

RECOGNITION, COMPENSATION, AND ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION AS CORRELATES OF STAFF JOB PERFORMANCE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT: This study adopted a correlational research design to examine recognition, compensation, and academic conference participation as correlates of staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The design enabled the determination of the degree and direction of relationships among variables without manipulation. The population comprised 5,415 respondents drawn from four public tertiary institutions: Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State University, Federal College of Education Omoku and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic. A sample of 1,083 respondents (20%) was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into Recognition, Compensation, and Academic Conference Participation (RCACPQ) and Staff Job Performance (SJPQ) sections, based on a four-point Likert scale. The instrument was validated by experts and yielded a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of .808. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at the .05 significance level with SPSS version 28. Findings provided empirical evidence on the relationships between the selected variables and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The study concluded that recognition, compensation, and academic conference participation significantly correlate with improved staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Keywords: Recognition, Compensation, Academic, Conference Participation, Staff, Job Performance, Tertiary Institutions, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

The performance of academic and non-academic staff in tertiary institutions has continued to attract scholarly and policy attention due to its direct impact on educational quality, institutional effectiveness, and national development (Ololube, 2024). Staff job performance encompasses the efficiency, productivity, and overall contribution of employees to organizational goals (Armstrong & Taylor, 2015). In the context of tertiary institutions, job performance includes teaching effectiveness, research output, administrative diligence, and student support services

(Chiang & Birtch, 2010). Consequently, understanding factors that influence job performance is critical for educational stakeholders, particularly in developing regions like Rivers State, Nigeria.

One important determinant of employee performance is recognition. Recognition refers to formal and informal acknowledgment of an employee's achievements, contributions, and efforts within an organization (Jairus & Ihebom, 2020; Luthans, 2015; Ololube & Wome, 2025). Recognition may include awards, commendations, verbal praise, or institutional acknowledgment in newsletters and meetings. Theoretical frameworks such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory emphasize the psychological importance of recognition in motivating employees (Herzberg et al., 2011). Empirically, studies show that recognition enhances intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and ultimately job performance (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Stajkovic & Luthans, 2003). In the academic environment, recognition for research productivity, quality teaching, and service excellence can strengthen staff morale and foster a performance-oriented culture (Allameh et al., 2011). However, despite its importance, limited empirical research has explored how recognition influences staff job performance specifically in the tertiary institutions of Rivers State, creating a knowledge gap that this study seeks to address.

Another salient determinant of staff job performance is compensation. Compensation refers to both financial rewards (e.g., salaries, allowances, bonuses) and non-financial benefits (e.g., healthcare, pension schemes) which employees receive in exchange for their services (Milkovich et al., 2014). Compensation is a central component of human resource strategy and is widely recognized as a motivator that shapes employee behavior and performance (Armstrong & Murlis, 2007). Equity theory posits that employees evaluate the fairness of their compensation relative to others and adjust their effort and performance accordingly (Adams, 1965; Ololube & Wome, 2025). In the education sector, fair and competitive compensation has been linked to higher levels of job satisfaction, reduced turnover intentions, and improved performance among academic and administrative staff (Podgursky & Tongrut, 2006; Gyensare et al., 2014).

Nonetheless, in many Nigerian tertiary institutions, compensation challenges such as delayed salaries, inadequate allowances, and insufficient performance-based incentives remain persistent, often affecting staff morale and productivity (Eze, 2019). This study, therefore, investigates the extent to which compensation correlates with staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Alongside recognition and compensation, academic conference participation represents an important professional development factor that may influence job performance. Academic conferences provide platforms for knowledge exchange, networking, exposure to new research trends, and opportunities for scholarly collaboration (Ololube & Wome, 2025; Rowe et al., 2012). Participation in conferences can enhance academic staff competencies, increase research output, and improve teaching quality by exposing educators to innovative pedagogies (Boulton & Lucas, 2011). Moreover, attendance at scholarly conferences has been linked to increased motivation, renewed professional identity, and higher academic visibility (Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2011). While research suggests that professional development activities are associated with better job performance, empirical evidence documenting this relationship in the context of tertiary institutions in Nigeria and particularly in Rivers State remains sparse (Obioma, 2020). Taken together, recognition, compensation and academic conference participation represents key motivators and professional enablers that may influence job performance among tertiary institution staff (Ololube, 2024; Ololube & Wome, 2025).

