



## Influence of Financial and Career Motivational Factors on Job Satisfaction among Academic Staff of Public Universities in South-East Nigeria

IMADE IDUOZEE, OMOYEBAGBE R. DANIA  
University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

**Abstract.** This study investigated the influence of financial and career motivational factors on job satisfaction among academic staff of public universities in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the influence of salary, promotion, and recognition on the job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities within the region. The study adopted a correlational survey research design. The population comprised 9,791 academic staff drawn from the ten public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. A sample size of 400 respondents was determined using the Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation. Multivariate regression analysis was employed to test the influence of the independent variables (salary, promotion, and recognition) on the dependent variable (job satisfaction). The findings revealed that salary, promotion, and recognition significantly influence the job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria at the 0.05 level of significance. The results indicate that improvements in financial rewards and career advancement opportunities are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction among university lecturers. Based on the findings, the study recommends that government and university management should review the salary structure and welfare packages of academic staff to ensure that they are equitable and commensurate with their contributions to the university system. Additionally, university authorities should prioritise timely staff promotions and institutionalize formal recognition programmes to acknowledge and reward outstanding performance among academic staff. These measures are expected to enhance job satisfaction, improve staff morale, and contribute to greater productivity and effectiveness within the university system.

**Keywords:** Financial motivation, career motivation, salary, promotion, recognition, job satisfaction, academic staff, public universities, South-East Nigeria.

### 1. Introduction

In the current global economic scenario, employee motivation has emerged as a continuous strategic priority that requires the attention of all organisational stakeholders, particularly within the higher education sector (Okolocha, Akam & Uchehara, 2021). Most organisations have realised that the job satisfaction of their employees plays a vital role in determining the success of the organisation (Zheng, 2010). As such, employers and managers alike need to know how to get the best out of their workers. One of the antecedent determinants of job satisfaction is believed to be motivation (Pang & Lu, 2018).

Ogunode, Kasimu and Ibrahim (2023) define motivation as the force that propels an individual to carry out specific functions without complaint. Josiah, Audu and Ogunode (2023) and Olabisi, Okolo, and Niyi (2023) elaborate that motivation is the drive that influences an individual to achieve the maximum output for themselves or their institution. A motivated employee demonstrates higher performance, boosts productivity, improves job retention, and fosters creativity and innovation (Kuranchie-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2021). An employee with a high level of motivation willingly exerts effort toward organisational goals and is more likely to embrace challenging tasks and tolerate minor sources of dissatisfaction (Kumari, Ali & Abbas, 2021). Motivation is important because motivated employees are less likely to engage in withdrawal behaviour and more willing to accept change (Pang & Lu, 2018). In the same vein, employees who become less motivated will redirect their efforts elsewhere (Filtvedt, 2016), and this could hinder organisational effectiveness. Thus, it is important to know how to develop the right type and level of motivation to ensure that valuable employees are retained. Motivated employees will always put in their best for the realisation of the goals and objectives of the organisation. However, this does not just happen without meeting their diverse needs. It is therefore the role of the leadership of an organisation to strategize ways of getting the best from employees through various motivational techniques, as identified by

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory.

Job satisfaction, on the other hand, represents the match between what the employee wants from the employer and the job and what they actually receive (Adi, Agbe & Odeh, 2021). Competent organisational leaders play vital roles in the achievement of job satisfaction by creating a conducive environment that influences employees' behaviours, attitudes, and motivations, which in the long run leads to effective individual and organisational outcomes (Okoli, 2019). Job satisfaction encompasses an employee's positive emotional state resulting from their job experiences, increasing organisational commitment, improving physical and mental health, enhancing job performance, and promoting organisational citizenship behaviour (Kumari, Ali & Abbas, 2021).

The impact of financial and career motivational factors on job satisfaction cannot be over-emphasised. That is why Kathombe, Kipchumba and Kirui (2018) submitted that the ability to perform may not be enough for effective performance; lecturers have to be motivated for them to realise their maximum potential. Lecturers, who are the providers of knowledge at the tertiary level of education, are seen as the focus for human resource development as well as the major agents for the fulfilment and actualisation of the curriculum. The efficiency of any university system depends, to a large extent, on the motivation and job satisfaction of its academic staff (Okoli, 2019). Thus, the university system may not achieve its goals without efficient and satisfied lecturers. Nwagwu (2016) asserted that job satisfaction is one of the key factors in institutional dynamics, and understanding lecturers' job satisfaction at the university is of paramount importance for academic excellence.

Despite the pivotal role of academic staff in human capital development and nation-building in Nigeria, the motivation and welfare of university lecturers have often received inadequate attention from government and other relevant stakeholders, thereby contributing to growing dissatisfaction within the university system (Adeyemi, 2021; Okolocha, Akam & Uchehara, 2021). Existing literature has identified several determinants of job satisfaction, including salary, working environment, and interpersonal relationships (Chen & Chen, 2021; Mumin, 2021; Sabeng & Mensah, 2023).

Although motivation is widely recognised as a critical factor in enhancing employee satisfaction, there is still no consensus regarding the most effective strategies for motivating employees to attain optimal job satisfaction within organisational settings. Furthermore, scholarly attention to the specific influence of motivational indices on the job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria remains limited. Most existing studies, such as those by Jiang

and Messersmith (2023) and Ghosh and Reio (2023), have examined job satisfaction primarily from the perspective of organisational practices and managerial techniques, with limited emphasis on specific financial and career motivational factors and variables such as salary, promotion, recognition, particularly within the context of public universities in South-East Nigeria.

This gap in the literature underscores the need for empirical investigation into the relationship between financial and career motivational factors and job satisfaction among academic staff in the region. Consequently, this study seeks to examine the influence of financial and career motivational factors on the job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to: ascertain whether salary significantly influences job satisfaction among academic staff; examine whether promotion significantly influences job satisfaction and determine whether recognition significantly influences job satisfaction among academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a central concept in organizational behaviour and human resource management that reflects employees' attitudes and emotional responses toward their jobs. It is generally understood as the extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively about their work experiences, including tasks, responsibilities, and workplace conditions. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences, a definition that remains foundational in the literature. More recent perspectives continue to emphasize job satisfaction as a multidimensional construct shaped by both intrinsic and extrinsic workplace factors (Judge & Klinger, 2008; Robbins & Judge, 2022).

Various scholars have also described job satisfaction in different ways. Obi, Akwaga, and Igwe (2021) defined job satisfaction as employees' emotional state regarding their job, based on the comparison between what they expected and what they actually receive. Similarly, Adi, Agbe, and Odeh (2021) viewed job satisfaction as the degree of alignment between employees' expectations from their job and what they eventually obtain from the employer. Robberts and Hung (2020) described it as a positive feeling about one's job that results from the evaluation of its characteristics, noting that satisfied employees hold positive feelings while dissatisfied ones hold negative feelings. In the same vein, Ibarra and Obi (2020) explained job satisfaction as a feeling that produces either positive or negative effects toward one's roles and responsibilities at work, emphasizing that no

single approach can satisfy all workers in an organization.

Furthermore, Yokomma and Jones (2020) conceptualized job satisfaction as a combination of feelings and beliefs that span mental, emotional, and physical domains. Johny and Pradeep (2020) also described it as a pleasurable emotional state arising from the appraisal of one's job as fulfilling or facilitating personal values. In addition, Hettensha (2020) viewed job satisfaction as an emotional and psychological state that influences an individual's motivation and effort toward work. Dewi and Harjoyo (2019) defined it as an attitude of employees reflected in how they evaluate their work based on factors such as working environment, rewards, career development, and other conditions that determine workplace happiness. Nwagwu (2016) further described job satisfaction as the overall positive feelings individuals have toward their jobs.

The various definitions indicate that job satisfaction essentially refers to a positive attitude toward one's job, reflecting the general feelings individuals hold about their work. Consequently, it is associated with emotional stability, high morale, and increased willingness to contribute to organizational goals (Okonkwo, 1997). A satisfied worker therefore operates at both individual and organizational levels of satisfaction, as their personal contentment aligns with institutional objectives (Nwankwo, 2014).

