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# Job Satisfaction on Sustainable Productivity Among Academic Staff of Public Universities in South-East Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT**: This study examined the effect of job satisfaction on sustainable productivity among academic staff of public universities in South-East Nigeria, focusing on competitive salaries and and recognition. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and structured questionnaires were administered to 400 academic staff across selected universities in South-East Nigeria. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. Findings showed that competitive salaries (B = 0.401, Beta = 0.795, p = 0.004), and recognition (B = 0.295, Beta = 0.600, p < 0.001), are significant positive effects on sustainable productivity. The study concluded that job satisfaction factors are key determinants of sustainable productivity and recommended among others that the implement Competitive Compensation Policies: Management should regularly review salary structures and benefits to ensure they are competitive and reflect staff experience, qualifications, and performance. Transparent and fair remuneration policies will improve motivation and retention of academic staff.

**Key words:** Competitive salaries, Recognition and Sustainable productivity

## INTRODUCTION

The impact of declining job satisfaction and productivity extends beyond the university walls. For individual academic staff, prolonged dissatisfaction leads to burnout, loss of morale, reduced professional engagement and even withdrawal from core academic activities. For university administrations, low productivity translates into reduced research output, declining institutional rankings, staff turnover, and diminished competitiveness. At the community level, poorly motivated academic staff affects the quality of graduates entering the labor market, which in turn affects employment, entrepreneurship, and local development. Nationally, underperforming universities hinder the country's human capital development efforts, weaken the research ecosystem, and increase dependence on foreign academic institutions. Internationally, Nigeria's inability to retain productive academics results in brain drain and a weakened contribution to global scholarship and innovation. These multi-level consequences emphasize why job satisfaction

and productivity among academic staff must be examined as interdependent forces shaping the future of education and development.

Organizations and researchers have expressed concern about employee productivity. Researchers have been exploring various approaches to improve worker productivity for many years. According to Jadhav et al. (2021) and Geisler et al. (2019), behaviors or actions that are relevant to the goals of the organization in question are referred to as employee productivity. As a multifaceted variable, productivity has different performance components for each job (Kuzey, 2018). According to Meng and Berger (2019), attitudes have an impact on performance. For instance, Miah (2018), Oravee (2019), and Noercahyo et al. (2021) discovered evidence that the behavioral variable of employee productivity is influenced by the attitude variable of job satisfaction. Moges and Amentie (2022) found that "satisfaction of higher order needs would be the most closely related to employee productivity" in their empirical study.

The average true correlation between worker job satisfaction and worker productivity was estimated to be 0.30 by Oravee (2019), despite the fact that the causal relationship between worker job satisfaction and worker productivity is still unclear. In public universities across South-East Nigeria, many academics report a widening gap between expectations placed on them and the support they receive. While they are expected to meet rising performance benchmarks, they are often subjected to conditions that discourage commitment and innovation. This mismatch has created a situation where productivity is stagnating or declining, posing a serious threat to institutional growth and educational quality in the region.

The general objective of the study is to investigate the effect of job satisfaction on sustainable productivity among academic staff of public universities in South-East Nigeria**.** However, the specific objectives will be to:

1. investigate the influence of competitive salaries on sustainable productivity among academic staff of public universities in South-East Nigeria.
2. examine the effect of recognition on sustainable productivity among academic staff of public universities in South-East Nigeria.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction strongly influences the productivity of academic staff. It enhances quality of teaching, research output, and institutional participation. Academics who feel valued and supported are more likely to take initiative, adopt innovative teaching strategies, and engage with students proactively (Ayeni & Salami, 2023). This creates a ripple effect, positively impacting student satisfaction, institutional ranking, and graduate outcomes. Job satisfaction is also associated with organizational citizenship behaviour where staff take on voluntary roles, contribute to university governance, and support peers, all of which reinforce a collaborative academic culture (Iwuoha & Olatunji, 2024). On the other hand, persistent dissatisfaction can result in absenteeism, low energy, resistance to change, and in severe cases, attrition or industrial action. These behaviors undermine teaching continuity, disrupt academic calendars, and tarnish institutional reputation. In Nigeria, strike actions among academic unions have become recurring consequences of unresolved dissatisfaction. Therefore, academic job satisfaction should be seen not merely as a personal benefit but as a strategic imperative that shapes institutional stability, performance, and long-term competitiveness. Institutions that prioritize staff well-being

invariably perform better in their core mandates of knowledge creation and dissemination.

