

Academic Staff Welfare and Job Performance in Federal Universities in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between academic staff welfare and their job performance in federal universities in South-South, geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The welfare of academic staff is a critical factor in determining their job satisfaction, motivation and overall performance. However, from the literature reviewed so far it was observed that the relationship between academic staff welfare and their job performance has not satisfactorily given adequate attention in the context of incentive package, office accommodation, and electricity supply in federal universities in South-South. This study aimed to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between these variables. A cross-sectional correlational research design was adopted, while the population of the study consists of 7,506 academic staff in the six federal universities in South-South. The sample size was 245 respondents. Two research instruments were used to elicit data for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical method was used in analyzing the data at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between academic staff welfare and their job performance in federal universities in South-South, though with some of the variables showing a weak relationship. It was recommended among others that, the Federal Government, in collaboration with university governing councils, should develop and periodically review competitive incentive structures. These should incorporate both financial (e.g., allowances, bonuses) and non-financial (e.g., recognition, research grants) rewards to sustain motivation and performance in federal universities in South-South.

Keywords

Staff Welfare, Job Performance, Incentive Package, Electricity Supply

1. Introduction

Welfare generally reflects the level of comfort, satisfaction, and happiness that a person experience within their social and professional environments. Employees' welfare is determined by certain various characteristics such as quality of their workplace conditions, the availability of essential facilities, the nature of interpersonal and managerial relationships, and access to incentives such as housing, healthcare, and compensation benefits. The extent to which an employee enjoys welfare is influenced by their occupation, workload, income, and the policies implemented by their organization or government. Most of the regulating policies in organization are rigid [1]. Ensuring employees' welfare remains a central responsibility of employers, as it directly affects efficiency, motivation, and job satisfaction. This global concern for employees' wellbeing led to the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1919 after the First World War. The ILO emerged from international social movements a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) meant to protect workers' rights, fair treatment, and improved living standards. It is the mandate of International Labour Organization to promote social justice and safeguarding employees' welfare, human rights, and working conditions worldwide (ILO, n.d.). These Labour laws are designed to regulate the relationship between employers-employees and vice versa, ensure workers access to productive employment and fair wages and dignity at work environment, stipulating the conditions for employment, remuneration, and welfare to ensure mutual respect, prevention of unfair-gender-based treatment, race, religion, nationality or other form of discrimination. ILO ensures employee are treated with almost respect and provided the necessary benefit entitle to them. They strike a balance between the employer and the employee [2].

Academic wise, academic staff welfare concerns the overall wellbeing and quality of life of lecturers, researchers, and other teaching professionals. This may include the provision of adequate healthcare facilities, office spaces, reliable electricity supply, access, information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, and equitable incentive schemes (monetary and non-monetary). Welfare has a lot to do with the level to which academic staff perform their duties and remain effective and efficient with their job. It plays an important role to achieving the university goals (contributing to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; acquired both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society. The provision of necessary welfare to academic staff will motivate them

in ensuring they train graduates who are equipped to meet the manpower needs of the country in various [3]. Therefore, it will be necessary to ensure that academic staff are motivated and provided with needed facilities to enable them discharge their duties more efficiently and boost their job performance.

Holistically, the quality of higher education in any nation is closely tied to the welfare and job performance of academic staff who serve as the engine of teaching, research, and innovation. In Nigeria, particularly within the Federal Universities located in the South-South geopolitical zone, concerns about staff welfare and its relationship to job performance have gained significant attention. The South-South region, comprising states such as Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Rivers, Delta, and Edo, hosts several federal universities, including the University of Uyo, University of Calabar, Niger Delta University, Federal University Otuoke, and University of Benin, among others. These institutions are pivotal to national development and regional growth, yet they face persistent challenges related to staff welfare. Employees of public organizations in South-South seems not to have been enjoying adequate employee welfare packages. This situation which may have been a contributing factor to their morale and attitude to work has been a serious concern. It is of importance to note that staff productivity is a function of staff welfare. When employers take adequate care of their staff and their families, they create room for a peaceful and harmonious working relationship between the staff and management. This enhances staff performance, productivity and sustainability of the organizations. Therefore, management of public organizations should ensure that the welfare of their staff is enhanced and adequately taken care of. This will enable them to effectively and efficiently take care of the tasks assigned to them for the performance, growth and development of their organizations.