Job satisfaction is also regarded as a key ingredient for achieving recognition, income, promotion, and other rewards that contribute to a sense of fulfilment in the workplace (Kaliski, 2007). Korlo and Akintunde (2016) added that it reflects the extent to which employees' aspirations, desires, and needs are met on the job, and it varies across different dimensions of work experience.

In terms of classification, job satisfaction is often categorized into global job satisfaction and job facet satisfaction. Global job satisfaction refers to employees' overall evaluation and general feeling about their jobs as a whole (Muller & Kim, 2008). It represents the extent to which workers are generally pleased or dissatisfied with their occupation, taking into account their cumulative work experiences, responsibilities, organizational environment, and personal expectations. Employees who experience high global job satisfaction usually demonstrate positive attitudes toward their work, stronger commitment to organizational goals, and a greater willingness to remain in the organization (Robbins & Judge, 2022).

On the other hand, job facet satisfaction focuses on employees' feelings toward specific dimensions or components of their jobs, such as salary, promotion opportunities, fringe benefits, supervision, interpersonal relationships, workload, job security, and working

conditions (Muller & Kim, 2008). This form of satisfaction recognizes that an employee may be satisfied with certain aspects of the job while being dissatisfied with others. For instance, a lecturer may be satisfied with interpersonal relationships and academic freedom but dissatisfied with salary or inadequate facilities. Therefore, job facet satisfaction provides a more detailed understanding of the particular elements that contribute to or hinder employees' overall job satisfaction (Judge & Klinger, 2008). Both dimensions are important in organizational studies because they help employers identify the specific areas that require improvement in order to enhance employee morale, productivity, and retention (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).

In educational institutions, job satisfaction among academic staff is particularly important because it influences teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and institutional development. Satisfied academic staff are more likely to be committed, productive, and innovative, thereby contributing to the achievement of educational goals. Udoka (2018) therefore posited that for the school system to succeed and for the substantial investments in education to yield meaningful returns, academic staff must be satisfied with their jobs.

In summary, job satisfaction is a complex, multidimensional construct that reflects employees' emotional, cognitive, and behavioural responses to their work. It is influenced by expectations, workplace conditions, and individual perceptions, and it plays a critical role in determining both employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

## 2.2 Motivation

Motivation is a fundamental concept in organisational behaviour and human resource management, as it explains the forces that stimulate individuals to act toward the achievement of specific goals. It refers to the internal and external factors that energise, direct, and sustain human behaviour over time. Burns and Alexander (2020) described motivation as the process that provides individuals with reasons for acting in a particular manner, while Certo (2019) viewed it as the provision of incentives that encourage individuals to act in line with desired objectives. Similarly, Okoth and Oluoch (2019) defined motivation as the driving force that determines behaviour, purpose, and direction.

From an organisational perspective, motivation is concerned with the processes that influence employees' willingness to exert effort toward organisational goals. Ferris, Hochwarter, and Wright (2019) conceptualised motivation as a set of energetic forces originating both within and outside the individual, which initiate work-related behaviour and determine its direction, intensity, and persistence. In the same vein, Vroom (1964) explained motivation as the "why" of behaviour,

emphasising that motivated individuals sustain effort and commitment over prolonged periods, whereas unmotivated individuals quickly lose interest and energy.

Scholars have further examined motivation within workplace settings. Girdwichai and Sriviboon (2020) defined organisational motivation as the cumulative processes that influence employee behaviour and direction within the workplace. Josiah, Audu, and Ogunode (2023) described motivation as the drive that compels individuals to achieve maximum performance for themselves and their organisations. Likewise, Ogunode, Kasimu, and Ibrahim (2023) viewed motivation as the force that propels individuals to carry out assigned responsibilities willingly and effectively. Mulyani, Sari, and Sari (2019) also explained employee motivation as the stimulus that encourages employees to perform activities that facilitate the attainment of organisational goals.

Motivation has also been associated with employees' willingness to invest effort in their work. Antomioni (1999) defined motivation as the degree of effort individuals are willing to exert based on the extent to which they believe their needs will be satisfied. Sabbagha, Ledimo, and Martins (2018) further described motivation as the energy and driving force employees utilise in accomplishing individual and organisational objectives. Similarly, Hitka, Rózsa, Potkány, and Ližbetinová (2019) viewed motivation as a psychological process that energises and sustains human activities related to work tasks and organisational responsibilities. Collectively, these definitions indicate that motivation is primarily concerned with the factors that stimulate and sustain human action toward desired outcomes.

Motivation generally derives from two major sources: intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivation originates from internal satisfaction, personal fulfilment, intellectual curiosity, and a sense of accomplishment, whereas extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards such as salary, promotion, recognition, job security, and fringe benefits (Inayatullah & Jehangir, 2012). Employees are more likely to be motivated when they perceive that their efforts will result in desirable and valued outcomes.

For academic staff, motivation may arise from intrinsic factors such as intellectual fulfilment, professional autonomy, passion for knowledge creation, and commitment to student development. Lecturers who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to engage in innovative teaching, impactful research, and meaningful academic mentorship. Conversely, extrinsic motivation among lecturers may stem from adequate remuneration, timely promotion, job security, recognition, and favourable working conditions. These factors are especially critical within the Nigerian university system,

where poor remuneration, inadequate infrastructure, and unfavourable working conditions have contributed to frequent industrial disputes and the migration of skilled academics to foreign countries (Olofinkua, 2020).

In the context of this study, motivation refers to the internal and external forces that stimulate academic staff to exert effort toward the achievement of individual and institutional goals. It encompasses both psychological and material incentives capable of influencing lecturers' attitudes, commitment, and performance within public universities. Ultimately, fostering both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among academic staff is essential for improving job satisfaction, enhancing institutional effectiveness, increasing research output, and reducing the persistent problem of brain drain in Nigerian public universities.

Motivation is a fundamental concept in organisational behaviour and human resource management, as it explains the forces that stimulate individuals to act toward the achievement of specific goals. It refers to the internal and external factors that energise, direct, and sustain human behaviour over time. Burns and Alexander (2020) described motivation as the process that provides individuals with reasons for acting in a particular manner, while Certo (2019) viewed it as the provision of incentives that encourage individuals to act in line with desired objectives. Similarly, Okoth and Florah (2019) defined motivation as the driving force that determines behaviour, purpose, and direction.

From an organisational perspective, motivation is concerned with the processes that influence employees' willingness to exert effort toward organisational goals. Ferris, Hochwarter, and Wright (2019) conceptualised motivation as a set of energetic forces originating both within and outside the individual, which initiate work-related behaviour and determine its direction, intensity, and persistence. In the same vein, Vroom (1964) explained motivation as the "why" of behaviour, emphasising that motivated individuals sustain effort and commitment over prolonged periods, whereas unmotivated individuals quickly lose interest and energy.

Scholars have further examined motivation within workplace settings. Girdwichai and Sriviboon (2020) defined organisational motivation as the cumulative processes that influence employee behaviour and direction within the workplace. Josiah, Audu, and Ogunode (2023) described motivation as the drive that compels individuals to achieve maximum performance for themselves and their organisations. Likewise, Ogunode, Kasimu, and Ibrahim (2023) viewed motivation as the force that propels individuals to carry out assigned responsibilities willingly and effectively. Mulyani, Sari, and Sari (2019) also explained employee motivation as the stimulus that encourages employees to

perform activities that facilitate the attainment of organisational goals.

Motivation has also been associated with employees' willingness to invest effort in their work. Antomioni (1999) defined motivation as the degree of effort individuals are willing to exert based on the extent to which they believe their needs will be satisfied. Sabbagha, Ledimo, and Martins (2018) further described motivation as the energy and driving force employees utilise in accomplishing individual and organisational objectives. Similarly, Hitka, Rózsa, Potkány, and Ližbetinová (2019) viewed motivation as a psychological process that energises and sustains human activities related to work tasks and organisational responsibilities. Collectively, these definitions indicate that motivation is primarily concerned with the factors that stimulate and sustain human action toward desired outcomes.

