform tasks accurately, completely, cost-effectively, and efficiently, with the primary goal of achieving organisational objectives (Grahandika and Wijayati, 2021; Lai et al., 2020). Bhat and Beri (2016) explain job performance in the light of its categorisation into task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual performance. Task performance refers to the efficiency of job-related tasks. Adaptive performance refers to an employee's ability to adapt to changes in the workplace, creative problem-solving, learning new tasks, and interpersonal, cultural, and physical flexibility. Contextual performance refers to an employee's commitment to their social, psychological, and organisational context, surrounding efforts, initiative, enthusiasm, resourcefulness, motivation, creativity, cooperation, communication, interpersonal relationships and organisational commitment.

Job performance is an important indicator of how well employees perform their work, whether it is good or not. Job performance refers to the effort employees make on their jobs, ensuring dependable performance and responsibility for tasks (Hasanah & Kurniawan, 2017). It includes activities that contribute to a company's effectiveness, even if they are outside their specific task. Kaveri & Prabakaran (2013) define job performance as the contribution employees make to enhance company productivity.

Job performance measures individual worker effectiveness and influences personnel decisions like merit-based payment, promotion, and retention (Motowildo 2003; Mohamad & Jais, 2016). It's crucial for workers and organisational success, ensuring the best performance among employees. Besides, job performance refers to a person's high effectiveness and efficiency in achieving their goals and objectives (Hirlak et al., 2018; Khoshnaw and Alavi, 2020). Employee performance is determined by the amount and standard of work an employee accomplishes while performing their assigned tasks (Darma & Supriyanto, 2017). Song et al. (2019) highlighted the significance of job performance in developing human resource skills and as an indicator of an organisation's success and achievement. Measurement of performance

is central, as important organisational decisions are based on individual performance (Sadick & Kamardeen, 2020).

Empirical Review

Factors affecting academic staff job performance

Jalagat (2016) adopted theoretical models and existing literature to analyse the relationship between motivation and job performance. The findings indicated that motivation and job performance are inextricably linked. Moon et al. (2019) conducted another investigation to gain a better grasp of the underlying process through which work motivation affects service personnel's job performance. The purpose of this study is to determine how job motivation affects job performance. The findings of this study indicate that motivation is favourably associated with job performance.

Memon et al., (2023) found out that Job satisfaction among faculty members is a recipe for organisation's success. The researcher further reiterated that any institution of higher learning that fails to put adequate mechanism to checkmate job dissatisfaction may have challenges regarding productivity. Wang et al. (2022) in a related finding to that of Memon (2022) discovered that job satisfaction results in performance. The researcher also suggested that critical attention needs to be paid by academic institutions to job satisfaction among academic staff in the university settings.

Abubakar, et al., 2022) conducted a study to investigate the influence of remuneration, promotion, work satisfaction, and productivity on academic staff performance. The findings revealed that salary and promotion considerably increased performance, while salary reduced the association between job happiness and performance. The study recommends that university administrators should provide competitive compensation, implement clear and fair promotion processes, and invest in career development programs to increase productivity and work satisfaction. Hussaini et al. (2021) investigated the impact of motivation and working environment on academic staff performance in two Nigerian polytechnics. Motivation and the working environment were both found to be favourably connected with academic staff performance.

Babbuli and Aliyu (2024) investigated the impact of financial compensation systems; such as pay structures and advancement possibilities; on academic staff performance at Adamawa State University in Mubi (Nigeria). The study suggested that university administrators assess and improve pay structures, provide clear career pathways for academic staff (e.g., promotions, study leaves, training sponsorship), and ensure timely and equal compensation to promote dedication and productivity. Ejumudo and Ejumudo (2023) conducted at the Federal University of Petroleum Resources in Delta State, Nigeria, on organisational incentives (both monetary and non-monetary) and academic staff performance. This study demonstrated a substantial positive association between organisational incentives (monetary and non-monetary) and lecturers' academic achievement. The study recommends that institutions build complete incentive structures, integrate monetary rewards with non-monetary

assistance (e.g., recognition and; promotion chances), and establish transparent performance evaluation methods to align rewards with outcomes.

Wakabi and Balikuddembe (2024) explored the link between employee recognition and performance among academic and administrative workers at Ugandan University. The study found that employee recognition, remuneration (compensation), and organisational atmosphere have a significantly favourable impact on performance. There is a substantial positive association between recognition and staff performance, and the study recommended that academic staff receive sufficient acknowledgment when necessary to improve their performance. Adamu and Mafindi (2024) evaluated the impact of training on productivity in Nigerian educational colleges. The results revealed that continuous professional development (CPD) positively influence teaching effectiveness, research output, and job satisfaction. The study advocated increasing financing, conducting regular training needs assessments, increasing institutional leadership engagement, and improving the ICT infrastructure to improve training and development outcomes.