Statement of the Problem

The performance of staff in tertiary institutions continually plays important role in determining the quality of teaching, research productivity, administrative efficiency, and overall institutional effectiveness. However, in many tertiary institutions in Rivers State, concerns have been raised regarding declining staff morale, reduced research output, inconsistent service delivery, and diminished commitment to institutional goals. These challenges are often linked to inadequate recognition of staff contributions, irregular or insufficient compensation, and limited institutional support for participation in academic conferences and professional development activities. While recognition, fair compensation, and scholarly engagement are widely acknowledged as motivational and performance-enhancing factors, their practical influence on staff job performance within the context of tertiary institutions in Rivers State remains insufficiently examined. The absence of empirical evidence on how these variables (recognition, compensation and conference participation) relate to job performance creates a gap in policy direction and human resource decision-making. Therefore, this study seeks to determine the extent to which recognition, compensation, and academic conference participation correlates with staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine recognition, compensation, and academic conference participation as correlates of staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The study sought to:

- Determine the extent of relationship between recognition and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
- Investigate the extent of relationship between compensation and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
- Examine the extent of relationship between an academic conferences and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

Research Questions

The study attempts to find satisfactory answers to the three research questions as formulated to guid the direction of the study:

- What is the extent of relationship between recognition and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
- What is the extent of relationship between compensation and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?
- What is the extent of relationship between attendance of academic conference and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses further guided the study:

- There is no significant relationship between recognition and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between compensation and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between attendance to academic conferences and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Organizational Theory James March (1958)

The second theory that forms the basis of this study is the Organizational theory by James March (1958). An organizational theory simply means a set of concepts/constructs that are related to each other and explain how the staff behaves in social units. The organizational theory attempts to explain how interrelated units of an organization do or do not connect with each other. The central aim of organizational theory is to understand how groups of individuals behave, which may differ from the behaviour of an individual. The behaviour organizational theory often focuses on is goal-directed. Organizational theory can cover intra-organizational as well as inter-organizational fields of study.

James March (1958) organizational theory emphasized on the relationship that exists between organizations and their environment, and the outcome of those relationships on organizational productivity. The theory aims at finding out how and why people behave or act in certain ways within the organization and the implication of such action on performance, and the way to figure out how to boost productivity and facilitate cohesion. The theory encourages on the need to maintain strong social bonding between workers to increase their morale towards organizational goals achievement. The theory is of the view that it is the responsibility and the duties of the manager, the school leaders or administrators to play the role of promoting positive team culture and implement relevant organizational theories into workplace environment by offering reward to staff for all their hard work, particularly if you want to see consistent job performance and institutional growth. Rewards could be by taking the entire team for a nice meal, reward individual staff with special trophies, or offer financial incentives for hitting a particular target. The theory also emphasized on maintaining healthy relationships with staff and maintaining appropriate boundaries as it mentioned that the successful workplace environment is one in which managers respect the feeling of staff and do not treat them as mere economic animal that can react to financial incentives while taking it into cognizance not to get overfamiliar or friendly with staff members as they may start to lose respect for you and their productivity may start to fall. McGregor pointed out that, micromanaging employees can have the opposite of the desired effect. Allow staff to work independently, assessing them at regular intervals to offer feedback about how well they are performing is key to motivate the staff to explore in their various job functions.

The theory is significant to this study because it laid emphasized and encourages the school leaders, the administrator, or the manager to motivate staff and promote positive team culture by rewarding, compensating staff with outstanding contributions towards the organization goals achievement. The theory also encourages natural solidarity between the superior and subordinate but not necessary threatening staff as an economic animal who react to only financial incentive.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Human Resource Recognition and staff Job Performance in Tertiary Institutions

Recognition simply refers to the action of recognizing or the state of being recognized. In the academic setting, it is the formal acknowledgment of staff or employee in the school or the way of identifying and rewarding staff for outstanding contributions to the institutions to realize the predetermined goals and objectives. Carrel et al. (1989) highlighted that institutions strive for flexibility, speed, and constant innovation. Planning with the people and not for the people ensures a positive relationship to performance improvement. When employees are given the freedom to participate in organizational decision making for example, there is a high chance of having mutual trust between management and employees. Mutual trust and cooperation that will help to break the barriers between the two parties. The employees will not resort to strikes and work stoppages without exhausting all the available channels of resolving the dispute.

