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**NON-FINANCIAL MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS AS DETERMINANTS OF ACADEMIC STAFF
 PERFORMANCE OF UNIVERSITIES IN GOMBE STATE**

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of Non-Financial Motivation on Performance of Academic Staff among Universities in Gombe State. A cross-sectional research design was employed, with data collected from the data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) version 3. The study's population is 1449 academic staff of the 3 operational universities in Gombe State. 326 respondents were used for the study as sample size. The results revealed that recognition, and work environment have a significant and positive relationship with academic staff performance. The study concluded that enhancing recognition, and fostering a supportive work environment are essential strategies for substantially improving academic staff performance. Based on these findings, it was recommends that universities implement structured and transparent recognition programs to acknowledge the achievements and contributions of academic staff. Such initiatives could include awards, public commendations, promotion opportunities, and personalized feedback to cultivate a culture of appreciation, boost morale, and enhance performance. Additionally, institutions should improve the physical, social, and psychological work environment by ensuring adequate resources, modern facilities, fair workload distribution, and a supportive culture that promotes inclusivity, collaboration, and work-life balance, ultimately boosting staff performance.

Keywords: Non-financial motivation, Recognition, Work environment, Academic staff performance

1. Introduction

Today, academic staff performance is a growing concern among researchers, practitioners, scholars, and governments worldwide (Mughal, 2020). It is widely recognized as a critical factor in fostering institutional growth and sustainability, and as a vital resource for the survival of higher educational institutions (Suherman et al., 2023; Isah et al., 2022). In the current dynamic educational environment, academic staff are increasingly acknowledged as a university's most valuable asset (Suherman et al., 2023; Sarinah et al., 2022). Consequently, higher educational institutions, universities in particular, are realizing that achieving their objectives depend on the optimal performance of their academic staff (Bancin et al., 2023; Mughal, 2020).

However, their effectiveness is often compromised by the lack of adequate non-financial incentives (Adanu,

2024). Moreover, universities' overall performance, especially in developing countries, has been a subject of extensive debate in recent years. For instance in Nigeria, universities are anticipated to be an important hubs of academic excellence, and societal advancement (Pee & Vululleh, 2020). However, many Nigerian institutions fall short of these expectations, often earning low in global ranking (Bamiro, 2024). It has been reported that, out of the 170 public and private universities in Nigeria, none has secured a spot among the world's top 1,000, and public Nigerian universities continue to lag behind their peers in other African nations (Kalu, 2024; Musa, & Ibrahim, 2024; Ogunode et al., 2022). This performance gap affects Nigeria's socio-economic development, as universities play an essential role in cultivating a skilled workforce and fostering research essential for national advancement (Ogunode et al., 2023).

Similarly, Ogunode and Ibrahim (2023) noted that there has been significant outcry over the ineffectiveness of academic staff in tertiary institutions across Nigeria in executing their functions. The authors further asserted that, in most universities, lecturers' job performance is low due to poor motivation. Recent observations reveal that lecturers' commitment to teaching, research, and community service appears to be very low (Ogunode & Ibrahim, 2023). Moreover, many academic staff face challenges working in an unconducive environment and experience insufficient recognition. Although there has been an upsurge in scholarly works on the antecedents of employee performance, particularly in advanced economies, most of these studies (e.g., Suparjo & Nurchayati, 2023; Sengaza, 2022; Adewara et al., 2023; Bancin et al., 2023; Birhan, 2022; Hollinger et al., 2021; Majenje & Muhanga, 2023; Mukrodi et al., 2025; Syawaludin, 2022; Chankseliani et al., 2021; Albatal, 2019) have been conducted outside Nigeria. However, there is a dearth of studies in Nigeria that investigate the antecedents of employee performance in an academic setting. Among the few studies (e.g., Kalu, 2024; Olabisi et al., 2023; Ojeleye et al., 2020; Ogunode & Ibrahim, 2023; Ogunode et al., 2023) that have examined the antecedents of employee performance in an academic context, most have focused on factors such as the work environment (Ojeleye et al., 2020), career development (Olabisi et al., 2023), training and promotion (Ogunode & Ibrahim, 2023), and motivation (Yahaya et al., 2019).