Academic staff performance encompasses several activities including classroom instruction, student assessment, research, publication, and community engagement. It reflects the extent to which lecturers successfully fulfill these responsibilities. These duties also include but not limited to giving of assessment and marking, marking of exams script, supervising student projects etc. Staff performance also relates to how teaching quality translates into students' academic success. An academic staff is likely to dedicate his/her effort in ensuring the course content is met consequent to the availability of necessary welfare packages. Consequently, welfare factors such as incentives, office accommodation, and access to electricity can significantly shape lecturers' commitment, satisfaction, and overall performance which by extension, reflect on student's performance [4].

The growing concern over the deteriorating welfare conditions of academic staff in federal universities across the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria is a subject of appraisal. Despite the strategic role universities play in national development, particularly through research, teaching, and community service, academic staff in this region are likely facing a myriad of welfare-related challenges that significantly hinder their job performance. For instance, inadequacy of incentive packages, including delayed or irregular payment of salaries, insufficient motivation through promotions or recognition may demoralized many academic staff which may result in apathy toward academic excellence and innovation. Similarly, poor office accommodation which has been a persistent challenge in federal universities and lecturers without office space are left to work from home which may hinders academic consultation and administrative efficiency. In most federal universities in Nigeria particularly south-south, there have of challenges on electricity supply, this may disrupt lecture preparation, research activities, and the use of essential electronic devices. Without a stable power supply, reliance on ICT for academic work is severely limited, especially in an era increasingly dependent on digital technologies. As important as these academic staff welfare variables many schools have neglected their importance. However, the extent to which it relates to their job performance has not been ascertained in available literature. Holistically, the inability of existing studies to appraise the level of relationship of these variable with academic staff job performance suggest that there is a gap in knowledge that need to be filled. However, an understanding of the relationship between incentive package, office accommodation and electricity as academic staff welfare variables and job performance will go a long way in enhancing policy statements that will be made towards providing good welfare packages to academic staff in the study area. Based on this premise, the paper sets out to examine the relationship between academic staff welfare and job performance in federal universities in south-south geopolitical of Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

The literature review of this paper was carried out using concepts that are relevant to the study. As shown below, Figure 1 shows the direction and how the main concepts are connected. It helps in illustrating the relationship between variables, clearly depicting the independent, sub variables and the dependent variables

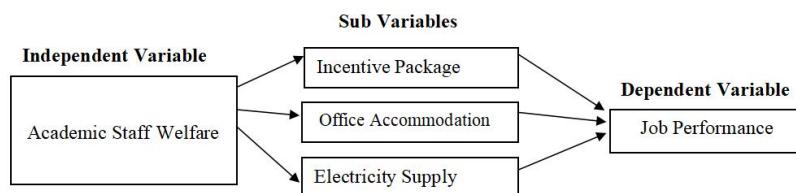


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Concept of Academic Staff Welfare