Employees will be motivated because management considers them as partners in contributing to school success instead of being seen as mere subordinates and therefore will avoid engaging into counterproductive behaviors hence improved performance through timely achievement of institutional goals and objectives. Additionally, Ichnniowski (1997) argued that innovative human resource management practices improve performance like use of systems related to enhance worker participation and flexibility in the design of work and decentralization to managerial tasks and responsibilities. It has been widely accepted than effective organizations require effective management of subordinate and superior relationship.

Furthermore, it is generally accepted that the effectiveness of any set of people is largely dependent on the quality of its leadership and effective leaders' behaviour facilitates the attainment of the follower's desires, which then results in effective performance. A large body of empirical evidence has demonstrated that management-subordinate behaviours influence organizational performance (Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Tertiary institutions administrators who are seen as the human resources personnel in school, must understand that without student and employee there will be no school, therefore, they must have in debt knowledge of what it means to maintain an excellent relationship with the employee students within their various tertiary institutions to sustain effective academic leadership and sustain progress. The process of promoting students staff administration in tertiary institutions means that students are given an opportunity in the decision-making process. That is employee are allowed to participate in making decisions concerning them, or else, they will object to such decisions which may cause problem in the school if not properly handle but involving them in decision making help them to develop their leadership skills to be able to make decisions when confronted with dilemmas of decision-making later on in life but if not given such an opportunity to participate in decision making, they will struggle making decision. It is also important that a system of meeting the individual needs of employee in terms inventory, information, counseling, placement, and research services are met, this creates an academic environment that is student and employee friendly.

Recognition strategy aims at providing staff with an opportunity to recognize and learn from outstanding co-workers. For effective job performance, factors such as accommodations, salaries and allowances, security and social needs are to be fairly met. Salaries and allowance should be paid as and when due. Accommodation such as office spaces, staff common room should be provided. Staff in a particular school should be encouraged to live in harmony of love

and mutual trust. The school environment should be made free from tension and antagonism. The school administrator should strive to maintain a cohesive work group where fairness and equity prevail. The staff with special or outstanding contributions or performance should not only be recognized with the word of mouth but be rewarded. The awards should be instantly made, and the type of jobs given to each staff should be interesting, challenging, and meaningful, in order to challenge the utilization of the individual staff's ability.

As earlier stated, the employees' job performance in tertiary institutions depends on the institution's leaders or administrators with positive values who sees participative leadership as important by involving staff in some administrative processes like decision-making in schools. This will increase the individual's sense of responsibility thereby boosting his ego and personality. Performance standard must be clearly stipulated by the administrator against which promotions, increase in salaries and the satisfaction of cherished needs must be made contingent upon. Vice chancellors should allow staffs both academic and non-teaching access to their appraisals and they should be given opportunity to contribute towards them and vice chancellor should as well avoid such threats that would dampen the motivation of staff disciplinary cases such as suspension with or without pay, termination and outright dismissals should follow administrative procedures to give victims opportunity to defend themselves since every employee's values job security.

For efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of tertiary institution, the schools' leaders or the administrators should as well consider the social needs of the staff by making deliberate attempts to carry every staff along in school activities. Such unnecessary discriminations based on sex, age, ethnicity, tribe, and religions should be de-emphasized. Everybody should be seen as member of a larger family; staff should be encouraged to show love and acceptance to one another, and esprit de-corps should be seen to manifest. Such get togetherness like welcome parties, and end of year parties and their likes should be encouraged. Udoh (2004) stated that the best and surest way to command the respect of the inferiors is not by blustering and threatening, but by holiness and love and a constant regard to their welfare and to God's will and honor.

Human Resources Recognition strategy in tertiary institutions is of paramount important to employees' job performance in tertiary institutions because once the employees are recognized in the school their ego or esteem needs can be accomplished through delegation of duties to them by the universities leaders or administrators and by so doing, the staffs ability is not only tested but his underlying skills and talents are also discovered and their participation in decision-making process in the school enable them to identify fully with the policies and decision of the school which in turn create spirit of belongings and encouraged them to work harder for high productivity and job performance for the realization of school goals and objectives.

Human Resource Compensation and Staff Job Performance in Tertiary Institution

The compensation system of tertiary institution is related with the salary, wages, and every other remuneration that has direct impact on its employee performance. For the fact that employee performance is a function of reward, a good compensation package is very important for maintaining employee's satisfaction level and compensation is nothing, but the sum of remuneration paid for the physical labor and efforts of an employee (Zheng et al., 2007). The growing recognition and consensus that compensation promotes productivity is consistent with the early work of Drucker (1956) that states happy workers are productively workers.