Past studies (e.g., Ogunode et al., 2024; Hamzah & Matkhairuddin, 2023; Suparjo & Nurchayati, 2023; Bancin et al., 2023; Birhan, 2022; Razak & Makassar, 2021; Aktar, 2019; Sharma, 2021) have documented that non-financial motivational factors are core influencers of employee performance. Components of non-financial motivation, such as recognition, work environment, job promotion, job autonomy, and training, have been identified as effective tools for enhancing employee productivity and loyalty (Ogunode & Ibrahim, 2023). Nze and Ahumibe (2023) recommended that recognition and the work environment are important proxies for non-financial motivation, especially in an academic setting.

Daniel, Ismail, and Sanusi (2025) opine that a lack of recognition in Nigerian universities significantly hampers academic staff performance by eroding their motivation and sense of professional value. When faculty members' contributions to research, teaching, and community engagement go unacknowledged, it not only diminishes individual morale but also stifles innovation and commitment to academic excellence (Hollinger-Smith et al., 2021). The absence of formal or informal recognition systems leads to feelings of underappreciation, which can result in decreased productivity, lower quality of educational delivery, and a higher turnover rate (Mukrodi, Suhaendi, & Sugiarti, 2025). Ultimately, the persistent neglect of recognizing academic achievements undermines the overall effectiveness of institutions and their capacity to contribute to national development.

Another non-financial motivational factor that has drawn significant scholarly attention is the work environment. Research indicates that a substandard physical work environment is a major contributor to stress, burnout, and diminished employee performance (Stanley, 2016). For academic staff tasked with balancing the demands of teaching, research, and community service, inadequate facilities and resources can exacerbate daily pressures, lower morale, and impede effective collaboration (Nwokeocha, 2023). In turn, these conditions not only hinder performance but also undermine the overall quality of academic output (Mather & Bam, 2025).

Despite the studies that examined the relationship between non-financial motivation and employee performance, most have predominantly focused on industries outside the educational sector, such as banking, manufacturing, healthcare, and transportation (e.g., Ogunode et al., 2024; Burbar, 2021; Isah et al., 2022). Within the Nigerian context, only a limited number of studies (e.g., Ogunode et al., 2023; Ogunode & Ibrahim, 2023) have examined this relationship, and even fewer have specifically focused on the performance of academic staff in Nigerian universities. Moreover, among the few studies that link non-financial motivational factors to the performance of teaching staff, none have utilized recognition and the work environment as combined proxies for non-financial motivation when analyzing their influence on academic staff performance. This indicates a

significant research gap, leaving unanswered questions about how these specific non-financial motivational factors impact academic staff in Nigerian universities.

Furthermore, scholars (e.g., Gyedu et al., 2021; Kekina & Suvanjumrat, 2017) argue that findings from similar studies conducted in other contexts may not necessarily apply to environments characterized by turbulence and frequent change. Factors such as technological breakthroughs, shifting policies, changing customer demands, and internal organizational dynamics can yield varying results depending on the context (Pavlou & Sawy, 2017). In light of these considerations, this study addresses the research gap by examining the effect of non-financial motivation on the performance of academic staff in Nigerian universities, focusing specifically on Gombe State. Using recognition and the work environment as proxies for non-financial motivation, as Nze and Ahumibe (2023) recommended, this study provides fresh insights into the role of non-financial motivators in enhancing academic staff performance among universities in Gombe State. The researcher chose three universities in Gombe State as the study domain because academic staff across Nigerian universities exhibit a high degree of homogeneity. Moreover, universities nationwide share similar characteristics in terms of working conditions, salary structures, and union representation, making any sample drawn from these institutions' representative of the whole.

Research Hypothesis

H0₁: Recognition has no significant relationship with performance of academic staff among universities in Gombe State.

H0₂: Work environment has no significant relationship with performance of academic staff among universities in Gombe State.