Academic staff welfare concerns all services, programs, and benefits designed by an employer to improve the comfort, motivation, and quality of life of teaching and research staff. In order to motivate staff and increase their performance levels, there is need to among others, prioritize payments, provide and make funds accessible and make adequate preparations to handle emergencies. Welfare initiatives is targeted to promote both economic and emotional stability, motivate employers to give loyal and committed service in their workplace [5]. Welfare as the sense of fulfillment derived from both material and non-material aspects of an individual's financial and social situation. Welfare is not only about income adequacy but also about security and protection against risks such as unethical dismissal of an employee, unhealthy work environment, poverty and destitution in retirement. Financial welfare is measured in terms of personal low level of debt, active savings and sound spending plan. Employee happiness and welfare are central to productivity and satisfaction, identifying two dimensions: subjective welfare, which relates to personal happiness and positive emotions, and psychological welfare, which involves autonomy, competence, and connectedness. The provision of these elements promotes staff engagement, creativity, and commitment to institutional goals [6]. These elements influences how academic personnel deliver lectures, conduct research, and engage in community service. Adequate welfare systems enhance productivity, reduce turnover, and foster a healthy work environment that supports academic excellence.

2.2 Job Performance

Job performance may mean different things to different people, it is based on individual perspective or one's approach. It may imply efficiency, results, or return (profits) on investment. Performance in a behavioral perspective is seen as the method through which organizations, teams and employees execute their work; it is the outcome record of a specific job function or activity at a given time. It is also the degree to which an employee's and organizational goals are met. It comprises both behaviour and outcomes. Academic staff job performance is a concept that scholars have viewed as a combination of responsibilities such as teaching, research and community service are performed by academic staff of universities. It has also been defined as the association between teaching features and educational success in the classroom. Job performance is a measure to which an employee performs his/her duties well or not. It may also be seen as accumulated work or task assigned to a worker. Grouping, assigning, analyzing, and evaluating a worker's job performance generally involve human resource expertise. Job performance in the context of the university is otherwise seen as the ability to execute different combined duties such as teaching, research and community service by an academic staff of universities. It is further said to mean the use of teaching features in relation to educational success in the classroom by a teacher [7].

2.3 Incentive Package

Incentives are awards given to an individual or a group of an employees for the fulfilment of assigned duties directly related to performance that may have a positive influence on the employees' objectives and organizational success. In every organization, incentives are used to motivate employees towards a greater performance, and it rewards the differences in performances. This is validated by Maslow Hierarchy of Needs theory (1943) which suggests workers must be shown that they are valued and respected in their workplace, and the employers (management) should create a supportive environment. The theory guides the understanding of physiological needs that may include incentive pay, benefits, health and medical facility, accommodation and transportation, and comfortable working environment. These incentives are provided to encourage reimburse some particular employee for effort beyond normal performance expectations. They stimulate employees' contributions above and beyond the normal standard of expectation. To prevent employees from looking elsewhere for better salary, career development opportunities, fringe benefits, and bonuses, incentive package should be attractive [8].

In every organization, incentive plays an important role to motivate employees and enhances performance and growth. An organization with incentive strategy and systems can make a good motivation to employees to fulfill the organization's vision. Employees are eager to come to work must especially when there is a feeling of being recognized of their contributions. In order to enhance the motivation among employees, the organization should know what factors can influence their motivation to generate a new energy for doing their job. Incentive may take the form of base pay, cost of living adjustments, short term incentives, and long-term incentives. Incentives have a powerful connection to employees' motivation and performance; employee's productivity is likely to increase to a certain percentage when incentive strategy is introduced most especially monetary incentive. The reason why monetary rewards can be a powerful motivator of employee performance and also help attract and retain top performers is that they help meet a variety of basic needs (e.g., food, shelter) and also higher-level needs (e.g., belonging to a group, receiving respect from others, achieving mastery in one's work), these are said to be basic needs every employee wishes to meet for a better living. For example, monetary incentive provides employees with the means to enhance the welfare of their families, as well as pay for leisure activities with friends, thereby helping satisfy the higher-level need to belong in groups.