Compensation processes are based on compensation philosophies and strategies contained in the form of policies, guiding principles, structures and procedures which are devised and managed to provide and maintain appropriate types and levels of pay, benefits and other forms of appreciation. This constitutes measuring job values, designing and maintaining pay structure, paying for performance, competence, and skill, and providing employee benefits. However, compensation management is not just about money, it is also concerned with that non-financial compensation which provides intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Compensation has a motivational effect and therefore implies that having a compensation structure in which the employees who perform better are paid more than the average-performing employees is vital to enhancing organizational performance.

Compensation packages can be in two ways; one is financial packages and the other is non-financial packages. The employees are very much encouraged to know the compensation level that employers are willing to offer. A good compensation package helps to retain qualified employees and increase the productivity of an organization (Zheng et al., 2007).

Compensation is one of the physical needs that motivates which in turn affect the employee performance. The effects of compensation on motivation vary from organization to organization. Compensation practices play a crucial and functional role on employee performance of different educational level because it is the heartbeat of human resource management. It is also vital to both employees and the employer. This is because employees typically depend on wages and salaries and must be equivalent to the work done. However, to school administrators or managers, compensation decisions influence the cost of running the school and thus, their ability to operate in a competitive price in the midst of competitive environments (Salim et al., 2010).

In this era of global competition, where attracting effective and efficient employees has become a necessity for competing organizations, it is necessary for tertiary institutions especially in Nigeria to give attention to the compensation system which is being utilized to get more productivity from their employee (Uwizeye & Muryungi, 2017). This is because many tertiary institutions or other similar organizations do not give emphasis to the effective utilization of compensation practices to ensure employees performance in developing countries. Organization pay directly influences employee voluntary turnover and people stay or leave an organization depending on whether they are satisfied with their job promotional opportunity and work environment (Mitchall et al., 2003). Compensation practices can improve the performance of employees when their institution and can make them better off than worse off by contributing to employee satisfaction and development (Delaney et al., 2010).

In Nigerian tertiary institutions, compensation practices play a crucial role to improve the performance of educational institutions at all levels by contributing to employee satisfaction, innovation, productivity, and the development of a good reputation among school community. Many studies have been conducted on compensation practices and its values on employees in most parts of the developed world, and parts of Asia but little have been conducted in Africa especially as it relates to higher institutions. Human resources management professionals need to determine fair compensation package to meet institutions standards and high enough to entice people to not feel dissatisfied to work for the school. Compensation includes anything the employee receives for his or her work. Similarly, human resources management professionals need to make sure the pay is comparable to what other people performing similar jobs are being paid. This involves setting up pay systems that take into consideration the number of years with the institution, years of experience, education, and similar aspects. Examples of staff

compensation include the following: Pay, Health benefits, retirement plans, Stock purchase plans, Vacation time, Sick leave, etc.

Human Resource Academic Conferences and Staff Job Performance in Tertiary Institutions

Professional development of academic staff in tertiary institutions is a renewal of knowledge, skills, access and absolute idea of staff who aim to improve the high level and equip staff with relevant skills to perform their tasks effectively. The success of education depends on the quality of academic staff because no nation develops higher than its educational input, which is primarily carried out by academic staff, they are the fundamental builders of education. Therefore, the government needs to invest in the education sector by organizing academic conferences for staff to be updated in their various job disciplines for effective national development.

A conference is a meeting of two or more people to discuss matters of common concern or interest. It is a big event that brings together education professionals in the field. Conferences are designed to provide excellent professional development and online opportunities to lecturers. It also enhances the growth and development of lecturers. According to Robinson (1996), a conference help conveys a message or information and ideas to a large audience and improve performance.

An academic conference (sometimes called a research conference, academic congress, academic meeting, or symposium is a meeting that researchers attend to present their findings and hear about the latest work within their field. These events are usually organized by associations or groups of independent researchers under the watchful eye of a scientific or technical committee that ensures the technical quality of the research that's presented.

Academic conferences aren't just for academics; they come in all shapes and sizes, from small local meetings to global events with thousands of international attendees. And while some conferences focus on highly-specialized topics within a single discipline, interdisciplinary conferences often bring together a broad variety of perspectives from academics, the industry and practitioners across several disciplines.

Attending an academic conference can be one of the most intellectually invigorating experiences the research world has to offer. They offer the opportunity to peer over the fence and see what's going on outside of a particular specialty. And in doing so, they help researchers forge new connections, build on their research, and enrich their career.