2. Literature Review

Performance of Academic Staff

Employee performance refers to an individual's ability to fulfill their job responsibilities, demonstrating effort, commitment, and collaboration with colleagues and employers (Donohoe, 2019). It is a critical factor in organizational success, as it helps businesses assess progress, stagnation, or decline, enabling necessary

adjustments to improve services and sustain growth (Burbar, 2021). Hamzah and Matkhairuddin (2023) emphasize that employee performance depends on how well employees execute their job duties. Ogunode et al. (2024) were among the first to outline the fundamental dimensions of work performance, while Samwel (2019) highlights that performance reflects employees' efforts to meet organizational goals. Similarly, Nwokocha (2018) defines performance as a measurable concept, linking productivity to input-output efficiency, which organizations use to gauge their effectiveness (Kushwaha, 2018).

In tertiary institutions, the performance of academic staff plays a vital role in achieving educational objectives. Al-Omari and Okasheh (2018) define job performance as the culmination of individual or group efforts that determine how well organizations meet their goals. Employee behavior at work is a crucial component of performance, as individuals differ in their ability to execute job responsibilities (Fogaça et al., 2018). Academic performance, a key indicator of educational success, measures the extent to which students, lecturers, or institutions achieve their learning objectives (Villalobos et al., 2024). Anwar and Abdullah (2021) describe academic staff performance as productivity driven by employee development, ultimately impacting institutional effectiveness. Performance is evaluated based on various criteria, such as output quality, efficiency, timeliness, and attendance, all of which contribute to overall effectiveness (Rodrigo et al., 2022).

Academic staff are integral to higher education institutions, particularly in universities, where they oversee teaching, research, and curriculum development. They play a critical role in implementing instructional programs, making them essential to the advancement of higher education. According to Ogunode et al. (2020), academic staff members are categorized into ranks from Graduate Assistants to Professors, each contributing to institutional objectives. Ogunode and Adamu (2021) emphasize that their responsibilities extend beyond teaching to include conducting research, supervising students, and engaging in academic communities. Furthermore, as noted by Ogunode and Ibrahim (2023) and Ogunode and Agyo (2022), academic staff benefit from structured working conditions, including set teaching

hours and standardized student-teacher ratios, which help maintain efficiency in higher education institutions.

Academic Staff Motivation

Motivation is a widely explored concept, defined across various contexts as the psychological force that drives individuals toward goal achievement. It provides behavior with purpose and direction, influencing employees' actions, effort intensity, and persistence (Ali & Ahmed, 2019; Kamwenji et al., 2022). Researchers describe motivation as an internal drive that fulfills unmet needs while aligning personal and organizational objectives (Aktar, 2019; Ogunode & Ibrahim, 2023). Motivation shapes employees' behavior by determining what they aim to achieve, how they pursue their goals, and their commitment level (Semgaza, 2022). Bartol and Martin (2018) highlight motivation as a critical tool for reinforcing behavior and sustaining organizational success, initiating goal-oriented actions that enhance employee commitment and performance. Organizations that recognize and nurture motivation—through both monetary and non-monetary incentives—can significantly improve workplace productivity and long-term growth.

Non-monetary incentives, in particular, play a vital role in motivating employees by providing recognition, career development opportunities, and workplace rewards that enhance job satisfaction and engagement (Sakaya, 2019; Hamzah & Matkhairuddin, 2022). These incentives foster a supportive work environment, ensuring employees feel valued and appreciated, which strengthens their commitment to the organization (Sharma, 2021; Ogunode et al., 2024). In academic institutions, non-monetary incentives contribute to excellence among faculty members, aligning individual motivation with institutional goals (Jaleta et al., 2019). When effectively implemented, such incentives—ranging from professional development opportunities to workplace autonomy—boost morale, encourage long-term engagement, and enhance overall performance (Suparjo & Nurchayati, 2023). Unlike monetary rewards, non-financial incentives nurture intrinsic motivation, ensuring employees remain dedicated to

their roles while driving sustainable organizational success.