To improve job satisfaction, a comprehensive and sustained approach is required. Compensation alone is not sufficient; intrinsic motivators such as career advancement, leadership support, mentorship, and recognition must be integrated into staff development strategies (Ekpenyong et al., 2024; Nwachukwu& Adebayo, 2022). Universities need to ensure that promotion criteria are transparent and merit-based, while also providing adequate platforms for research collaboration, international exchange, and academic freedom. Communication between management and staff should be regular and honest, while decision-making processes should be inclusive. Furthermore, a positive teamwork that emphasizes respect, equity, collegiality, and shared governance will significantly boost morale. Infrastructure improvements such as modern classrooms, e-libraries, stable internet access, and functional laboratories are also essential. In the peculiar context of South-East Nigeria, where economic and political instability affect tertiary institutions, strategic reforms and policy interventions must specifically target staff welfare. These efforts should not be reactionary but institutionalized as long-term goals within education policy frameworks. Ensuring that academic staff is satisfied with their jobs is fundamental to fostering a dedicated, innovative, and high-performing academic workforce capable of advancing sustainable productivity and institutional excellence in Nigeria's higher education landscape.

**Competitive Salaries**

Competitive salaries are compensation packages aligned with or exceeding prevailing market rates for specific roles, industries, or regions. In academia, competitive pay is crucial for attracting and retaining qualified staff, especially in tertiary institutions where specialized skills are required. A well-designed salary structure not only meets employees' financial needs but signals organizational appreciation and fairness, contributing significantly to job satisfaction and morale. Studies in Nigerian universities show that when academic staff believe their salary matches or surpasses expected external benchmarks, they exhibit higher motivation, reduced turnover intention, and loyalty to institutional goals. Conversely, stagnant or inadequate compensation erodes morale and encourages brain drain to other sectors or countries. Thus, salary competitiveness is a strategic human resource tool that influences institutional reputation, team work, and long-term stability (Musa et al., 2025; Salawu & Abubakar, 2023).

Empirical research underscores the direct link between competitive salaries and academic staff performance. Musa, Bakare, and Isah (2025) revealed that higher basic salaries were significantly associated with increased research output and engagement in collaboration and industry partnerships, though not with teaching effectiveness. Adiele (2025) further found significant positive correlations between salary levels, staff retention, productivity, and organizational commitment in federal universities in South-East Nigeria. Likewise, Ibrahim and Abubakar (2023) observed that welfare packages including salary adjustments were critical drivers of performance in public universities, reducing strikes and improving attitude towards work. These findings demonstrate that salary competitiveness enhances output beyond mere financial incentive it reinforces the institutional contract, professional identity, and performance standards expected of academic staff.

The notion of competitive salaries extends beyond basic pay to encompass total rewards bonuses, allowances, healthcare, pension, academic support, and career progression. In the Nigerian public university system, salary scales such as CONUASS II (updated in 2024–2025) include performance and risk allowances that can significantly increase take-home pay (Konnect NG, 2025). Studies show that prompt and transparent salary payments, combined with merit-based incentives, bolster morale and promote perceived fairness. For example, prompt fringe benefits and timely pay are highly correlated with job satisfaction among public school teachers and lecturers (Obionu et al., 2024). Furthermore, competitive total compensation helps to minimize moonlighting and fosters deeper institutional commitment among academics who see their broader contribution recognized and rewarded.