But it's not a secret that lots of people don't get the full benefit that an academic conference offers. Most of us have attended professional conferences and meetings, but an academic conference inhabits its own world. A world filled with abstracts and "camera-ready" papers, peer review and poster sessions. And successfully navigate this world; you need to get familiar with how an academic conference works.

A conference is an opportunity for academics and researchers to present and discuss their latest work and discover new and interesting developments in their field, which means that almost everyone who attends an event like this also presents at it. For this reason, the typical medium-to-large academic conference has a program packed full of short presentations across a variety of topics. These are often arranged into parallel "streams" that have sessions which run simultaneously.

Thanks to the influence of commercial conferences and the rising popularity of “un-conferences” that operate without a predefined structure, the rigid grip of the traditional academic conference format is loosening. However, while an increasing number of conferences in the academic world are testing out innovative styles of presentation and interaction, the typical presentations at an academic conference fall into the following categories.

METHODS

The study adopted a correlational research design to examine recognition, compensation and academic conference participation as correlates of staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to determine the degree and direction of the relationship among the variables without manipulating them.

The population of the study comprised 5,415 respondents drawn from four (4) public tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The institutions included Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State University, Federal College of Education, and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic. The population consisted of two Vice-Chancellors, one Rector, one Provost, and 5,411 academic and non-teaching staff across the four institutions. Specifically, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education had 986 academic and non-teaching staff; Rivers State University had 2,555; Federal College of Education, Omoku had 1,264; and Elechi Amadi Polytechnic had 607 staff. This brought the total population to 5,415 respondents.

The sample size for the study was 1,083 respondents, representing 20 percent of the total population. The sample comprised two Vice-Chancellors, one Rector, one Provost, 682 academic staff, and 401 non-teaching staff selected from the four tertiary institutions in Rivers State. A stratified sampling technique was first employed to categorize respondents based on their institutions and staff categories (academic and non-teaching). Thereafter, a simple random sampling technique was used to select participants proportionately from each stratum to ensure fair representation and reduce sampling bias.

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument consisted of two sections. Section ‘A’ focused on Recognition, Compensation, and Academic Conference Participation Questionnaire (RCACPQ). Section ‘B’ addressed Staff Job Performance and was tagged the Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (SJPQ).

The questionnaire was structured on a four-point Likert rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE)-4, High Extent (HE)-3, Low Extent (LE)-2, and Very Low Extent (VLE)-1. The instrument was designed to elicit responses on the extent to which HRM practices relate to staff job performance.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in Measurement and Evaluation from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The draft copies of the questionnaire were submitted to the experts for review to ensure clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the items in measuring the intended constructs. Their suggestions and corrections were incorporated into the final version of the instrument to enhance its validity.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted using 10 copies of the questionnaire administered to two groups of professionals at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt. After an interval of two weeks, the same instrument was re-administered to the same respondents to determine consistency.

The data collected from the pilot study were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of .808 was obtained, indicating a high level of reliability.

The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to Heads of Departments, Heads of Administrative Units, and selected academic and non-teaching staff in the sampled institutions. The distribution and collection of the instruments were carried out on scheduled dates with the assistance of three trained research assistants to ensure a high response rate and proper coordination.

Data collected for the study were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). The statistical tool was used to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at the .05 level of significance. All analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the extent of relationship between recognition and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 1: Relationship between recognition and staff job performance

		Recognition	Staff job performance
Recognition	Pearson Correlation	1	.805**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1083	1083
Staff job performance	Pearson Correlation	.805**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1083	1083

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The SPSS output on Table 1 reveals a correlation coefficient of 0.805** between recognition and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, indicating a very strong significant relationship between recognition and staff job performance. More so, the probability value (.000) is less than the critical value (.05), this shows that there is a very strong relationship between recognition and staff job performance. This further implies that recognition can be used to influence staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Based on this, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between recognition and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State and accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a very strong relationship between recognition and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

Research Question Two: What is the extent of relationship between compensation and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 2: Relationship between compensation and staff job performance

		Compensation	Staff job performance
Compensation	Pearson Correlation	1	.797**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1083	1083
Staff job performance	Pearson Correlation	.797**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1083	1083