Concept of Physical Work Environment

The physical work environment encompasses both the geographical location and immediate surroundings that influence employees' performance. Key elements such as lighting, ventilation, temperature control, office layout, and furniture arrangement significantly impact employees' ability to work efficiently (Lankeshwara, 2016). Workplace ergonomics, including spatial arrangement and functionality, also play a crucial role in ensuring comfort and productivity (Gitahi, Waiganj, & Koima, 2015). A well-designed workspace enhances safety, comfort, and job satisfaction, which in turn boosts overall productivity and well-being (Sitepu, Dalimunthe, & Sembiring, 2020). The work environment includes practical and aesthetic features such as heating, natural and artificial lighting, and décor, all of which contribute to creating a conducive atmosphere for employees (Nanzushi, 2015).

The physical work environment can be classified into three dimensions: physical structure, physical stimuli, and symbolic artifacts (Suresh, 2016). Physical structure includes the architecture, furniture, and workspace arrangement, while physical stimuli refer to sensory factors like lighting, temperature, and noise levels that affect employee comfort. Symbolic artifacts, such as office design and aesthetics, reflect the organization's culture and identity. A poor fit between these elements and employees' needs can result in discomfort, stress, and reduced productivity (Kolade & Oladipupo, 2019). Ensuring that the work environment aligns with employees' ergonomic needs is essential for minimizing stress and enhancing efficiency (Suresh, 2016). Moreover, when employees feel comfortable in their workspace, they are more likely to align their career goals with the organization's objectives, leading to greater engagement, commitment, and overall job satisfaction (Budie et al., 2019; Madu, Asawo, & Gabriel, 2017).

Concept of Job Recognition

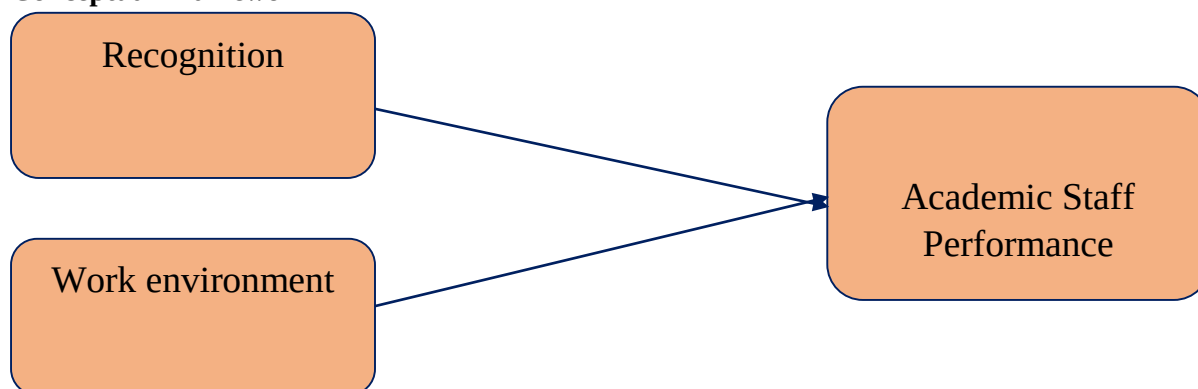
Job recognition is a fundamental aspect of the workplace that acknowledges employees' contributions, enhancing motivation and overall performance. Employees who feel recognized tend to

be more engaged, productive, and satisfied with their jobs (Masri & Suliman, 2019). Organizations that prioritize recognition foster a positive work environment where employees feel valued, leading to increased commitment and reduced turnover (Scherbaum, Naidoo & Saunderson, 2022). Research suggests that non-monetary rewards, such as verbal praise or symbolic gestures, significantly contribute to job satisfaction and performance. Recognized employees are more likely to contribute innovative ideas and collaborate effectively, benefiting both organizational success and teamwork (Scherbaum et al., 2022).

Recognition can take various forms, including formal and informal, public and private acknowledgments (Roberts, 2015). Kosfeld and Neckermann (2011)

highlighted that simple gestures, such as a personalized thank-you note, can significantly boost employee morale. Blau's (1964) theory of reciprocity suggests that employees who receive recognition are motivated to give back through increased effort. Akerlof (1982) further emphasized that socio-emotional rewards, beyond monetary compensation, influence employee motivation. Saunderson (2016) describes recognition as a form of communication between management and employees, reinforcing their achievements. It serves as a means of aligning individual and team accomplishments with an organization's goals and values (Human Resources Council of Canada, 2015). Ultimately, recognition strengthens employee-employer relationships and fosters a culture of appreciation and high performance (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Conceptual Framework



Empirical Studies

This section is concerned with the review of empirical studies on the relationship between work environment and employee performance and recognition and employee performance.