Motivation generally derives from two major sources: intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivation originates from internal satisfaction, personal fulfilment, intellectual curiosity, and a sense of accomplishment, whereas extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards such as salary, promotion, recognition, job security, and fringe benefits (Inayatullah & Jehangir, 2012). Employees are more likely to be motivated when they perceive that their efforts will result in desirable and valued outcomes. For academic staff, motivation may arise from intrinsic factors such as intellectual fulfilment, professional autonomy, passion for knowledge creation, and commitment to student development. Lecturers who are intrinsically motivated are more likely to engage in innovative teaching, impactful research, and meaningful academic mentorship. Conversely, extrinsic motivation among lecturers may stem from adequate remuneration, timely promotion, job security, recognition, and favourable working conditions. These factors are especially critical within the Nigerian university system, where poor remuneration, inadequate infrastructure, and unfavourable working conditions have contributed to frequent industrial disputes and the migration of skilled academics to foreign countries (Olofinkua, 2020).

In the context of this study, motivation refers to the internal and external forces that stimulate academic staff to exert effort toward the achievement of individual and institutional goals. It encompasses both psychological and material incentives capable of influencing lecturers' attitudes, commitment, and performance within public universities. Ultimately, fostering both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among academic staff is essential for improving job satisfaction, enhancing institutional effectiveness, increasing research output, and reducing the persistent problem of brain drain in Nigerian public universities.

## 2.2 Dimensions of Motivation

Motivation is a multidimensional concept, meaning it is shaped by several interrelated factors that influence an individual's willingness to initiate, sustain, and direct effort toward achieving organisational goals. In the context of academic staff, motivation is not driven by a single factor but by a combination of financial, psychological, social, and institutional conditions. These dimensions are often discussed in both organisational behaviour and educational management literature (Robbins & Judge, 2019; Armstrong, 2021).

### 2.2.1. Financial Motivation (Salary and Allowances)

Financial motivation refers to the monetary rewards employees receive for their work, including salaries, wages, bonuses, and allowances. It is one of the most direct and visible forms of motivation in any organisation. According to Armstrong (2021), financial rewards remain a primary extrinsic motivator because they satisfy basic economic and physiological needs. Similarly, Robbins and Judge (2019) argue that pay serves as a critical reinforcement mechanism that influences employee behaviour and commitment. In the university system, salary plays a central role in motivating academic staff because it determines their standard of living and financial stability. When salaries are fair, competitive, and regularly paid, lecturers are more likely to remain committed and productive. However, irregular payment, inadequate remuneration, and poor welfare packages often weaken motivation and contribute to dissatisfaction (Ogunode, 2020; Okolocha, Akam & Uchehara, 2021). In Nigeria, financial challenges within public universities have been strongly linked to reduced morale and brain drain among academic staff (Roy-Omonigho, 2023; Olofinkua, 2020).

Equity Theory also supports the importance of financial motivation by explaining that employees compare their input-output ratio with others, and perceived unfairness leads to demotivation (Adams, 1965). Empirical studies have consistently shown that financial rewards significantly influence employee motivation and performance across sectors, including education (Kumari, Ali & Abbas, 2021; Pang & Lu, 2018).

### 2.2.2. Promotion and Career Advancement

Promotion is another key dimension of motivation and refers to upward movement within an organisational hierarchy, usually accompanied by increased responsibility, recognition, and improved remuneration. Promotion serves as both a motivational and developmental tool because it signals progress and achievement (Dessler, 2020; Armstrong, 2021). In academic settings, promotion is closely tied to scholarly output, teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and service contributions. Lecturers are typically

motivated when promotion processes are fair, transparent, and based on merit. However, delays, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and perceived favoritism can significantly reduce motivation among academic staff (Garba & Idris, 2021; Okolocha, 2021).

Vroom's Expectancy Theory explains promotion as a valued outcome that motivates employees when they believe their effort will lead to performance and rewards (Vroom, 1964). In universities, the expectation of career advancement encourages lecturers to publish research, attend conferences, and improve teaching quality. Studies have shown that clear promotion pathways enhance employee motivation and retention (Sahibzada & Khawrin, 2023; Garba & Abdullahi, 2019).

### 2.2.3. Recognition and Reward Systems

Recognition refers to the appreciation and acknowledgment employees receive for their efforts, achievements, and contributions. It may be formal (awards, certificates, promotions) or informal (praise, feedback, appreciation from supervisors). According to Armstrong and Taylor (2020), recognition is a powerful non-financial motivator that reinforces positive behaviour and strengthens employee engagement.

In universities, recognition is particularly important because academic work is often intellectual, long-term, and not always immediately rewarded financially. Lecturers are motivated when their research, teaching excellence, and community service are acknowledged by their institutions. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory identifies recognition as a strong motivator that enhances job satisfaction and performance (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959).

Self-Determination Theory also explains recognition as a factor that satisfies the psychological need for competence and relatedness, thereby strengthening intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In many Nigerian universities, however, lack of adequate recognition systems has been reported as a demotivating factor among academic staff (Okolocha, 2021; Roy-Omonigho, 2023). Studies have shown that recognition significantly improves employee motivation, engagement, and productivity across various organisational settings (Eria, Kibaya & Serunjobi, 2023; Pen, 2024).

### 2.2.4. Working Environment as a Motivational Factor

The working environment is a critical dimension of motivation and includes physical conditions (offices, classrooms, equipment, infrastructure), psychological conditions (stress levels, safety), and organisational support systems. Chandrasekar (2011) notes that a conducive work environment enhances employee morale, efficiency, and motivation. For academic staff, the working environment directly influences their

ability to teach, research, and perform administrative duties effectively. Adequate facilities such as laboratories, libraries, ICT infrastructure, and comfortable offices contribute positively to motivation. Conversely, poor infrastructure, lack of equipment, and unsafe conditions reduce enthusiasm and commitment (Ogunode, 2020; Chen, 2023).

Herzberg's hygiene factors theory classifies working conditions as extrinsic elements that prevent dissatisfaction when adequately provided (Herzberg et al., 1959). Empirical studies have confirmed that a supportive working environment significantly enhances employee motivation and productivity (IG-Worlu & Chiekezie, 2023; Sabeng & Mensah, 2023). In Nigerian public universities, inadequate infrastructure and poor funding have remained major constraints affecting staff motivation (Okolocha, Akam & Uchehara, 2021).

### 2.2.5. Interpersonal and Social Motivation

Interpersonal and social motivation refers to the influence of relationships, communication, and social interactions within the workplace on employee motivation. It includes cooperation among colleagues, support from supervisors, teamwork, and organisational culture (Robbins & Judge, 2019). In academic environments, collaboration is essential for research, teaching, supervision, and academic development. Positive relationships among lecturers foster knowledge sharing, emotional support, and teamwork, all of which enhance motivation (Abun, Jean & Basilio, 2023; Ridzuan et al., 2018). When employees feel respected and supported by colleagues and management, their motivation levels tend to increase.

Social Exchange Theory explains that positive workplace relationships create mutual obligations, trust, and commitment between employees and organisations (Blau, 1964). Similarly, Human Relations Theory highlights the importance of social interaction in shaping employee motivation and morale (Mayo, 1933). Poor interpersonal relationships, on the other hand, can lead to conflict, stress, and reduced motivation. Studies have shown that strong interpersonal relationships significantly enhance motivation and job performance in both academic and non-academic settings (Ikonne & Onuoha, 2015; Oyovwe-Tinuoye, 2020).

## 2.3 Empirical Review

Sahibzada and Khawrin (2023) investigated the relationship between salary, recognition, and job satisfaction among lecturers at Paktia University, Afghanistan. The study adopted a survey research design using a convenience sampling technique to select 60 lecturers. Data were collected through an online Google Form questionnaire and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between salary and job satisfaction among lecturers at Paktia University.

Abdul, Yahaya, and Olusanya (2022) examined motivation and job satisfaction as correlates of job performance among library staff at Landmark University, Omu-Aran, Kwara State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, and the entire library staff constituted both the population and sample of the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Frequency counts and percentages were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis were employed to test the hypotheses. The findings showed that salary structure and working environment had a high influence on respondents' job satisfaction. The study recommended that university management should ensure continuous staff motivation and satisfaction to enhance employee performance and organisational productivity.