**Recognition**

Studies examining recognition as a component of job satisfaction among academic staff reveal that acknowledgment of scholarly contributions significantly enhances faculty commitment and overall performance. In a comprehensive review of factors influencing job satisfaction in universities, Stephen (2024) identified that when academic staff perceive their efforts in teaching and research as valued by institutional leadership, it fosters a sense of ownership and loyalty, leading to improved morale and reduced turnover intentions. This perspective aligns with Sahibzada and Khawrin (2023), who conducted a survey among lecturers at Paktia University and found a strong positive correlation between recognition practices, such as public commendations for academic achievements, and job satisfaction levels, with statistical evidence indicating that higher recognition directly correlates with greater emotional fulfillment in the role. Similarly, Jo and Shin (2025) analyzed data from over 25,000 employees, including those in educational settings, and demonstrated that recognition acts as a key motivator, boosting engagement and satisfaction by validating individual contributions amidst demanding workloads.

The role of recognition in mitigating dissatisfaction among academic staff emerges from analyses of organizational dynamics in higher education. Grover and Chawla (2025) proposed a theoretical model where human resource practices, including recognition programs like awards for innovative teaching, contribute to positive employee experiences and heightened job satisfaction, emphasizing that such practices create emotional bonds between faculty and the institution. Complementing this, Maket and Odenyo (2023) explored how recognition influences organizational commitment in resource-constrained environments, revealing that job satisfaction mediates this relationship, with faculty reporting greater dedication when their scholarly outputs are formally acknowledged. Sikira et al. (2024) extended these insights by examining non-monetary recognition, such as letters of appreciation, and found it validates hard work, thereby elevating satisfaction and performance, a finding applicable to academic contexts where extrinsic rewards are often limited.

Explorations into the psychological mechanisms underlying recognition highlight its capacity to address intrinsic needs in academic professions. Sahibzada and Khawrin (2023) drew on earlier works to argue that recognition, distinct from salary, fulfills esteem needs, resulting in elevated job satisfaction among lecturers facing high teaching loads. Jo and Shin (2025) further substantiated this through structural equation modeling, showing that recognition counteracts burnout by reinforcing a sense of worth, particularly in roles involving student mentorship and research, leading to sustained

satisfaction. Stephen (2024) integrated views from multiple sources to posit that supportive leadership styles, which incorporate recognition, yield higher satisfaction compared to rigid hierarchies, as faculty feel their interdisciplinary efforts are genuinely appreciated.

**Sustainability Productivity**

Recent research also emphasizes the role of emotional and psychological variables in productivity. Emotional intelligence, for example, allows individuals to manage their emotions, empathize with others, and respond constructively to workplace challenges, thereby reducing conflict and enhancing collaboration (Adeoye et al., 2023). Organizational climate, which includes perceptions of fairness, trust, autonomy, and recognition, also significantly shapes employee morale and productivity (Olawale & Oduyemi, 2022). Studies in Nigerian tertiary institutions have shown that a supportive climate characterized by openness and autonomy correlates with higher levels of employee commitment and productivity (Aliyu et al., 2022). Furthermore, investment in professional development and continuous learning fosters employee competencies and adaptability, essential for maintaining productivity in dynamic work environments. As such, organizations that emphasize emotional well-being, inclusivity, and continuous learning are better positioned to achieve sustainable productivity. Productivity should thus be viewed not only through a transactional lens but also as an evolving outcome of human behavior, organizational systems, and environmental conditions.

To promote productivity effectively, organizations must develop holistic strategies that integrate human capital development, process improvement, and strategic leadership. This involves conducting regular performance appraisals, adopting modern performance metrics, and incentivizing excellence through competitive compensation and recognition programs (Ogunyomi & Ajayi, 2023). Moreover, aligning individual goals with organizational objectives ensures coherence and fosters intrinsic motivation. Organizational leaders play a pivotal role by setting clear visions, supporting innovation, and cultivating a high-performance culture (Bature et al., 2024). Digital transformation initiatives must also be tailored to the workforce's capacity and job nature to prevent burnout and disengagement (Akintola & Okonkwo, 2023). In Nigeria and other developing economies, improving infrastructure, reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, and strengthening education-to-work transitions will significantly bolster national productivity levels (Odeyemi & Fasoranti, 2024). In conclusion, productivity is a multifaceted construct requiring sustained investment in people, processes, and systems to foster long-term organizational effectiveness and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving global economy.