Paul, Dare, and Obasi (2024) examined the impact of the work environment on academic staff at the University of Abuja. The results revealed a positive and significant effect of the work environment on academic staff performance. It has been advised that academic institutions should create an enabling climate by reducing workloads, providing research grants, and supporting training and workload management. This is critical for improving academic achievement. Idowu and Aderonke (2025) investigated the impact of the work environment on academic staff at public universities in north-central Nigeria. The results revealed that work environment had a positive and significant impact on academic staff performance. The study recommended that academic workers be provided with a good work environment to perform optimally.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework discusses the adoption of theories used in explaining the work. The theory adopted as the basis of the explanation of the relationship of the variables is the Ecological Systems Theory. This theory developed by psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner, explains how human development is profoundly influenced by interconnected environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner & Evans (2000). It divides these influences into five nested layers—the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem—showing how everything from immediate family dynamics to broad cultural and historical contexts shapes behaviour.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory posits that an individual's development or behaviour is influenced by a series of interconnected environmental systems, ranging from the immediate surroundings (e.g., family) to broad societal structures (e.g., culture) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Amongst the influences is the macrosystem which addresses influences from the larger environment. The

macrosystem differs from the previous ecosystems as it does not refer to the specific environments but the already established society and culture.

This relevance of this theory draws from its strength to explain behaviour or development from the role of the environment. In examining factors affecting job performance of academic using the ecological system theory, the theory stipulates that the macrosystem is the factors in the academic environment which include work environment, reward incentive and so on. The development of the academic staff which is their performance is hinged on the macro system which is represented by factors in the environment of academic staff. The academic staff job performance is largely an output of the motivational factors in place to encourage the academic staff. These factors as examined in this work include funding, human environment, physical and reward incentive

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the individual's development or behaviour is influenced by a series of interconnected environmental systems. This implies that performance of academic staff is influenced by series of factors in the environment of academic staff. These factors form the macro system of the academic staff.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design. This permitted the use of questionnaire and interview to generate necessary data from the research participants. The population of this study consisted of all the academic staff of University of Ibadan totaling 1,532 and academic staff of Adekunle Ajasin University with population of 580. The universities selected for the study were University of Ibadan; Ibadan (UI) and Adekunle Ajasin University; Akungba (AAUA) representing a Federal and a State University. From the population of the two universities, a total number of 210 academic staff were selected, using simple random sampling technique with a sampling fraction of 10% of the population, with 153 and 58 respondents selected respectively from UI and AAU. This group provided information on factors affecting academic staff job performance.

Secondary data was sourced from relevant academic journals, the internet, and university official publications. It is expected that this will provide information on the general performance. The research instruments used for collecting data for this study were questionnaire. The questionnaire contains close ended questions and adopted the Likert five point scales. Analytical tools appropriate for each objective were adopted to analyse the data collected for the study. Analytical tools such as percentages, frequencies, regression analysis etc were adopted for the analysis.

Data Analysis and Result

The table 1 below present the analyses of factors affecting job performance of academic staff examined certain variables affecting job performance of academic staff which includes funding, human environment, physical environment and reward incentive. It showed that 3.54% of the academic staff strongly agreed that they have

access to financial revenue, while 7.07% also supported this response in the affirmative. A total of 11.25% of the academic staff answered indifferently (undecided). On the other hand, 34.08% of the academics disagreed, while 44.05% of the academic staff strongly disagree. The result showed that funding is a factor affecting job performance of academic staff as over 75% of the academic staff disagreed on having adequate funding. On whether it is erratic, 43.73% strongly agree on this, 23.79% of the academic staff also agree that there is erratic funding. On the contrary, 5.47% disagree on having erratic funding, and 8.04% strongly disagree on erratic funding. 18.97% of the academic staff answered undecided. From the result, many of the academic staff agreed that there is erratic funding. This is because 67.72% of the academic staff agreed on having erratic funding. Also, from the result of the interview, many of the academics maintained that funding is not even available and not a matter of erratic.