Mumin (2021) examined lecturers' perceptions of how pay and promotion influence job satisfaction in tertiary institutions in Ghana. The study adopted a mixed-method approach involving both questionnaire and interview methods. A total of 270 participants were selected from five tertiary institutions in the Northern Region of Ghana. Logistic regression analysis was used to analyse the data collected. The findings indicated that pay and promotion independently had significant positive influences on job satisfaction among academic staff. The study recommended the implementation of policies aimed at annual salary reviews and effective promotion systems to improve job satisfaction among academic staff.

Opeke, Ikonne, and Adewoyin (2019) investigated job satisfaction among library personnel in public universities in South-West Nigeria using Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory as the theoretical framework. The study adopted a survey research design and utilised a structured questionnaire to collect data from professional and paraprofessional library staff. Total enumeration sampling technique was employed due to the manageable population size of 346 respondents. Descriptive statistics were employed for data analysis. The results showed that a high level of job satisfaction among respondents, particularly regarding job security, relationships with co-workers, work itself, and recognition. However, respondents expressed dissatisfaction with salary, which recorded the lowest mean score among all dimensions of job satisfaction. The study recommended improved salary structures to enhance job satisfaction among library personnel.

Bakar, Alsmadi, Radzali, and Solahudin (2022) examined the factors influencing job satisfaction among academicians in public universities in East Coast Peninsular Malaysia. The study covered 20 public universities in Malaysia, with 298 academic staff selected from three public universities. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising 154 items measured on a five-point Likert scale.

Multivariate regression analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that promotion opportunities, salary, supervision, and collegial relationships significantly predicted job satisfaction among academic staff in public universities. The study recommended that relevant authorities should periodically monitor employees' job satisfaction levels.

Garba and Idris (2021) investigated the effects of promotion on job satisfaction in tertiary institutions in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design and utilised a non-probability sampling technique. A total of 205 questionnaires were administered to respondents from one federal and one state tertiary institution purposively selected. Multiple regressions were used to analyse the data collected. The results indicated that promotion had a positive influence on job satisfaction and organisational goal attainment. The study recommended that promotion opportunities should be objectively implemented and offered promptly to deserving staff to improve job satisfaction.

Garba and Abdullahi (2019) examined the impact of promotion on job satisfaction and organisational productivity among academic and non-academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria. The study employed stratified random sampling technique to select respondents. Data were collected from 341 staff members, out of which 308 questionnaires were retrieved and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between promotion opportunities and job satisfaction. The study recommended that organisations should prioritise promotion opportunities as a strategy for retaining competent staff and reducing brain drain.

Mustapha and Zakaria (2013) investigated the influence of promotion opportunities on job satisfaction among lecturers in four public universities in Kelantan, Malaysia. The study employed a systematic random sampling technique to select 320 lecturers. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings indicated a positive and significant relationship between promotion opportunities and job satisfaction. The study recommended that organisations should prioritise promotion opportunities to enhance employee satisfaction and retention.

Eria, Kibaya, and Serunjogi (2023) investigated the influence of motivational factors on job satisfaction among academic staff at Makerere University, Uganda. The study adopted a correlational research design involving a sample of 294 academic staff. Data were collected through questionnaire administration and analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that recognition significantly and

positively predicted job satisfaction among academic staff at Makerere University.

Ziryawulawo (2023) examined the effect of motivation on the satisfaction and performance of university staff in Uganda. The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive research design using quantitative methods. A sample size of 313 university staff from both public and private universities was selected for the study. Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and analysed using factor analysis, principal component analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis. The findings indicated that recognition had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction and performance among university staff in Uganda.

Pen (2024) investigated intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction among academic staff at Svay Rieng University, Cambodia. The study adopted a quantitative survey research design involving 91 academic staff. Data were analysed using correlation analysis. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between intrinsic motivation, particularly recognition, and job satisfaction. The study recommended the establishment of recognition programmes to improve job satisfaction among academic staff.

Kolo (2019) assessed the factors influencing job satisfaction among Library and Information Science educators in South-South Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design involving 79 educators conveniently selected from six Library Schools in South-South Nigeria. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), covering both motivator and hygiene factors of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Descriptive statistics were utilised for data analysis. The result shows that respondents generally experienced job satisfaction. Work itself ranked highest among the motivator factors, while relationships with colleagues ranked highest among the hygiene factors. However, respondents expressed dissatisfaction with recognition and work environment. The study concluded that not all motivator factors result in job satisfaction and not all hygiene factors lead to dissatisfaction, thereby supporting Herzberg's assertion that employees may simultaneously experience satisfaction and dissatisfaction with different aspects of their jobs.

To address the identified research gap, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between salary and job satisfaction among academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between promotion and job satisfaction among academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria

H0<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between recognition and job satisfaction among academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria

## 2.4 Theoretical Framework

### 2.4.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory is one of the most widely recognised theories of human motivation. The theory was developed by Abraham Maslow in 1943 and explains that human beings possess a hierarchy of needs that influence their behaviour and motivation. According to the theory, individuals are motivated to satisfy lower-level needs before progressing to higher-level needs. Maslow categorised these needs into five hierarchical levels arranged in ascending order of importance: physiological needs, safety needs, social or belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualisation needs.

At the foundational level are physiological needs, which include basic necessities required for survival such as food, shelter, clothing, salary, and conducive working conditions. Once these needs are reasonably satisfied, individuals seek safety needs, which encompass physical security, job security, fair treatment, and protection from threats or uncertainties within the work environment. The third level consists of social or belongingness needs, which involve the desire for interpersonal relationships, acceptance, affection, teamwork, and social interaction with colleagues and supervisors.

The fourth category comprises esteem needs, which include recognition, respect, status, achievement, autonomy, reputation, and independence. At the apex of the hierarchy is self-actualisation, which represents the desire for self-fulfilment, personal growth, and the realisation of one's full potential (Robbins & Judge, 2020). Maslow argued that once a particular need is substantially satisfied, it ceases to motivate behaviour, and the individual progresses to the next higher level of need.

The relevance of Maslow's theory to this study lies in its explanation of how the satisfaction of employees' needs influences their level of motivation and job satisfaction. Academic staff in public universities possess diverse needs ranging from adequate remuneration and job security to recognition, professional growth, and self-fulfilment. When these needs are adequately met, lecturers are more likely to experience higher levels of motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction. Conversely, the inability of universities to satisfy these needs may result in dissatisfaction, reduced morale, and poor job performance. Therefore, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how motivational factors such as salary, recognition,

promotion, working conditions, and interpersonal relationships influence the job satisfaction of academic staff in Nigerian public universities.

#### 2.4.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, was developed by Frederick Herzberg in 1968. The theory explains that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are influenced by two distinct sets of factors which operate independently of one another. Herzberg argued that the factors responsible for job satisfaction are fundamentally different from those that cause job dissatisfaction.

The theory emerged from Herzberg's interviews with employees concerning situations in which they felt either satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs. Findings from the study revealed that employees associated job satisfaction primarily with intrinsic factors related to the nature of the work itself. These factors, referred to as motivators, include achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, personal growth, and the work itself. According to Herzberg, these factors enhance employee motivation, increase satisfaction, and encourage improved performance.

Conversely, employees associated dissatisfaction with extrinsic factors known as hygiene factors. These include organisational policies, supervision, salary, interpersonal relationships, job security, working conditions, and administrative practices. Herzberg maintained that the absence of hygiene factors causes dissatisfaction; however, their presence alone does not necessarily create satisfaction or motivation. Rather, hygiene factors merely prevent dissatisfaction, while true satisfaction is achieved through the presence of motivator factors.

Herzberg's theory further emphasised that organisations seeking to improve employee satisfaction should focus not only on improving working conditions and compensation but also on enriching jobs to provide opportunities for achievement, recognition, responsibility, and career advancement. Thus, while adequate salary and favourable working conditions are important, employees also desire meaningful and challenging work that provides opportunities for personal growth and self-realisation.