**Empirical review**

Khudair (2025) studied the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among university staff at the Technical Institute in Kut, Iraq. The objective was to determine the correlation and gender-based differences in these variables. The problem was low job satisfaction despite high organizational commitment and unexplored gender differences. The study lacked an explicit theoretical anchor. A quantitative survey approach was used with a sample of 100 staff (168 males and 139 females) selected from a population of 307. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficients, t-tests, and Cronbach’s alpha. The findings indicated relatively low job satisfaction but high organizational commitment, with no gender difference in satisfaction but a significant

difference in commitment favoring males. The study recommended enhancing motivational strategies to bridge the satisfaction-commitment gap. The critical gap involves the absence of theoretical underpinning and limited geographical application.

Zarini and Serly (2024) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance at The Zuri Hotel Pekanbaru. The aim was to determine satisfaction and performance levels and evaluate the effect of satisfaction on performance. The problem addressed was the need to assess how satisfaction contributes to performance in the hotel sector. No anchor theory was identified. A descriptive and explanatory survey was employed, with a sample of 55 hotel staff analyzed using SPSS and simple linear regression. Results showed high levels of both satisfaction and performance, with job satisfaction explaining 44.5% of the variation in performance. The recommendation was for management to focus on improving job satisfaction to boost overall performance. The study's gap lies in the exclusion of mediating variables and limitations due to sample size and single-location focus.

Kosasih, Diwyarthi, and Rezeki (2023) conducted a study to examine the influence of work environment, career development, and job satisfaction on employee productivity in CV Multi Lestari Utama, with job satisfaction as a moderator. The problem identified was low productivity despite existing HR programs. The study appears loosely based on motivational and productivity theories, though none were explicitly stated. The research used a quantitative explanatory design, with 100 participants selected through unknown sampling. Data analysis was done using Partial Least Squares (PLS). Findings indicated that the work environment significantly influenced productivity, while career development had minimal effect. Job satisfaction positively impacted productivity but did not moderate the environment-productivity relationship. The authors recommend focusing on environmental improvements and job satisfaction strategies. However, the study's generalizability is limited due to small sample size and lack of theoretical grounding, and does not address other moderating or contextual variables.

Fan (2023) evaluated the use of the Management by Objectives (MBO) framework as an organizational development intervention (ODI) to improve productivity, job satisfaction, and performance in a home shopping business. The objective was to implement MBO to address productivity gaps. The key problem was ineffective employee engagement and lack of structured performance goals. The study was guided by Management by Objectives Theory. A qualitative design was employed using observations and open-ended interviews with 33 participants (including employees, suppliers, and customers). Data were analyzed through thematic interpretation of diagnostic and post-intervention phases. Results showed that MBO improved alignment, productivity, satisfaction, and performance. The study recommends broader application of MBO in similar sectors. However, a limitation lies in the subjectivity of qualitative data, small sample size, and potential bias from CEO-led interviews, which may limit reliability and broader applicability.

Wijesekara (2023) investigated the impact of job satisfaction on turnover intention in PVC manufacturing industries. The aim was to explore how satisfaction levels influence retention, particularly among non-executive staff. The problem addressed high turnover in industrial settings due to poor satisfaction. No theory was explicitly mentioned. The study used a survey approach with 110 randomly

selected employees and employed SPSS for correlation and regression analysis. Results confirmed that low satisfaction strongly predicts turnover intention, with age and length of service also significant. The study suggested better employee engagement and promotion of positive perceptions. A gap exists in terms of testing mediators such as engagement or leadership style in the turnover process.

Tarigan, Cahya, Valentine, Hatane, & Jie (2022) explored the impact of a Total Reward System (TRS) on job satisfaction, productivity, and financial performance among Gen Z workers in Indonesia's service sector. The objective was to provide empirical evidence on TRS as a strategic HR tool. The problem identified was the lack of research connecting TRS and productivity, especially for Gen Z. The study used Equity Theory as its anchor. A quantitative design using surveys from 40 companies with around 240 participants was employed, and data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. Findings showed that TRS positively influences job satisfaction and productivity, but Gen Z values self-development over monetary incentives. The study recommended integrating non-monetary rewards into compensation packages. However, the generational focus creates a limitation in generalizing results across different age cohorts and industries.