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The SPSS output on Table 2 revealed a correlation coefficient of .797** between compensation and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, indicating a strong significant relationship between compensation and staff job performance. More so, the probability value (.000) is less than the critical value (.05), this shows that there is a strong relationship between compensation and staff job performance. This further implies that compensation can be used to influence staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Based on this, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between attendance of academic conference and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State and accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a strong relationship between compensation and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State

Research Question Three: What is the extent of relationship between attendance of academic conference and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 3: Relationship between attendance of academic conference and staff job performance

		Attendance of academic conference	Staff job performance
Attendance of academic conference	Pearson Correlation	1	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1083	1083
Staff job performance	Pearson Correlation	.642**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1083	1083

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The SPSS output on Table 3 revealed a correlation coefficient of .642** between attendance of academic conference and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, indicating a strong significant relationship between compensation and staff job performance. More so, the probability value (.000) is less than the critical value (.05), this shows that there is a strong relationship between attendance of academic conference and staff job performance. This further implies that attendance of academic conference can be used to influence staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Based on this, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between attendance of academic conference and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State and accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a strong relationship between attendance of academic conference and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between the recognition and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient analysis for the relationship between the recognition and staff job performance

		Recognition practice	Staff job performance
Recognition practice	Pearson Correlation	1	-.412*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.019
	N	1083	1083
Staff job performance	Pearson Correlation	-.412*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	
	N	1083	1083

** . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 revealed the results of correlation, where correlation value $r = -.412$, $p < .019$, indicates a significant relationship between the recognition as a human resource management practice and staff' job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Thus, the null hypothesis therefore, was rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between the compensation and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient analysis for the relationship between the compensation and staff job performance

		Compensation	Staff job performance
Compensation	Pearson Correlation	1	.936**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1083	1083
Staff job performance	Pearson Correlation	.936**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1083	1083

** . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 revealed the results of correlation, where correlation value $r = .936$, $p < 0.000$, indicates a significant relationship between the compensation and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Thus, the null hypothesis therefore, was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between attending academic conferences as a human management strategy and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis

		Academic Conference	Staff job performance
Academic Conference	Pearson Correlation	1	.815**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	1083	1083
Staff job performance	Pearson Correlation	.815**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	1083	1083

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 revealed the results of correlation, where correlation value $r = .815$, $p < .000$, indicates a significant relationship between attending academic conference as a human resource management strategy and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Thus, the hypothesis was rejected.

DISCUSSION

Recognition strategy and staff job performance in tertiary institutions

Hypothesis one stated that “There is no significant relationship between recognition and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State”, the Pearson correlation results where correlation value $r = -.412$, $p < .019$, revealed that there is a significant relationship between recognition strategy and employees job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Thus, the null hypothesis four was rejected.

This finding is in line with Carrel et al. (1989) highlighted those institutions strive for flexibility, speed, and constant innovation, planning with the people and not for the people ensures a positive relationship to performance improvement. When employees are given freedom to participate in organizational decision making for example, there is a high chance of having mutual trust between management and employees. Mutual trust and cooperation that will help to break the barriers between the two parties. The employees will not resort to strikes and work stoppages without exhausting all the available channels of resolving the dispute. Employees will be motivated because management considers them as partners in contributing to school success instead of being seen as mere subordinates and therefore will avoid engaging into counterproductive behaviors hence improved performance through timely achievement of institutional goals and objectives.

Additionally, Ichnniowski (1997) argued that innovative human resource management practices improve performance like use of systems related to enhance worker participation and flexibility in the design of work and decentralization to managerial tasks and responsibilities. It has been widely accepted that effective organizations require effective management of subordinates and superior relationship.

Udoh (2004) also supported this by stating that the best and surest way to command the respect of the inferiors is not by blustering and threatening, but by holiness and love and a constant regard to their welfare and to God’s will and honor. He emphasized that human resources recognition strategy in tertiary institutions is of paramount important to employees’ job performance in tertiary institutions because once the employees are recognized in the school their ego or esteem needs can be accomplished through delegation of duties to them by the

school leaders or administrators and by so doing, the staff ability is not only tested but his underlying skills and talents are also discovered and their participation in decision-making process in the school enable them to identify fully with the policies and decision of the school which in turn create spirit of belongings and encouraged them to work harder for high productivity and job performance for the realization of school goals and objectives.