Job Recognition and Performance of Academic Staf

Employee recognition is a crucial factor in enhancing employee performance and organizational success. Studies suggest that recognition fulfils employees' higher-order needs for esteem and social status, leading to increased job satisfaction and motivation (Masri & Suliman, 2019). Research by EI and Abubakr (2019) in Qatar emphasized the importance of employee recognition in improving work performance

and recommended strategies for refining talent management practices. Similarly, Vaseer and Shahzad (2016) highlighted that employee recognition significantly influences job satisfaction, which subsequently improves service quality and overall employee performance. Ferdousi et al. (2019) found that in Bangladesh's garment sector, employee engagement, rewards, and recognition were strongly associated with quality performance. Their study concluded that when organizations align recognition programs with quality objectives, employees are more likely to be committed to achieving these targets.

Despite the positive effects of recognition, its implementation and impact can vary depending on organizational context and methodology. Chantal et al. (2022) examined employee recognition in the Shyogwe Diocese and found that while recognition

existed, it had only a minor effect on employee performance. They recommended incorporating extrinsic rewards, such as promotions, bonuses, and insurance policies, to boost employee confidence and motivation. However, limitations in sample size and data analysis methods suggest the need for further research. Hussain et al. (2019) explored the interplay between employee recognition, rewards, job-related stress, and performance in Pakistani call centers. Their findings indicated that recognition and rewards positively impact performance.

Work Environment and Performance of Academic Staff

Employee performance is influenced by key workplace factors such as the work environment, job responsibilities, and motivation. Mubarok and Suparmi (2023) found that a positive work environment and well-defined job roles enhance employee performance at the Great Mosque of Demak. Similarly, Tri et al. (2023) analyzed the effects of competence, work experience, work environment, and discipline on employee performance, concluding that while competence, experience, and discipline had no significant impact, the work environment played a crucial role. Sari et al. (2021) further examined how motivation mediates the relationship between work environment and performance, highlighting the importance of motivation in workplace dynamics. Additionally, Muslih and Hardani (2022) demonstrated that both work environment and workload significantly influence employee performance at PT. Perkebunan Nusantara IV (Persero) Medan. Putri et al. (2019) also found that work discipline mediates the effect of the work environment on employee performance at PT. Gatramapan, indicating that a structured workplace fosters discipline and productivity.

Further research underscores the importance of a conducive work environment in boosting employee performance. Calvin et al. (2020) discovered that while training had no significant effect, the physical work environment and workplace relationships positively impacted job performance. Burbar (2021) reinforced this notion by confirming a strong correlation between work environment and employee productivity in the Palestinian banking sector.

Similarly, Andah and Akpo (2021) identified the physical work environment and career progression as critical determinants of business educators' performance in Cross River State tertiary institutions. Benjamin and Onuoha (2020) also found that supervisor support, social factors, and work-life balance directly contribute to employee performance in private organizations in Rivers State. Finally, Agaba et al. (2020) examined healthcare providers at Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital and confirmed that both physical and psychosocial work environments significantly enhance employee performance. These studies collectively emphasize that fostering a supportive and engaging workplace can drive higher productivity and job satisfaction across various industries.

Theoretical Review

The Two-Factor Theory by Herzberg (1964) and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943) provide a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the relationship between non-financial motivation factors and employee performance. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, also known as the motivation-hygiene theory, distinguishes between factors that lead to job satisfaction (motivators) and those that prevent dissatisfaction (hygiene factors). Motivators, such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement, directly contribute to employee satisfaction and improved performance (Burbar, 2021). On the other hand, hygiene factors, including company policies, supervision, salary, and work relationships, do not necessarily enhance job satisfaction but can cause dissatisfaction if inadequate (Hyun, 2019). Herzberg argued that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not opposites; rather, the absence of satisfaction does not imply dissatisfaction, highlighting the importance of balancing both sets of factors to optimize employee motivation and performance.