Waworuntu, Kainde, & Mandagi (2022) analyzed the effects of flexibility of work schedule and job satisfaction on performance among millennials and Gen Z employees. The objective was to understand generational differences in how these variables interact. The study addressed a research gap in generational analysis of workplace satisfaction and performance. Though not grounded in a specific theory, the study is conceptually linked to Flexibility of work schedule Theory. A systematic literature review method was adopted, analyzing 35 studies from 2018 to 2022. Results revealed that flexibility of work schedule and job satisfaction significantly impact performance, with Gen Z valuing flexibility and growth more than millennials. The study recommended flexible work arrangements and supportive environments. However, the review design lacked original data and statistical validation, leaving room for empirical testing in specific industries.

Memon, Khahro, Memon, Memon, & Mustafa (2023) assessed the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance in Pakistan's construction industry. The objective was to identify relevant factors and their effects on performance. The study addressed concerns about declining productivity in construction due to human resource neglect. The research is grounded in the Expectancy Theory. A quantitative approach was used with data from 85 respondents, analyzed through multiple regression. Eleven job satisfaction and eight performance parameters were evaluated. The findings revealed significant positive relationships, with job satisfaction strongly predicting performance. Recommendations included enhancing workplace conditions and aligning HR strategies with employee needs. However, the sample size was small and industry-specific, limiting cross-sectoral application.

Inayat & Khan (2021) investigated how job satisfaction affects employee performance in private sector organizations in Peshawar, Pakistan. The objective was to validate whether satisfaction leads to enhanced employee output. The core problem was low employee morale due to dissatisfaction in a volatile socio-economic setting. The study applied Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory. A quantitative design with 180 employees from hospitals, banks, and universities was used, employing the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and a performance rating form. Data were analyzed

using correlation techniques. Findings confirmed a strong positive relationship between satisfaction and performance. The authors suggested strategies for improving motivation and stability. The gap lies in the focus on only three sectors and lack of multivariate analysis.

Okolocha, Akam, & Uchehara (2021) examined the effects of job satisfaction on the performance of university lecturers in South-East Nigeria, focusing on responsibility and career advancement. The objective was to assess how these factors influence academic staff output. The study addressed the gap in literature concerning academic staff in Nigerian public universities. Anchored on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, a survey research design was used with a sample of 1,780 lecturers. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed through regression and Pearson correlation using SPSS. Results indicated that responsibility and career growth significantly enhanced lecturer performance. The authors recommended empowering lecturers with more responsibilities. However, the study did not consider other motivational variables such as leadership or organizational climate.

Sainju, Hartwell, & Edwards (2021) explored job satisfaction and employee values using unstructured online employee reviews from Fortune 50 companies. The study aimed to identify satisfaction themes using text-mining techniques. The core problem was the inadequacy of traditional survey tools in capturing real-time employee sentiments. Based on Job Descriptive Index theory, the study used Structural Topic Modeling (STM) on 682,176 reviews from Indeed.com. Data were analyzed to compare satisfaction factors across industries. Results indicated that factors such as management quality and compensation heavily influence satisfaction and turnover, differing by sector. Recommendations included integrating text analytics into HR strategies. The gap lies in limited geographical applicability and potential biases in self-reported online reviews.

Ezenwafor and Onyekachi (2021) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and research productivity of academic staff in federal universities in Nigeria. The objective was to determine whether satisfaction with research funding, workload, and recognition influences publication output. The problem addressed was low global visibility of Nigerian universities due to weak research productivity. Using a correlational research design, data were collected from 198 lecturers through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Pearson correlation analysis. Findings showed a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and research productivity. The study recommended increased research grants and reduced teaching workload. However, the focus on federal universities alone limits generalization, leaving a gap in examining public universities holistically.