2.4 Office Accommodation

One of the core reason for teaching and learning is binging about desirable change in behavior through the means of critical thinking. This process is only obtainable in an environment structured to facilitate learning. This implies that for university education to attain its unique goals, the learning environment must be well structured with available and

adequate accommodation facilities that may facilitate free flow learning. This is also incorporating the lecturers' office space. This staff office is one of the major school facilities that need to be provided among other facilities, which would invariably enhance effective job performance [9]. He further asserted that School facilities such as staff office, classroom buildings, library and others are the material resources provided for staff and students to optimize their productivity in the teaching and learning process. He noted that the transfer of knowledge does not only take place in the four walls of the classroom but the comfort and stability of teacher can instill learning through discovery, exploration, interaction with the internal and external environment that has necessitated the creative and innovative development of teaching and learning facilities that reflect these changes. This means that academic staff need quality staff office for pre-classroom teaching-learning discovery, exploration, creative and innovative development, and files documentation which will lead to effective job performance. Academic staff, including personnel whose primary assignment is instruction, research or public service, holding an academic rank with such titles as professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, lecturer, are eligible for quality staff office accommodations that may enable them to adequately utilize their time in the pursuit of the university goal. This means that if University lecturers are to meet their optimum job delivery, staff office is essential to be allocated to each academic staff, as this would enhance their quality and adequate job performance.

2.5 Electricity Supply

Electric power supply remains one of the most essential drivers of socio-economic and technological progress. Electricity is a vital resource for human activity and national development. In the context of higher education, reliable power supply directly affects the quality of teaching, research, and administrative functions [10]. Inadequate electricity forces academic staff to limit work hours and reduces productivity. Regular power supply, on the other hand, enables extended research time, access to digital resources, and overall academic efficiency. Electricity facilitates internet access, essential for academic research and collaboration. Without stable electricity, lecturers struggle to prepare lessons, store research data, or engage in virtual communication. Consistent electricity enhances both work safety and operational effectiveness by enabling proper lighting, communication, and preservation of educational and medical resources. Ultimately, a dependable power supply fosters a healthier, more productive academic environment conducive to research and innovation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Area

The study was conducted in Nigeria's South-South geopolitical zone, this zone consists of six states Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Akwa Ibom, and Cross River. Its serves as the hub of the nation's petroleum industry and contributes significantly to country's economy. The zone extends along the country's southern coastline, covering areas from the Bight of Benin to the Bight of Bonny. It also covers a large portion of the Niger Delta, a region notable for its ecological and economic importance. Geographically, the South-South is characterized by coastal mangrove forests and riverine terrain, with several inland areas supporting human settlement and agriculture [11]. Despite occupying only about five percent of Nigeria's total land area, the zone accounts for approximately 12 percent of the national population estimated at about 26 million people (Wikipedia Contributors, 2024). Prominent cities within this zone include Warri/Uvwie, Calabar, Uyo, Ikot Ekpene, Ugep, Sapele, Buguma, Uromi, Ughelli, Ikom, and Asaba. Within this geopolitical zone, there are nine federal universities strategically distributed across the six states. These universities play a central role in advancing education, research, and manpower development in the region.

3.2 Methods

This research adopted a cross-sectional correlational design, chosen for its suitability in examining relationships between two or more variables at a specific point in time. The design enabled the researcher to determine the nature and extent of the relationship between academic staff welfare and job performance using quantitative data. Correlational designs are useful in identifying associations without manipulating variables, making them ideal for studies focused on real-world organizational contexts [12]. Data for the study were obtained using copies of questionnaire. The target population in the study were the entire academic staff (lecturers) within the nine (9) federal universities in the study area. Furthermore, hat and draw method was used in selecting three out of the nine universities. From this selected universities, purposive sampling was further used to pick one faculty among other faculties and three departments from the sampled faculty. A total of nine departments with a number of 236 lecturers and 9 head of department making a total of 245 academic staff. Two structured questionnaire were used in obtaining data title Federal Universities Academic Staff Welfare Questionnaire (FUASWQ) and Federal Universities Academic Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (FUASJP), the FUASJP was administered to administrative lecturers (Head of Department) while the FUASWQ was to the teaching staff. From the 245 questionnaire administered, a total of 219 copies were retrieved which formed the basis of data analysis. Data collected from the field were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical method. This technique was appropriate for determining the strength and direction of the linear relationship between academic staff welfare variables (incentive packages, office accommodation, electricity supply) and job performance. The level of significance was set at 0.05, meaning that results with $p \leq 0.05$ were considered statistically significant.