Similarly, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943) explains how different levels of human needs influence motivation and performance. The theory emphasizes that individuals progress through five levels of needs—physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. In an academic setting, a positive work environment fulfills safety and

belongingness needs by providing job security, fair policies, and collegial support, leading to higher motivation and productivity (Maslow, 1943; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Recognition plays a crucial role in fulfilling esteem needs, as faculty members who receive awards, promotions, and professional acknowledgments feel valued and motivated to perform better (Saunderson, 2016). Institutions that prioritize non-financial motivation factors, such as a conducive work environment and recognition programs, enhance employee engagement, loyalty, and overall institutional success (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Roberts, 2015).

3. Methodology

The study utilized a quantitative survey design to collect data from 1,449 teaching staff across three operational universities in Gombe State: Gombe State University, Federal University Kashere, and North Eastern University, Gombe. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula, a sample size of 302 was initially determined, with an additional 10% added based on Hair et al.'s (2020) recommendation, leading to 332 distributed questionnaires. A total of 326 responses were deemed valid for analysis. The study employed a multi-stage sampling approach, incorporating stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across departments,

followed by simple random sampling to select respondents. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and correlational techniques, with structural equation modeling (SEM) conducted using partial least squares (PLS) in Smart PLS4 to test relationships among the study variables.

A structured questionnaire measured responses using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), ensuring a higher response rate and reduced frustration among participants (Razak & Makassar, 2021). Tripathi (2020) emphasized that a five-point Likert scale is most suitable for studies with sample sizes exceeding 100, as it provides more response options while minimizing respondent fatigue. The study adapted a five-item employee performance scale, which was validated by two organizational behavior experts, with Sari et al. (2021) reporting an internal reliability score of 0.79. The physical work environment was measured using a five-item scale developed by Esthi and Savhira (2019), which had a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.77, confirming its reliability. Additionally, job recognition was assessed using a 10-item scale by Varsamisa et al. (2022), also measured on a five-point Likert scale.

4. Results and Discussion

Measurement Model

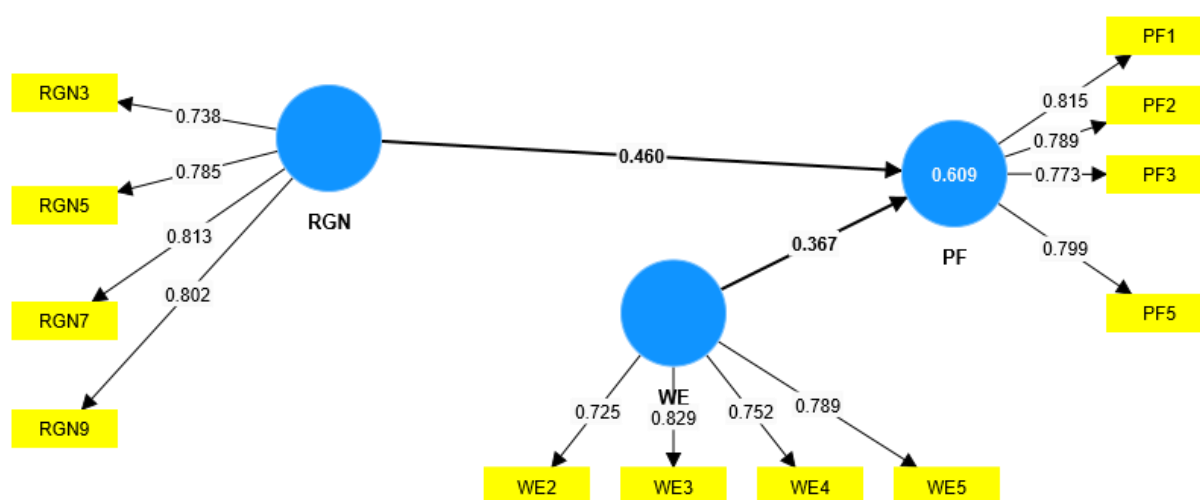


Figure 1: Measurement Model

Figure 1 depicted the structure of the output of the measurement model for the relationship. The independent variables, recognition and work environment are shown on the diagram with their

indicators. They pointed to the dependent variable, performance. And the details discriminant validity is contained in table 2 and 3 below. Also, for discriminant validity the study employed the Fornell and Larker criterion which states that the square root of

AVE must be greater than the correlation with other variable in the study and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) method. This is as presented in table 2 and 3 below.