Mensah and Boateng (2023) examined job satisfaction and academic staff performance in public universities in Ghana. The objective was to assess how satisfaction with leadership and promotion influences teaching and research effectiveness. The problem was declining staff morale within public tertiary institutions. A quantitative survey design was adopted, with 260 lecturers sampled using simple random sampling. Data were analyzed using regression analysis. Findings revealed that job satisfaction significantly predicts academic performance, particularly research output. The study recommended leadership transparency and merit-based promotion. However, the study's country-specific focus leaves a contextual gap for comparative analysis with Nigerian public universities.

Chen and Li (2024) investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and

faculty productivity in public universities in China. The objective was to examine how institutional support and job autonomy influence academic output. The problem addressed was increasing faculty burnout amid performance pressures. Using a cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 410 faculty members and analyzed using structural equation modelling. Results showed that job satisfaction significantly mediated the relationship between institutional support and productivity. The authors recommended enhancing academic autonomy. Nevertheless, cultural and systemic differences limit applicability to African university systems, leaving a gap for context-specific empirical validation.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The survey research design was used to collect data directly from respondents, based on the fact that survey research design supports the collection of data primarily through the use of questionnaire, the study considered survey research design suitable for the study.

### Sources of Data

Data for the study were obtained primarily through structured questionnaire formulated by the researcher. Hence it was based on information collected directly from staffs of the 6 selected universities in South-East Nigeria.

### Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised 11,347 staff of 6 selected public universities (3 Federal and 3 State universities) which is considered suitable for this study because this number of universities allows for in-depth analysis. We can collect and analyze data from a manageable number of universities; Representation: We can still represent different States and types of universities in South-East Nigeria; Feasibility: We can complete data collection and analysis within a reasonable time frame.

### Sample Size Determination

The sample size of this study was made up of a proportion of individuals drawn from the population in order to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and productivity among academic staff of public universities in South-East Nigeria . A sample is the representativeness of the population from which it is drawn if the aggregate characteristics of the sample closely approximate those same aggregate characteristics of the population (Yomere & Agbanifoh). Therefore, this study adopted Krejcie and Morgan (1971) formula to determine the sample size, the formula was adopted because it is intended to control error limits.

Formula:

$$s = \frac{X^2 * N * P(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2 * P(1-P)}$$

Where:

s = required sample size

$X^2$ = table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at 0.95 confidence = 3.841

N = population size = 11,347

P = population proportion = 0.5

d = degree of accuracy (precision) = 0.04for higher precision

$$s = \frac{3.841 * 11,347 * 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.04^2(11,347-1) + 3.841 * 0.5(1-0.5)}$$

$$s = \frac{10,895.9}{19.1139}$$

s = 570.2

N = 570 Respondents

Therefore, the sample size is 570.

**Sampling Distribution Using Bowley's Proportional Allocation Technique**

Bowley's Proportional Allocation Technique was used to distribute the sample proportionately across the identified strata after stratified sampling had been applied. The total population of academic staff was grouped based on the six selected public universities in South-East Nigeria, with each university serving as a stratum. The allocation formula ensured that the number of questionnaires administered to each university was proportional to its staff strength, thereby enhancing representativeness and reducing sampling bias.

nh= (Nh)/N *n

Where:

nh = Sample from each firm
Nh = Population of each firm
N = Total population
n = Total sample size
Where N is Total Population and n is determined Sample size.

**Sampling Techniques**

The study used stratified random sampling to account for the heterogeneous population of academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria, varying by institutional size, ownership, and administrative practices. The population was divided into six strata, corresponding to the selected universities, and respondents were randomly chosen within each stratum to ensure representativeness, reliability, and generalizability of findings while maintaining a manageable sample size.