Compensation and Staff Job Performance in Tertiary Institution

Hypothesis two stated that there is no significant relationship between compensation strategy and employees job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, the Pearson correlation results where correlation value value $r = -.936$, $p < .000$, revealed that there is a significant relationship between compensation strategy and employees job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Thus, the null hypothesis four was rejected. This finding is in line with of Drucker (1956) who believed that compensation promotes productivity. He stated that “happy workers are productive workers, therefore, compensation system of tertiary institution which is related with the salary, wages, and every other remuneration that has direct impact on its employee performance should be treated by administrators as key factor for productivity. For the fact that employee performance is a function of reward, a good compensation package is very important for maintaining employee’s satisfaction level. The finding also agrees with Ololube (2019) who state that compensation management is not just about money, it is also concerned with non-financial rewards which provides intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. The finding is also in support of Ololube (2009) who emphasized that compensation has a motivational effect and therefore implies that having a compensation structure in which the employees who perform better are paid more than the average performing employees is vital to enhancing organizational performance.

Compensation practices play a crucial and functional role on employee performance of different educational level because it is the heartbeat of human resource management. It is also vital to both employees and the employer. This is because employees typically depend on wages and salaries and must be equivalent to the work done. However, to school administrators or managers, compensation decisions influence the cost of running the school and thus, their ability to operate in a competitive price in the mist of competitive environments (Salim et al., 2010).

Academic Conference and Staff Job Performance in Tertiary Institutions

Hypothesis three stated that “There is no significant relationship between attendance to academic conference staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State”, the Pearson correlation results where correlation value $r = -.916$, $p < .000$, revealed that there is a significant relationship between academic conference as a human resource management strategy and staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Thus, the null hypothesis six was rejected.

This finding agrees with Ololube (2019), who stated that professional development of academic staff in tertiary institutions is a renewal of knowledge, skills, access, and absolute idea of staff who aim to improve the high level and equip staff with relevant skills to perform their tasks effectively. This means that the success of education depends on the quality of academic staff because no nation develops higher than its educational input, which is primarily carried out by academic staff; they are the fundamental builders of education. Therefore, the important of academic conference cannot be overstated, for this reason the government needs to invest in the

education sector by organizing academic conferences for staff to be updated in their various job disciplines for effective national development.

Robinson (1996) supported the finding by stating that a conference is a meeting of two or more people to discuss matters of common concern or interest. It is a big event that brings together education professionals in the field that is designed to provide excellent professional development and online opportunities to lecturers, enhances the growth and development of lecturers and help conveys a message or information and ideas to a large audience and improve performance.

An academic conference (sometimes called a research conference, academic congress, academic meeting, or symposium is a meeting that researchers attend to present their findings and hear about the latest work within their field. These events are usually organized by associations or groups of independent researchers under the watchful eye of a scientific or technical committee that ensures the technical quality of the research that's presented.

Attending an academic conference can be one of the most intellectually invigorating experiences the research world has to offer. They offer the opportunity to peer over the fence and see what's going on outside of a particular specialty, and in doing so, they help researchers forge new connections, build on their research, and enrich their career.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from this study, evidence indicates that recognition, compensation, and academic conference participation are significant correlates of staff job performance in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Recognition of staff contributions enhances motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment, leading to improved productivity and efficiency. Similarly, fair and timely compensation serves as a strong extrinsic motivator that influences employees' dedication, performance, and retention. Participation in academic conferences provides opportunities for professional development, knowledge exchange, and exposure to innovative practices, which in turn positively affect teaching quality, research output, and administrative effectiveness. Mutually, these human resource management practices create an enabling environment that promotes high performance and institutional effectiveness. The study emphasizes the need for tertiary institutions to adopt comprehensive strategies that integrate recognition programs, competitive compensation, and support for professional development activities. Thus, institutions are able to enhance staff morale, motivation, and overall job performance, thereby improving the quality of education, research productivity, and service delivery in Rivers State. These insights provide a foundation for policy and managerial interventions in higher education effectiveness.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the followings three recommendations are made:

- Tertiary institutions in Rivers State should implement structured recognition programs that acknowledge and reward the achievements of both academic and non-teaching staff. This could include awards, commendations, public appreciation, and performance-based acknowledgments to boost morale and motivation.

- Institutions should ensure fair, timely, and competitive compensation for staff, including salaries, allowances, and performance-based incentives. A transparent and equitable remuneration system will enhance job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and improve overall staff performance.
- Tertiary institutions should actively support staff participation in local, national, and international academic conferences. Providing funding, study leave, and logistical support will facilitate professional development, knowledge sharing, and research productivity, ultimately contributing to higher job performance.

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