Table 1 Item Loadings, Internal Consistency, and Average Variance Extracted for First Order Construct

Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE
PF1	0.815	0.805	0.804	0.631
PF2	0.789			
PF3	0.773			
PF5	0.799			
RGN3	0.738	0.792	0.792	0.616
RGN5	0.785			
RGN7	0.813			
RGN9	0.802			
WE2	0.725	0.778	0.784	0.600
WE3	0.829			
WE4	0.752			
WE5	0.789			

Table 1 presents the outer loadings of each construct's indicators, which were assessed to determine the item or factor reliability of the reflective constructs (Hulland, 1999; Duarte & Raposo, 2010; Hair et al., 2021). Following Hair et al.'s (2019) rule of thumb for established scales, an outer loading of 0.7 or higher is considered appropriate and reliable. Consequently,

only items with loadings of 0.7 and above were retained, while those falling below this threshold (i.e., PF4, RGN1, RGN2, RGN4, RGN6, RGN8, RGN10, and WE1) were removed. Additionally, the assessment ensured that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values met the minimum threshold of 0.5.

Table 2: Discriminant validity – Fornell Larker approach

	PF	RGN	WE
PF	0.794		
RGN	0.745	0.785	
WE	0.724	0.776	0.775

Source: SmartPLS 4, 2025

In Table 2, the square roots of the AVE are highlighted in bold along the diagonal. The results indicate that these values are higher than the correlations among the

constructs, confirming that the criterion for discriminant validity is met.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity- Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	PF	RGN	WE
PF			
RG	0.894		
WE	0.813	0.891	

Source: SmartPLS 4, 2025

High HTMT values, particularly above 0.90, may indicate problems with discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). As shown in Table 3, all inter-construct correlations were below the HTMT threshold of 0.90, and HTMT inference standards. This confirms that discriminant validity is effectively established using both traditional and advanced assessment methods.

Assessment of the Structural Model

The structural model (inner model) specifies the relationships between the constructs. Thus, the structural model will be used to test the hypothesis. This section presents the structural equation model of the data analysis for direct relationship using Bootstrap analysis. To evaluate the significance of the path coefficients of direct relationship, a conventional bootstrapping approach was used for 326 cases, utilizing 5000 bootstrap samples (Hair et al., 2014).