The academic staff were asked whether they work as a team, which is under human environment as a factor affecting their performance. The responses indicated that, 27.01% of the academic staff strongly agree on this, 25.08% also agree on the question. On the other hand, 1.61% of the academic staff disagree on the question, while 0.64% strongly disagree on this. A large proportion of the respondents were neutral which is (45.66%). The result indicates that the academic staff were undecided about group work. This is because a large percentage, which is 45.66 were neutral about. Also, on the question on instructional facilities, 1.93% strongly agree on having access to instructional facilities, 42.22% agree to this question. About 16.72% of the academic staff were neutral about it (undecided), while 33.47% and 5.47% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively on the question. A fairly large number of the academic staff agreed that they have access to instructional facilities. On access to electricity, 5.47% strongly agreed to having regular access to electricity, 21.22% agreed to it. On the other hand, 16.72% disagreed with the question, while 49.20% strongly disagree on the question. 7.40% of the academic staff were neutral on this question. This implied that majority of the academic staff are of the opinion that there is no regular access to electricity. As regards information network system, 13.18% of the academic staff strongly agree to it, 30.55% of the academic staff also agree to the question. 15.11% of the academic staff were indifferent about it. However, 8.36% of the academic staff disagree on having access to information network service, while 32.80% strongly disagree on this.

The foregoing questions on instructional facilities, electricity and information network service are all questions on physical facilities, which make up the work environment. The responses revealed that most of these facilities are not accessible to the academic staff. Concerning reward system as a factor affecting performance of academic staff, the Lecturers responses went thus: 8.68% of the academic staff strongly agreed that they receive reasonable amount of salary, while 46.62% of the academics also agreed on this, 30.87% were indifferent (undecided). However, 9.97% of the academic staff disagreed on this, while 2.98% strongly disagree on it. On whether the salary should be improved, 19.94% of the academic staff strongly agreed

to this, while 12.22% also answered in the affirmative. About 29.58% of the academic staff remain neutral (undecided) about the question. On the other hand, 19.29% and 18.97% of the academic staff disagree and strongly disagree on the question respectively. Also, on scholarship grant, the trend of the result showed that 1.61% of the academic staff strongly agreed on having access to it, 14.15% agreed on accessing it. However, 19.94% of the academic were indifferent about it, while 33.12% and 31.19% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. From the result, we can infer that a large number of the academics do not have access to scholarship; this is because 66.31% of the academics disagreed to having access to the grant.

The result further showed that about 1.61% of the academics strongly concurred on receiving fellowship, while 5.14% equally agreed to it. But 37.94% were undecided about it, while 30.55% and 24.76% of the academics disagree and strongly disagree to it. The result further revealed that many of the academics are not having access to fellowship. This is due to the fact that a higher percentage of the academics disagreed on having access to fellowship (55.31%). Lastly, on allowance for mentoring, 8.64% strongly agree that they receive allowance for mentoring, 26.37% also agree to the fact that they receive the allowance. On the contrary, 16.40% and 29.90% disagree and strongly disagree to receiving allowance for mentoring. On the reward system, a large number of the academic staff agreed that they receive reasonable amount of salary. This is because over 55% of the academic staff agreed on receiving reasonable amount of salary. On whether their salary should be improved, the academic staff are divided, about 33% agreed the salary should be improved, and 29% of the academic staff were neutral about it (undecided) while about 37% disagreed on this,. Over 55% of the academics disagree on having access to fellowship. About 45% of the academia disagreed on having access to mentoring allowance. About 46% disagree on this, while over 26% were neutral about it.

Table 1: Responses on Factors Affecting the Job Performance

VARIABLE	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	p-value
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Adequate financial revenue	11	3.54	22	7.07	35	11.25	106	34.08	137	44.05	2.47	0.000
Erratic funding	136	43.73	74	23.79	59	18.97	17	5.47	25	8.04	3.65	0.000
You work as a team or group	84	27.01	78	25.08	142	45.66	5	1.61	2	0.64	2.37	0.000
Access to instructional facilities	6	1.93	132	42.22	52	16.72	104	33.44	17	5.47	3.07	0.000
Access to electricity	17	5.47	66	21.22	23	7.40	52	16.72	153	49.20	2.79	0.000
Access to information network service	41	13.18	95	30.55	47	15.11	26	8.36	102	32.80	2.72	0.000
Receiving reasonable salary	27	8.68	145	46.62	96	30.87	31	9.97	12	3.86	2.98	0.000
It should be improved	68	19.94	38	12.22	92	29.58	60	19.29	59	18.97	2.73	0.000
You receive scholarship grant	5	1.61	44	14.15	62	19.94	103	33.12	97	31.19	2.90	0.000
Allowance for mentoring	2	0.64	82	26.37	83	26.69	51	16.40	93	29.90	2.40	
Fellowship grant	5	1.61	16	5.14	118	37.94	95	30.55	77	24.76	2.93	0.000