The theory is highly relevant to this study because it provides insight into the motivational factors that influence the job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities. Variables such as salary, working conditions, job security, interpersonal relationships, and university policies constitute hygiene factors that may reduce dissatisfaction among lecturers. On the other hand, recognition, promotion, achievement, and

opportunities for professional development represent motivator factors capable of enhancing lecturers' satisfaction, commitment, and productivity. Consequently, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory offers an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction among academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria.

### 3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprised of all the 9791 lecturers in the ten public universities in the South East Geopolitical zone, Nigeria. These universities are Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State (1884 academic staff), Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra (974 academic staff), University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State (1952 academic staff), Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu State (521 academic staff), Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ebonyi State (738 academic staff), Ebonyi State University, Ebonyi State (486 academic staff), Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State (1226 academic staff), Imo State University, Imo State (589 academic staff), Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Abia State (935 academic staff), Abia State University, Abia State (486 academic staff). The justification for using this particular geo-political zone is the geographical proximity of the southeast geo-political zone to the researcher and to allow for ease of access and data collection, ensuring a high response rate and reducing logistical challenges. A simple random sampling technique was adopted for this study, whereby each unit in the population was afforded an equal opportunity for selection. To determine the sample size for this study, the sample size determination formula by Taro Yamane (1967) was used:

$$n = N/1+N(e)^2$$

Where n = sample size

N = population under study

e = Level of significance = 0.05

The total academic staff of public universities in South East is 9791

Therefore, the sample size was obtained as follows:

$$n = N/1+Ne^2$$

$$n = 9791/(1+9791)(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 9791/(9792)(0.0025)$$

$$n = 9791/24.48$$

$$n = 399.96$$

$$n \approx 400$$

To ensure that there is proportionate representation of the lecturers in the institutions, a simple proportion was used to apportion the total questionnaire in order to determine the number of questionnaire to administer to each university. The distribution is shown in table 3.2 below

**Table 1:** Sample distribution

	Universities	Population	proportionate sample
1	Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State	1884	$1884/9791 \times 400 = 77$
2	Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra	974	$974/9791 \times 400 = 40$
3	University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State	1952	$1952/9791 \times 400 = 80$
4	Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu State	521	$521/9791 \times 400 = 21$
5	Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ebonyi State	738	$738/9791 \times 400 = 30$
6	Ebonyi State University, Ebonyi State	486	$486/9791 \times 400 = 20$
7	Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Imo State	1226	$1226/9791 \times 400 = 50$
8	Imo State University, Imo State	589	$589/9791 \times 400 = 24$
9	Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Abia State	935	$935/9791 \times 400 = 38$
10	Abia State University, Abia State	486	$486/9791 \times 400 = 20$
	Total	9791	400

Source: Researchers' Computation (2026)

This study utilised a structured questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in human resource management to ensure its adequacy, clarity, and relevance to the study objectives. In addition, the reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.80, indicating a high level of internal consistency and confirming the instrument's suitability for the study. Data collected through the questionnaire were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the research questions, while multiple regression analysis was used to test the study hypotheses. All statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

A total of four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents. Out of this number, three hundred and ninety-two (392) copies were successfully retrieved and found suitable for analysis, representing a response rate of 98%. The details of the questionnaire administration and retrieval are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Respondents' Demographic Profiles

S/N	Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Gender of Respondents	Male	213	54.3	54.3
		Female	179	45.7	100.0
		Total	392	100.0	
2	Age of Respondent	20 – 30years	2	0.5	.5
		31 - 40years	14	3.6	4.1
		41 -50years	199	50.8	54.8
		Above 51years	177	45.2	100.0
		Total	392	100.0	
3	Highest Educational qualification	Bachelor's degree	10	2.6	2.6
		Masters' degree	148	37.8	40.3
		Doctorate degree	234	59.7	100.0
		Total	392	100.0	
4	Academic Rank	Graduate Assistant	10	2.6	2.6
		Assistant lecturer	23	5.9	8.4
		Lecturer 2	77	19.6	28.1
		Lecturer 1	111	28.3	56.4
		Senior Lecturer	128	32.7	89.0
		Associate professor	27	6.9	95.9
		Professor	16	4.1	100.0
5	Numbers of years in service in the institution	0-5 years.	6	1.5	1.5
		6-10 years	49	12.5	14.0
		11-15years	158	40.3	54.3
		16-20years.	121	30.9	85.2
		21yrs. & above	58	14.8	
	Total	392	100.0		

Source: Researcher Fieldwork (2026).

Respondents' Demographics: Table 2 shows The demographic analysis of 392 respondents reveals a predominantly middle-aged, highly educated, and experienced academic sample. Most participants are male (54.3%), aged 41–50 years (50.8%) or above 51 years (45.2%), and hold a Doctorate degree (59.7%). In terms of academic rank, the largest groups are Senior Lecturers (32.7%) and Lecturer 1 (28.3%), while Professors (4.1%) and early-career staff are fewer. Correspondingly, the majority have 11–15 years (40.3%) or 16–20 years (30.9%) of service, indicating a mature

workforce with substantial institutional experience. Overall, the typical respondent is an experienced, doctorate-holding, mid-to-senior level academic, with limited representation from younger or early-career faculty.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Salary**

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Dev
7	I am satisfied with my current salary package	15 (3.8%)	102 (26%)	21 (5.4%)	251 (64%)	3 (0.8%)	2.68	0.992
8	My salary is regular and it is being paid as at when due	126 (32.1%)	251 (64%)	5 (1.3%)	7 (1.8%)	3 (0.8%)	4.25	0.643
9	I get salary increment as at when due.	194 (49.5%)	158 (40.3%)	11 (2.8%)	18 (4.6%)	11 (2.8%)	4.29	0.936
10	My salary corresponds with the level of my input as a lecturer	28 (7.1%)	44 (11.2%)	25 (6.4%)	184 (46.9%)	111 (28.3%)	2.22	1.181
11	My salary is enough to meet all my basic needs	26 (6.6%)	8 (2.0%)	16 (4.1%)	326 (83.2%)	16 (4.1%)	2.24	0.839
Overall mean & Standard Deviation							3.14	0.918

*Source: Researcher Fieldwork (2026).*

The salary-related responses indicate strong dissatisfaction with the amount and adequacy of pay, despite high satisfaction with pay regularity and increments. Respondents agreed that salary is paid on time (mean = 4.25) and that increments are given as due (mean = 4.29). However, they strongly disagreed that salary corresponds with their input as lecturers (mean = 2.22) or is enough to meet basic needs (mean = 2.24), and they were generally dissatisfied with the current salary package (mean = 2.68). The overall mean of 3.14 suggests a slightly negative perception overall, with notable variability in responses regarding increment timeliness (Std Dev = 0.936) and pay-input correspondence (Std Dev = 1.181). In essence, while salary administration (regularity and increments) is praised, the actual compensation level is viewed as inadequate and inequitable relative to effort and needs.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Promotion**

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Dev
12	I am satisfied with the promotion structure of my institution	5 (1.3)	257 (65.6%)	26 (6.6%)	4 (1%)	100 (25.5%)	3.16	1.309
13	My promotion is regular	129 (32.9%)	243 (62%)	3 (0.8%)	15 (3.8%)	2 (0.5%)	4.23	0.696
14	My promotion corresponds with the level of my input as a lecturer	6 (1.5%)	151 (38.5%)	53 (13.5%)	104 (26.5%)	78 (19.9%)	2.75	1.204
15	My promotion boosts the level of my job satisfaction	8 (2%)	203 (51.8%)	52 (13.3%)	77 (19.9%)	52 (13.3%)	3.09	1.149
16	There is fairly good chance for promotion if I deserve it	78 (19.9%)	236 (60.2%)	52 (13.3%)	26 (6.6%)	0 (0%)	3.91	0.828
Overall mean & standard deviation							3.43	1.037

*Source: Researcher Fieldwork (2026).*

Respondents expressed strong satisfaction with the regularity of promotions (mean = 4.23) and believe there is a fair chance for promotion if deserved (mean = 3.91), indicating that the promotion process is seen as accessible and timely. However, they were notably less satisfied with the alignment between promotion and their actual input as lecturers (mean = 2.75), suggesting a perceived disconnect between effort/performance and career advancement. Overall satisfaction with the promotion structure was moderate (mean = 3.16), and the belief that promotion boosts job satisfaction was also lukewarm (mean = 3.09). The relatively high standard deviations (e.g., 1.309 for satisfaction with structure, 1.204 for promotion-input correspondence) point to considerable divergence in opinion, likely between those who benefit from the system and those who feel overlooked. Overall, while the promotion system is viewed as regular and fair in opportunity, it is not widely seen as performance-sensitive or consistently satisfying.