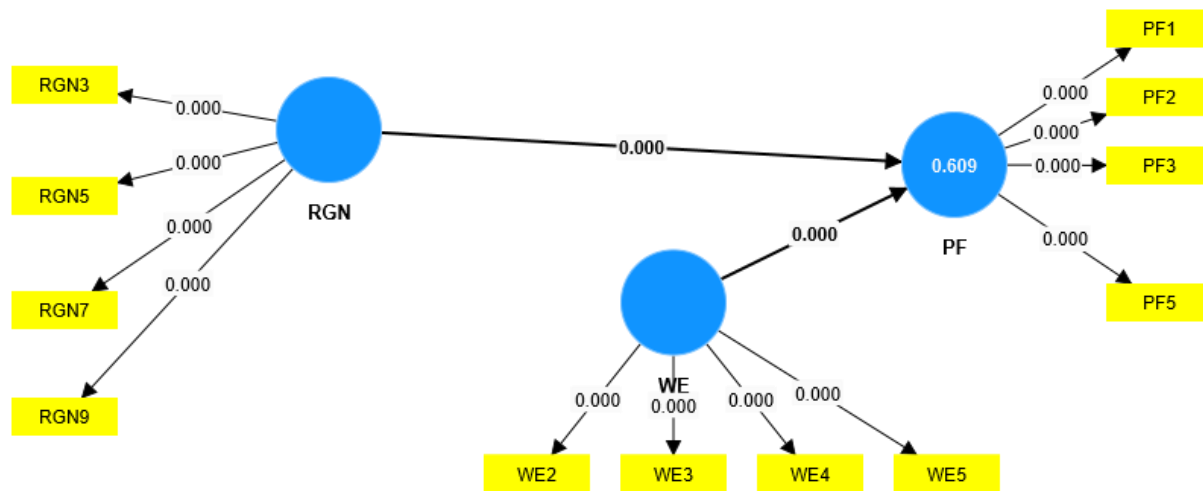


Figure 2: PLS Algorithm for the direct relationship

Test of Hypotheses

The study test for the two hypotheses of the study is presented in Table 4. Thus, Table 4 presented the

results of the structural model with the beta value of the relationships, standard deviation, T-statistic and P-values.

Table 4: Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Beta	ST Dev	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
RGN -> PF	0.458	0.062	7.430	0.000	Reject
WE -> PF	0.367	0.064	5.730	0.000	Reject

Table 4 indicates that recognition has a significant positive effect on academic staff performance ($\beta = 0.458$, t -value = 7.430, p -value = 0.000). This implies that a one-unit increase in recognition leads to a 45.8% improvement in academic staff performance. Consequently, the first hypothesis (H01), which posits that recognition has no significant relationship with the performance of academic staff in universities in Gombe State, is rejected. This conclusion is further supported by the T -statistic, which exceeds the threshold of 1.96.

Similarly, the findings reveal that the working environment has a significant positive relationship with academic staff performance ($\beta = 0.367$, t -value = 5.730, p -value = 0.000). This suggests that a one-unit increase in the working environment results in a 36.7% enhancement in academic staff performance. Therefore, hypothesis two (H02), which states that the working environment has no significant relationship with academic staff performance in universities in Gombe State, is also rejected.

Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the research findings in relation to the underlying theories and the outcomes of previous studies, as thoroughly examined in the literature review.

Recognition and performance of academic staff

The first research hypothesis examined the relationship between recognition and the performance of academic staff in universities in Gombe State. Based on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis, the study found a statistically significant positive relationship between recognition and academic staff performance, indicating that increased recognition leads to improved performance. This aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which identifies recognition as a key motivator that enhances job satisfaction and productivity. Supporting literature, including studies by Bell (2018), Bhagwat (2018), and Chantal et al. (2022), emphasizes that recognition fosters a sense of belonging and drives academic staff to exceed expectations. Given these findings, the study rejects the null hypothesis (H01), affirming that recognition significantly influences staff performance. In the

context of Gombe State universities, structured recognition programs such as awards for outstanding faculty, acknowledgment of research contributions, and long-service recognition can enhance morale and institutional success.

Work Environment and Performance of Academic Staff

The second research hypothesis examined the relationship between the work environment and academic staff performance in universities in Gombe State. Using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the study found a significant positive relationship, indicating that improvements in the work environment enhance staff performance. This aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which identifies the work environment as a crucial hygiene factor. Consistent with prior studies by Kolade and Oladipupo (2019), Ojeleye et al. (2020), and Sari et al. (2021), the findings indicate that access to research facilities, modern infrastructure, and a supportive organizational culture foster job satisfaction and innovation.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that enhancing recognition, and creating a supportive work environment are critical factors in substantially improving the performance of academic staff in universities. By fostering a culture that values and acknowledges contributions, and ensuring a conducive work environment, universities can effectively motivate their academic staff to achieve higher levels of productivity and engagement.

The study recommends that universities implement structured recognition programs, such as awards, promotions, and public commendations, to acknowledge academic staff contributions and enhance motivation. Additionally, institutions should improve the physical, social, and psychological work environment by ensuring adequate resources, modern facilities, fair workload distribution, and a supportive culture that promotes inclusivity, collaboration, and work-life balance, ultimately boosting staff performance.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Although this study has contributed valuable insights, future research should explore the combined effects of financial and non-financial motivation on academic staff performance for a more comprehensive understanding. Comparative studies across different regions or countries could assess cultural and

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