Source: field work 2024

Table 1 presents the analyses of factors affecting academic staff job performance. The result showed that funding affects academic staff job performance. That is if funding is increased, performance of academic staff will also increase. If funding is increase by one unit, performance will increase by (0.9504). Since the p-value (0.009) is less than (0.05), it shows that funding significantly affect job performance of academic staff. On human environment as a factor affecting job performance of academic staff, the result shows that there is no significant relationship between human environment and job performance of academic staff, since the p-value (0.057) is greater (0.05). There is also negative relationship between human environment and job performance of academic staff. That is, a unit increase in human environment; performance will reduce by (-0.2734). As regards physical environment, since the p-value (0.000) is less than (0.05), there is significant relationship between physical environment and performance of academic staff. If physical environment is increased by a unit, then performance will increase by (0.3176). On reward and performance of academic staff, the result shows that there is significant relationship between reward incentive and academic staff job performance. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than (0.05), it shows that, reward is significantly related to performance. And a unit increase in reward will increase performance by (0.4445), showing positive relationship between reward incentive and performance of academic staff.

Table 2: Regression Analysis on Factors affecting Performance of Academic Staff

Performance	Coeff.	t	p-value
Funding	0.9504	-4.22	0.009
Human environment	-0.2734	1.91	0.057
Physical environment	0.3176	-3.81	0.000
Reward	0.4445	-4.80	0.000
Cons	-23.2096	6.26	0.000

Source: field work 2015

Discussion of Findings

This section focused on the discussion of findings from this research. The result from the descriptive statistics revealed how factors such as funding, physical environment, human environment and reward incentive affect performance of academic staff. The result showed that funding is a factor affecting job performance of academic staff as majority of the academic staff disagreed on having adequate funding. On whether it is erratic, 43.73% strongly agree on this, 23.79% of the academic staff also agree that there is erratic funding. The result from the inferential statistic also showed that funding affect academic staff job performance. That is if funding is increased, performance of academic staff will also increase. The result revealed that funding significantly affects job performance of academic staff.

The findings from the descriptive statistics showed that human environment is not necessarily a factor affecting job performance of academic staff. This is because the responses indicated that majority of the academic staff were undecided about the role of human environment of job performance. The inferential statistics showed that there is no significant relationship between human environment and job performance of academic staff. The result further revealed that there is also negative relationship between human environment and job performance of academic staff.

The findings showed the role of physical environment on performance of academic. Physical environment is determined by indicators such as regular electricity, information network system and instructional materials. The responses revealed that most of these facilities are not accessible to the academic staff. The result from the inferential statistics revealed that there is significant relationship between physical environment and performance of academic staff. The result aligns with Ejumudo and Ejumudo in 2023. The researchers conducted a research on the role of organisational incentives (both monetary and non-monetary) and academic staff performance. This study demonstrated a positive association between organisational incentives (monetary and non-monetary) and lecturers' academic achievement. The result also concurred with the findings of Paul et. al., (2024). Paul et al (2024) discovered a positive and significant effect of the work environment on academic staff performance. It has been advised that academic institutions should create an enabling climate by reducing workloads, providing research grants, and supporting training and workload management. This is critical for improving academic achievement.

The descriptive statistic revealed the role of reward incentive which is indicated by salary, scholarship and grant. The result showed that reward incentive positively affects the job performance of academic staff. The result from the inferential statistics showed that there is significant relationship between reward incentive and academic staff job performance. The result indicated that reward is significantly related to performance. The result aligns with the Abubakar, et al., (2022). The researcher conducted a study to investigate the influence of remuneration, promotion, work satisfaction, and productivity on academic staff performance. The findings revealed that salary and promotion considerably increased performance. The study recommends that university administrators should provide competitive compensation, implement clear and fair promotion processes, and invest in career development programs to increase productivity and work satisfaction.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, the study concluded factors such as reward incentive, physical environment and funding are factors that affect academic staff job performance. The study further concluded that funding, reward incentive and physical environment affect job performance of academic staff while human environment does not affect job performance of academic staff.

Recommendation

In view of the findings of this work, the work further recommended that:

- i. There is a need for the government to give proper attention to the factors affecting academic staff in universities. Factors such as funding and physical environment and reward system incentive affect performance of academic staff in universities in Southwestern Nigeria.
- ii. Government must look into the funding, reward system, and physical environment of academic staff. The government must take practical and urgent step in addressing the challenges posed by funding, the reward system and physical environment in the universities. There is a need to do an upward review of the reward system currently operational, there is need to increase funding to address problems of inadequate physical facilities.

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