4. Results and Discussions

Table 1. Result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between incentive package and academic staff job performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value
Incentive package	219	11.2831	2.30720		
Job Performance	219	11.2831	2.53628	.203	.005

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 1 reveal a statistically significant positive correlation between incentive packages and academic staff job performance ($r = 0.203, p = 0.005$). Although the relationship is weak, which indicates that improvements in incentive schemes are associated with increases in job performance. This suggests that providing adequate and well-structured incentives both monetary and non-monetary can motivate lecturers to work more effectively and enhance institutional productivity. This finding aligns with [13], who found that remuneration, job security, promotion, and welfare significantly influenced teacher retention and job commitment in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, universities that adopt competitive incentive structures are likely to see improved motivation, job satisfaction, and performance among their academic workforce.

Table 2. Result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between office accommodation and academic staff job performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value
Office Accommodation	219	11.1553	1.96147		
Job Performance	219	21.6712	2.53628	.174	.010

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation results in Table 2 show a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between office accommodation and job performance ($r = 0.174, p = 0.010$). This implies that while improved office accommodation positively influences performance, the effect is not particularly strong. Academic staff who have conducive office environments tend to be more productive, organized, and motivated, but this factor alone does not determine performance outcomes. The result is consistent with the findings of [14], who discovered that office layout significantly influences academic staff performance at Covenant University. They recommended upgrading physical workspaces to improve staff satisfaction and productivity.

Table 3. Result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between electricity and academic staff job performance

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value
Electricity	219	11.6210	1.96943		
Job Performance	219	21.6712	2.53628	.171*	.011

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows that electricity supply has a statistically significant positive relationship with job performance ($r = 0.171, p = 0.011$). Although the relationship is weak, the results suggest that consistent power availability enhances lecturers' efficiency and work output. Stable electricity supports teaching preparation, research, and the use of digital technologies, all of which are essential to academic excellence. This outcome supports the findings of [15], who reported that reliable power supply improves lecturers' teaching and administrative effectiveness. It also agrees with [16], who emphasized that power disruptions negatively affect both students' and lecturers' academic activities.

5. Conclusion

This study established that academic staff welfare is a multi-dimensional construct that significantly influences job performance in federal universities within Nigeria's South-South geopolitical zone. Among the welfare components examined, incentive packages and electricity supply showed the strongest correlations with lecturers' performance, while office accommodation demonstrated a modest but meaningful influence. The results highlight that when academic staff are adequately supported through fair remuneration, reliable infrastructure, and conducive working environments, they become more motivated, productive, and committed to their institutional responsibilities. Conversely, neglecting welfare provisions can lead to reduced job satisfaction, inefficiency, and poor organizational outcomes. Therefore, improving academic staff welfare is not merely a human resources strategy it is a crucial investment in the quality of higher education, research output, and national development.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Enhance Incentive Packages: The Federal Government, in collaboration with university governing councils, should develop and periodically review competitive incentive structures. These should incorporate both financial (e.g., allowances, bonuses) and non-financial (e.g., recognition, research grants) rewards to sustain motivation and performance.
- ii. Improve Office Accommodation: Universities should ensure that lecturers have access to safe, functional, and comfortable office spaces. Regular maintenance, renovation, and expansion of existing facilities should be prioritized to foster a conducive working environment that promotes academic productivity.
- iii. Ensure Reliable Power Supply: Federal universities should invest in alternative energy sources such as solar and backup generators to mitigate the challenges of erratic electricity supply. Reliable power access will support research, teaching preparation, and ICT-based academic activities.

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