**Method of Data Collection**

A structured questionnaire titled job satisfaction and sustainable productivity among academic staff designed by the researcher was used to collect data from respondent. The questionnaire has two sections, namely; section A and section B. Section part of the questionnaire comprises personal data of the respondents such as age, gender, working year of experience, educational level. Section B comprises questions related to the research question of this study. The relevant data was collected through the use of five-point Likert scale questionnaire which include; Strongly Agreed (5pt), Agreed (4pt), Neutral (3pt), Strongly Disagreed (2pt), Disagree (1pt)

.

**Table 1 Reliability Test Result**

| Variables | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|---|---|---|
| Physical working conditions | 0.901 | 5 |
| Teamwork | 0.766 | 5 |
| Competitive Salary | 0.704 | 5 |
| Recognition | 0.844 | 5 |
| Flexibility of work schedule | 0.724 | 5 |

**Source:** SPSS (version 27) output of pilot survey data, 2025.

Table 1 above shows Cronbach alpha value of 0.921, this shows that the instrument is highly reliable.

**Method of Data Analysis**

This study used both the descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data generated. The data were coded and analyzed using SPSS for windows version 27. The descriptive statistics included frequency counts and simple percentage. The multiple regression analysis will be used to test the hypothesis of the study.

**Hypothesis Testing Decision**

Decision Criteria:

● Reject research hypotheses if the test statistic falls in the critical region or if the p-value ≤ α\alpha.

●Fail to reject research hypotheses if the test statistic does not fall in the critical region or if the p-value > α\alpha.

**Model Specification**

The model for this study is specified to examine the relationship between job satisfaction dimensions and academic staff productivity in public universities in South-East Nigeria. The model assumes that academic staff productivity is a function of key job satisfaction factors such as physical working conditions, teamwork, competitive salary, recognition, and flexibility of work schedule.

Where:

General (Multiple Regression) Model

$SUPT = a + \beta_1 CSL + \beta_2 RCG + + e$

Where:

SUPT = Sustainable Productivity

CSL = Competitive Salaries

RCG = Recognition

e = Error term

Hypothesis 3 (Competitive Salary)

$SUPT = a + \beta_3 CSL + e$

Hypothesis 4 (Recognition)

**Table 2: Competitive Salaries and Sustainable Productivity**

| Statements | SA Freq (%) | A Freq (%) | UD Freq (%) | D Freq (%) | SD Freq (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I believe my salary is competitive compared to similar positions in other universities. | 95 (23.8) | 120 (30.0) | 55 (13.7) | 80 (20.0) | 50 (12.5) |
| My compensation reflects my level of experience and qualifications. | 100 (25.0) | 130 (32.5) | 50 (12.5) | 75 (18.7) | 45 (11.3) |
| I am satisfied with the benefits package provided by my university. | 90 (22.5) | 115 (28.7) | 60 (15.0) | 80 (20.0) | 55 (13.8) |
| Salary increases are awarded fairly based on performance. | 85 (21.3) | 110 (27.5) | 65 (16.2) | 85 (21.3) | 55 (13.7) |
| I believe that competitive salaries enhance my motivation to perform well. | 140 (35.0) | 135 (33.8) | 40 (10.0) | 50 (12.5) | 35 (8.7) |

**Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026**

Table 2 presents mixed perceptions regarding competitive salaries and sustainable productivity. While a slight majority of respondents agreed that their salary is competitive (53.8%) and that their compensation reflects their experience and qualifications (57.5%), a considerable proportion (32.5% and 30.0% respectively) expressed dissatisfaction. Similarly, only 51.2% indicated satisfaction with the benefits package, whereas 33.8% disagreed. Perceptions of fairness in salary increases were relatively lower, with less than half (48.8%) agreeing that increments are awarded fairly, and 35.0% expressing disagreement. However, a strong majority (68.8%) agreed that competitive salaries enhance their motivation to perform well. This suggests that although many academic staff recognize the motivational importance of competitive pay, concerns about adequacy, benefits, and fairness remain significant. Overall, the findings imply that salary-related issues may influence job satisfaction and productivity, and improvements in compensation policies could strengthen sustainable academic performance.