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Recognition**

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Dev
17	My opinion on work issues is respected	81 (20.7%)	241 (61.5%)	27 (6.9%)	27 (6.9%)	16 (4.1%)	3.88	0.952
18	Appreciation from management increases my level of job satisfaction	27 (6.9%)	284 (72.4%)	27 (6.9%)	54 (13.8%)	0 (0%)	3.72	0.784
19	The organization views its academic staff as assets.	81 (20.7%)	187 (47.7%)	81 (20.7%)	27 (6.9%)	16 (4.1%)	3.74	0.995
20	My institution recognize individuals personal aspiration, needs and	27 (6.9%)	133 (33.9%)	135 (34.4%)	81 (20.7%)	16 (4.1%)	3.19	0.975

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Dev
	supportive of their involvement in research							
21	Financial recognition is the most used type of recognition given to staff that performs well in my organization.	27 (6.9%)	52 (13.3%)	29 (7.4%)	265 (67.6%)	19 (4.8%)	2.49	1.014
Overall mean & standard deviation							3.40	0.944

Source: Researcher Fieldwork (2026).

Respondents generally feel respected and valued, though financial recognition is notably lacking. Staff strongly agree that their opinions on work issues are respected (mean = 3.88) and that management appreciation boosts job satisfaction (mean = 3.72), with a moderate view that the institution views academic staff as assets (mean = 3.74). However, support for personal aspirations and research involvement received only a neutral-to-slightly-positive rating (mean = 3.19), indicating room for improvement in individual development support. Most strikingly, respondents disagreed that financial recognition is the primary form of recognition for good performance (mean = 2.49), suggesting that while non-financial recognition (respect, appreciation) is present, tangible monetary rewards for excellence are rare. The standard deviations (0.78–1.01) reflect moderate consensus on most items, except for item 17 (opinion respected, Std Dev = 0.95) and item 19 (staff viewed as assets, Std Dev = 0.995), where views were somewhat more varied. Overall, the institution fosters a respectful and appreciative environment but falls short on financial recognition and personalized support for staff aspirations.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Job Satisfaction

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Dev
22	I am satisfied with the working conditions of my institution	0 (0%)	91 (23.2%)	52 (13.3%)	201 (51.3%)	48 (12.2%)	2.47	0.980
23	My work on the present job gives me a sense of accomplishment.	0 (0%)	288 (73.3%)	78 (19.9%)	26 (6.6%)	0 (0%)	3.67	0.596
24	I feel satisfied because of the comfort I am provided at work	0 (0%)	104 (26.5%)	26 (6.6%)	236 (60.2%)	26 (6.6%)	2.53	0.956
25	I am happy to work for my institution because of the pleasant working environment	0 (0%)	182 (46.4%)	26 (6.6%)	155 (39.5%)	29 (7.7%)	2.92	1.073
26	I am satisfied with a healthy balance between work and family life	0 (0%)	244 (62.2%)	52 (13.3%)	96 (24.5%)	0 (0%)	3.38	0.852
Overall mean & standard deviation							2.99	0.892

Source: Researcher Fieldwork (2026).

The data reveals a clear contrast: respondents derive intrinsic satisfaction from their work and work-life balance but are dissatisfied with tangible working conditions. Staff strongly agree that their work provides a sense of accomplishment (mean = 3.67) and that they maintain a healthy work-family balance (mean = 3.38), indicating positive internal rewards. However, they disagree that they are satisfied with working conditions overall (mean = 2.47), comfort at work (mean = 2.53), or a pleasant working environment (mean = 2.92). Notably, no respondent strongly agreed with any of these tangible condition items, and over 60% disagreed or strongly disagreed with having adequate work comfort. The standard deviations are moderate (0.60–1.07), with the highest variation in perceptions of the working environment (Std Dev = 1.073). Overall, the mean job satisfaction score of 2.99 leans slightly negative, suggesting that while staff find personal meaning and balance in their roles, institutional deficiencies in physical conditions, comfort, and environment significantly undermine their overall satisfaction.

### Regression Analysis Results

To establish the relationship between financial and career motivational factors and job satisfaction, a regression analysis model was estimated. The specific financial and career motivational factors dimensions considered for the study were salary, promotion, and recognition, with the results presented in Tables 7 to 9.

Table 7: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.816 <sup>a</sup>	0.665	0.661	1.89096	1.607

a. Predictors: (Constant), SALR, PRMT, RCOG

b. Dependent Variable: JOSA

The regression result shows that when the independent variables: salary, promotion and recognition were regressed on job satisfaction, a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.665 was obtained. Given the value of Adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.661 indicates that the independent variables jointly explain 66.1% of the variation in the dependent variable. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.607 falls within the acceptable range (1.5–2.5), suggesting no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, thereby affirming the model's validity.

**Table 8:** Job Satisfaction ANOVA<sup>a</sup> results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2740.455	3	548.091	153.280	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	1380.236	386	3.576		
Total	4120.691	391			

a. Dependent Variable: JOSA

b. Predictors: (Constant), SALR, PRMT, RCOG

The F-statistic value of 153.280 was significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that the independent variables jointly had a significant relationship with the dependent variable.

**Table 9:** Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.195	0.678	-	4.716	0.000
	SALR	0.094	0.030	0.097	3.196	0.002
	PRMT	0.192	0.032	0.192	6.083	0.000
	RCOG	0.088	0.031	0.085	2.844	0.005

a. Dependent Variable: JOSA

Source: Researcher's computation

Table 9 demonstrates a positive and statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction and each of the dimensions of the three financial and career motivational factors examined. Specifically, job satisfaction exhibited significant associations with salary ( $\beta = 0.094$ ,  $t = 3.196$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), promotion ( $\beta = 0.192$ ,  $t = 6.083$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), and recognition ( $\beta = 0.088$ ,  $t = 2.844$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ).

**Test of Research Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis One:** *There is no significant relationship between salary and job satisfaction among academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria*

As shown in Table 9, salary has a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.094$ ;  $t = 3.196$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ) at the 0.05 level of significance. Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that salary significantly influences the job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities within the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

**Hypothesis Two:** *There is no significant relationship between promotion and job satisfaction among academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria*

As shown in Table 9, promotion has a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.192$ ;  $t = 6.083$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) at the 0.05 level of significance. Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that promotion significantly

influences the job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities within the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

**Hypothesis Three:** *There is no significant relationship between recognition and job satisfaction among academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria*

As shown in Table 9, promotion has a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.088$ ;  $t = 2.844$ ;  $p = 0.005$ ) at the 0.05 level of significance. Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected.