**Table 3: Recognition on Sustainable Productivity**

| Statements | SA Freq (%) | A Freq (%) | UD Freq (%) | D Freq (%) | SD Freq (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I receive adequate recognition for my contributions to the university. | 105 (26.3) | 130 (32.5) | 55 (13.7) | 65 (16.3) | 45 (11.2) |
| My achievements are celebrated by my colleagues and management. | 100 (25.0) | 125 (31.2) | 60 (15.0) | 70 (17.5) | 45 (11.3) |
| Recognition from my superiors motivates me to improve my performance. | 145 (36.3) | 140 (35.0) | 40 (10.0) | 45 (11.2) | 30 (7.5) |
| I feel valued for my efforts and dedication to my work. | 135 (33.8) | 145 (36.2) | 35 (8.8) | 50 (12.5) | 35 (8.7) |
| The university has formal programs for acknowledging staff achievements. | 90 (22.5) | 110 (27.5) | 65 (16.3) | 80 (20.0) | 55 (13.7) |

**Source: Researcher's Computation, 2026**

Table 3 shows that recognition plays a meaningful role in sustainable productivity, although perceptions vary across items. A majority of respondents agreed that they receive adequate recognition for their contributions (58.8%) and that their achievements are celebrated by colleagues and management (56.2%), though a notable proportion expressed dissatisfaction in both areas. A stronger positive response was observed regarding the motivational effect of recognition, with 71.3% agreeing that recognition from superiors encourages improved performance. Similarly, 70.0% indicated that they feel valued for their efforts and dedication, suggesting that personal

acknowledgment enhances morale and productivity. However, perceptions of formal recognition programs were less favorable, as only 50.0% agreed that such programs exist, while 33.7% disagreed. Overall, the findings suggest that while informal and supervisory recognition positively influence productivity, strengthening formal recognition systems could further enhance job satisfaction and sustained performance among academic staff.

**Test of hypotheses**

**$H_{01}$:** Competitive salaries have no significant effect on sustainable productivity among academic staff of public universities in South-East Nigeria.

**$H_{02}$:** Recognition has no significant effect on sustainable productivity among academic staff of public universities in South-East Nigeria.

**. Table 4c: Coefficients[a]**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | .094 | .089 | | 1.055 | .022 |
| | | | | | | |
| | Recognition | .295 | .063 | .600 | 6.446 | .000 |
| | Flexibility of work schedule | .286 | .050 | .326 | 5.706 | .001 |

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable Productivity

**Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2026**

Table 3c presents the regression coefficients examining the influence of competitive salaries, recognition, and flexibility of work schedule on sustainable productivity among academic staff. The constant (intercept) value of 0.094 ($p = 0.022$) indicates that if all predictors were absent, sustainable productivity would start at a minimal baseline level. Similarly, competitive salaries ($B = 0.401$, Beta = 0.795, $p = 0.004$) and recognition ($B = 0.295$, Beta = 0.600, $p < 0.001$) positively influence productivity, highlighting the importance of fair compensation and acknowledgment of contributions.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that job satisfaction factors, specifically competitive salaries and recognition play a significant and positive role in enhancing sustainable productivity among academic staff of public universities in South-East Nigeria. The results show that a well-structured competitive remuneration, and meaningful recognition of staff contributions. Competitive salaries were identified as the most influential, highlighting the critical role of institutional practices, leadership, and infrastructure in shaping productivity outcomes. Overall, the study underscores that sustainable academic productivity is not solely dependent on individual effort but is strongly determined by both organizational and personal support mechanisms. Therefore, universities that prioritize these dimensions are likely to achieve enhanced staff performance, job satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness. Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made to enhance sustainable productivity among academic staff of public universities in South-East Nigeria:

i. **Implement Competitive Compensation Policies:** Management should regularly review salary structures and benefits to ensure they are competitive and reflect staff experience, qualifications, and performance. Transparent and fair remuneration policies will improve motivation and retention of academic staff.

ii. **Improve Recognition Systems:** Institutions should establish both formal and informal mechanisms for recognizing staff contributions, including awards, commendations, and performance acknowledgment programs. Regular recognition can enhance morale, motivation, and commitment to work.

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