It is therefore concluded that recognition significantly influences the job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities within the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

**5. Discussion of Findings**

Firstly, this study revealed that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between salary and job satisfaction of academic staff of public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria ( $\beta = 0.094$ ;  $t = 3.196$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ). This finding implies that when academic staff are paid adequate salaries that can cater for their needs, they will be satisfied with their job and become more efficient and effective in their job performance. However, if their salary is not adequate and commensurate with their input to the school system as is presently the case in public universities in Nigeria, it could lead to negative behaviour like absenteeism, collection of bribes from students for marks, ineffective

use of working hours, poor performance and dissatisfaction with their job. This study corroborates with the findings of Sahibzada and Khawrin (2023) who found that there was a positive and significant relationship between salary and job satisfaction among Paktia University lecturers. Similarly, Abdul, Yahaya and Olusanya (2022) found that salary structure has high influence on the job satisfaction of library staff in Landmark University, Omu-Aran, Kwara State. This study is also in consonance with the findings of Mumin (2021) who conducted a study to examine the perspectives of lecturers about how pay and promotion influence job satisfaction in tertiary institutions in Ghana and found that pay has a significant and positive influence on job satisfaction of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Ghana. Furthermore, this study agrees with the findings of Opeke, Ikonne and Adewoyin (2019) who found that salary is a key factor that influences the job satisfaction of library personnel in the public universities in South-West, Nigeria. The consistent, statistically significant positive relationship between salary and job satisfaction demonstrated by this study in South-East Nigerian public universities, and corroborated by multiple studies across Nigeria (South-West, Kwara), Ghana, and Afghanistan involving both academic and library staff, leads to the conclusive implication that adequate salary is a fundamental, non-negotiable prerequisite for job satisfaction, professional ethics, and effective performance within this sector; conversely, the chronic inadequacy of academic salaries prevalent in Nigerian public universities is irrefutably identified as the primary driver of severe systemic dysfunctions – including erosion of academic integrity (bribery), absenteeism, chronic underperformance, and brain drain – which collectively degrade educational quality, institutional stability, and national development prospects, thereby mandating urgent, substantial, and sustainable salary reform as the critical imperative for salvaging the public university system in Nigeria.

Secondly, the study found that promotion has a positive and significant relationship with the job satisfaction of academic staff of public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria ( $\beta = 0.192$ ;  $t = 6.083$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). This implies that promotion as a dimension of motivation has a strong influence on job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities in the south-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This finding implies that when academic staff are promoted as when due, it gives them a sense of fulfilment, increases their ego, improves their performance and increases the level of job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities in the south-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This study corroborates with the findings of Bakar, Alsmadi, Radzali, and Solahudin (2022) who found that promotion opportunities significantly predict job satisfaction among academics in Public Universities in East Coast Peninsular Malaysia. This study also agrees with the findings of Garba and Idris (2021) and Garba and Abdullahi (2019) who found that promotion had a

positive influence on job satisfaction of academic and non-academic staff of tertiary institutions in Sokoto State. This study's confirmation of a significant positive link between timely promotion and job satisfaction among South-East Nigerian public university academics, reinforced by similar findings in Malaysia (Bakar et al., 2022) and Northern Nigeria (Garba et al., 2019, 2021), deduces that fair and predictable career progression is a fundamental non-financial motivator essential for fulfilling esteem needs, retaining talent, and boosting performance. This implies that delays or inconsistencies in promotion processes within Nigerian universities constitute a major systemic failure, eroding trust, fuelling brain drain, and undermining institutional effectiveness. Consequently, establishing transparent, efficient, and adequately funded promotion systems is a non-negotiable policy imperative to enhance job satisfaction, combat turnover, and improve the quality of higher education in the region.

Thirdly, the study found that recognition has a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction of academic staff of public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria ( $\beta = 0.088$ ;  $t = 2.844$ ;  $p = 0.005$ ). This means that recognition is a strong motivational factor that can influence the level of job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities in the south-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This finding implies that when academic staff are duly recognised and rewarded for their individual and collective efforts and achievements in the university system, it will lead to increased employee engagement, increased productivity, increased employee retention, create a positive work environment that attracts and retains top talent as well as positively influence the level of job satisfaction of academic staff in the university system. This result is in agreement with the findings of Pen (2024) who revealed a positive and significant relationship exists between (recognition) and job satisfaction of academic staff at Svay Rieng University in Cambodia. This finding of this study also corroborates with the findings of Eria, Kibaya and Serunjogi (2023) who found that recognition was a positive significant predictor of job satisfaction among the academic staff at Makerere University, Uganda. Similarly, the finding is also in consonance with the findings of Ziryawulawo (2023) who found that recognition had a significant and positive effect on the job satisfaction and performance of university staff in Uganda. However, the study disagrees with Kolo (2019) who found that recognition did not significantly influence the job satisfaction of library and information science educators in South-South Nigeria. This study's confirmation of a significant positive link between recognition and job satisfaction among South-East Nigerian public university academics, strongly supported by international evidence (Pen, 2024 in Cambodia; Eria et al., 2023 & Ziryawulawo, 2023 in Uganda), deduces that meaningful recognition is a fundamental, cost-effective motivator fulfilling esteem

needs and driving engagement, productivity, and retention in this context. This implies that systematically acknowledging staff contributions is crucial for building a positive work culture and partially mitigating dissatisfaction from other systemic challenges. However, the disagreement with Kolo's (2019) Nigerian study on library staff highlights that effectiveness is context-dependent, demanding authentic, fair, and tailored implementation to avoid perceptions of insincerity or inequity. Consequently, developing structured, credible recognition programs – sensitive to diverse staff roles and achievements – is a strategic imperative for Nigerian universities to boost morale and retain talent

## 6. Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of financial and career motivational factors on the job satisfaction of academic staff in public universities in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to: ascertain whether salary significantly influences job satisfaction among academic staff; examine whether promotion significantly influences job satisfaction among academic staff; and determine whether recognition significantly influences job satisfaction among academic staff in public universities in South-East Nigeria. The findings revealed that salary, promotion, and recognition had significant positive influences on the job satisfaction of academic staff.

## 7. Recommendations

The government and the management of public universities should review the salary and other benefits of academic staff to ensure that they are fair enough and commensurate with their input to the university system so that they can have decent pay that will be enough to cater for their welfare, especially with the present economic situations in Nigeria. This is because adequate salary plays a crucial role in influencing the level of job satisfaction of academic staff of public universities in Nigeria.

The management of public universities should prioritize staff promotion as a strategy to influence their job satisfaction and commitment.

The management of public universities should always organise a formal recognition and reward programs to acknowledge academic staff achievement, contributions, innovations and a breakthrough in their research endeavours.

## References

- Abdul, H. A., Yahaya, A. I., & Olusanya, D. E. (2022). Motivation and job satisfaction as correlates of job performance of library staff in Landmark University, Omu-Aran, Kwara State. *Library and Information Perspectives and Research*, 4(1–2), 13–31.
- Abun, D., Jean, G., & Basilio, Q. (2023). The effect of workplace relationship on job satisfaction of employees: School context. *Divine Word International Journal of Management and Humanities*, 2(1), 102–119.
- Adams, J. S. (1963). Toward an understanding of inequity. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67(5), 422–436. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0040968>
- Adi, D., Agbe, J. I., Odeh, R. C., & Tyokyaa, C. I. (2019). Influence of staff development programme on staff job performance in colleges of education in North Eastern Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science*, 19(5), 7–13.
- Antomioni, D. (1999). What motivates middle managers? *Industrial Management*, 41(6), 27–30.
- Bakar, N. A., Alsmadi, M. S., Radzali, N. A., & Solahudin, M. H. (2022). The influence of job satisfaction among university academicians in East Coast Peninsular Malaysia. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(2), 3434–3442.
- Burns, L. R., & Alexander, J. A. (2020). The impact of employee motivation on organizational commitment. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 9(15), 134–137.
- Certo, S. C. (2019). *Supervision: Concepts and skill-building*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Chen, X., & Chen, C. C. (2021). The effects of non-financial rewards on employee motivation: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 51(2), 123–139.
- Deci, E. L., Cascio, W. F., & Krusell, J. (1975). Cognitive evaluation theory and some comments on the Calder and Staw critique. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 31(1), 81–85. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0076168>
- Dewi, D. P., & Harjoyo, H. (2019). *Human Resource Management*. Unpam Press.
- Eria, M., Kibaya, E., & Serunjogi, C. D. (2023). The influence of motivational factors on job satisfaction among the academic staff at Makerere University. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 4(7), 2359–2366.
- Ferris, S. L., Hochwarter, W. A., & Wright, T. A. (2019). Toward a work motivation conceptualization of grit in organizations. *Group & Organization Management*, 44(2), 320–360. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601119834093>
- Filtvedt, R. E. (2016). *Motivation and job satisfaction: Does Herzberg's two-factor theory apply to knowledge workers of today?* (Master's thesis, Norwegian University of Life Sciences).

- Garba, F., & Abdullahi, A. (2019). Impact of promotion on job satisfaction and organizational productivity: A study of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Nigeria. *Saudi Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 4(5), 423–427.
- Garba, F., & Idris, S. (2021). Effect of promotion on job satisfaction: A study of tertiary institutions in Sokoto State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Management Studies and Social Science Research*, 3(6), 134–138.
- Girdwichai, L., & Sriviboon, C. (2020). Employee motivation and performance: Do the work environment and the training matter? *Journal of Security and Sustainability Issues*, 9(J), 42–54. [https://doi.org/10.9770/jssi.2020.9.J\(4\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/jssi.2020.9.J(4))
- Herzberg, F. (1968). One more time: How do you motivate employees? *Harvard Business Review*, 46(1), 53–62.
- Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). *The motivation to work* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Hettenesha, Y. U. (2020). The relationship between school climate and teachers' job satisfaction in government secondary schools of Gillelle, Addis Ababa. *Journal of Educational Management*, 3(2), 263–275.
- Hitka, M., Rozsa, Z., Potkany, M., & Lizbetinova, L. (2019). Factors forming employee motivation influenced by regional and age-related differences. *Journal of Business Economics and Management*, 20(4), 674–693. <https://doi.org/10.3846/jbem.2019.6586>
- Ibarra, M., & Obi, O. (2021). School climate and teachers' performance in an elementary school in a resettlement area. *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research*, 8(1), 119–128.
- Ig-Worlu, M. O., & Chiekiezie, H. E. (2023). Exploring specific physical conditions as determinants of cataloguers' job satisfaction in Federal and State Universities' libraries in South-South Zone of Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Service and Research*, 3(6), 1337–1345.
- Ikonne, C., & Onuoha, U. (2015). Factors influencing job satisfaction of librarians in federal and state university libraries in Southern Nigeria. *Open Access Library Journal*, 2(2), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1101337>
- Inayatullah, A., & Jehangir, P. (2012). The teachers' job performance: A role of motivation. *Abasyn Journal of Education*, 5(2), 78–99.
- Josiah, H. F., Audu, B. C., & Ogunode, N. J. (2023). Motivational strategies and teachers' job performance in post-basic education and career development (PBECD), Nigeria. *International Journal on Integrated Education*, 6(7), 22–31.
- Kaliski, B. S. (2007). *Encyclopedia of Business and Finance* (2nd ed.). Thomson Gale.
- Kathombe, M. W., Kipchumba, S., & Kirui, K. (2018). Reward management strategies and employee performance in selected universities in Nakuru County, Kenya. *Journal of Human Resource Management*, 6(3), 95–102.
- Kolo, V. E. (2019). Factors influencing job satisfaction among library and information science educators in South-South Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice*.
- Korlo, K. A., & Akintunde, O. O. (2016). *Exploring factors influencing teacher job satisfaction in Nigerian schools*. University of Jos.
- Kumari, K., Ali, S., & Abbas, J. (2021). Examining the role of motivation and reward in employees' job performance through mediating effect of job satisfaction: Empirical evidence. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, 10(4), 401–420.
- Locke, E. A. (1976). The nature and causes of job satisfaction. In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 1297–1343). Rand McNally.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396.
- Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and Personality*. Harper & Row.
- Maslow, A. H. (1965). *Eupsychian Management*. Irwin.
- Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.). Harper & Row.
- Mueller, C. W., & Kim, S. W. (2008). The contented female worker: Still a paradox? In K. A. Hegtvedt & J. Clay-Warner (Eds.), *Advances in Group Processes* (Vol. 25, pp. 117–149). Emerald Group Publishing.
- Mulyani, S. R., Sari, V. N., & Sari, M. W. (2019). The model of employee motivation and cooperative employee performance. *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 20(2), 379–390.
- Mumin, A. A. (2021). How do pay and promotion influence job satisfaction in tertiary institutions? Perspectives of academic staff in Northern Region of Ghana. *Advance*, 1(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.31124/advance.14450415.v1>
- Nwagwu, B. (2016). *Towards a theory of job satisfaction and incentives*. New Nigeria Publishers.
- Nwankwo, J. (2014). *Management in Education: Modern Approaches in Educational Management*. Giraffe Books.
- Obi, O. G., Akwuaga, I., & Igwe, O. (2022). The relationship between gender, stress and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Anambra State, Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal*, 18(4), 230–245.
- Ogunode, N. J., Kasimu, S., & Ibrahim, I. (2023). Motivation and academic staff of Nigerian

- universities. *Best Journal of Innovation in Science, Research and Development*, 2(7), 185–198.
- Okoli, I. E. (2019). Organizational climate and job satisfaction among academic staff: Experience from selected private universities in Southeast Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Business Studies and Management*, 5(12), 36–48.
- Okolocha, C. B. (2021). Job satisfaction and employee productivity: Evidence from selected universities in South-East Nigeria. *International Journal of Business & Law Research*, 9(1), 127–138.
- Okolocha, C. B., Akam, G. U., & Uchehara, F. O. (2021). Effect of job satisfaction on job performance of university lecturers in South-East Nigeria. *International Journal of Management Studies and Social Science Research*, 3(1), 119–137.
- Okonkwo, S. N. (1997). *Job satisfaction and the work behaviour of Nigerian teachers: The Nigerian perspective*. Meks Publishers.
- Okoth, A. A., & Oluoch, M. F. (2019). Influence of performance appraisal on motivation of public secondary school teachers in Gem-Sub County, Kenya. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 9(4), 39–49.
- Olofinkua, V. K. (2020). *Academic staff's job satisfaction and motivation in Catholic Universities in Nigeria* (Doctoral dissertation, Fordham University). <https://research.library.fordham.edu/dissertations/AAI27545265>
- Opeke, R., Ikonne, C. N., & Adewoyin, O. O. (2019). Job satisfaction among library personnel in public universities in South-West Nigeria. *Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 10(2), 124–138. <https://doi.org/10.4314/ijikm.v10i2.9>
- Oyovwe-Tinuoye, G. (2020). Interpersonal relations and job satisfaction among librarians in universities in Southern Nigeria. *Tropical Journal of Education*, 2(21), 12–21.
- Pang, K., & Lu, C. S. (2018). Organizational motivation, employee job satisfaction and organizational performance. *Maritime Business Review*, 3(1), 36–52. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MABR-03-2018-0007>
- Pen, D. (2024). Examining intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction among academic staff at Svay Rieng University in Cambodia. *Journal of General Education and Humanities*, 3(2), 103–116. <https://doi.org/10.58421/gehu.v3i2.212>
- Ridzuan, A. R., Baharudin, N. A., Ismail, S., Arham, A. F., Nazri, N. M., & Rahman, M. F. (2018). Measuring the factors of employees' job satisfaction among lecturers in UiTM Melaka. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(10), 899–914.
- Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2020). *Organizational behavior* (18th ed.). Pearson.
- Roy-Omonigho, S. (2023). Poor remuneration: Effects on university lecturers in Nigeria. *The Guardian Nigeria*. <https://guardian.ng/opinion/poor-remuneration-effects-on-university-lecturers-in-Nigeria/>
- Sabeng, D. A., & Mensah, J. V. (2023). Job satisfaction and characteristics among staff of public higher educational institutions in Ghana. *Cogent Education*, 10(2), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2226457>
- Sabbagha, M. D., Ledimo, O., & Martins, N. (2018). Predicting staff retention from employee motivation and job satisfaction. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 28(2), 136–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2018.1454578>
- Sahibzada, A., & Khawrin, M. K. (2023). The relationship between salary and recognition on job satisfaction: A study of Paktia University lecturers. *Peer-Reviewed, Multidisciplinary & Multilingual Journal*, 2(1), 74–78.
- Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Yokomena, S., & Jones, A. (2020). Job satisfaction among urban secondary-school teachers in Namibia. *South African Journal of Education*, 28(2), 135–154.
- Ziryawulawo, M. K. (2023). Motivation and performance of staff in universities in Uganda. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research*, 5(3), 1–11.
- Zuhra, F. (2022). The effect of interpersonal relationships on job satisfaction through organizational culture at the Camat Office, Samalanga District, Bireuen Regency. *International Journal of Economics*, 1(2), 396–404. <https://doi.org/10.55299/ijec.v1i2.274>