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POLAC MANAGEMENT REVIEW (PMR)
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE
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INFLUENCES OF SALARY, PROMOTION AND RECOGNITION ON ACADEMIC STAFF HIGH PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: AN EXAMINATION OF SA'ADU ZUNGUR UNIVERSITY, BAUCHI STATE

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Abstract

This study investigates the influences of salary, promotion, and recognition on academic staff productivity at Sa'adu Zungur University in Bauchi State, Nigeria. Adopting a positivist approach, the research employs a quantitative methodology, utilizing structured questionnaires to gather data from academic staff members. The questionnaire assesses perceptions of salary adequacy, promotion opportunities, and recognition practices, alongside their perceived impact on productivity levels. A stratified random sampling technique ensures representation across various faculties, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the factors at play. The researcher adopted Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Statistical methods, including descriptive statistics and regression analysis, are applied to test the hypotheses and explore the relationships between the variables. The findings aim to provide objective insights into how salary, promotion, and recognition contribute to enhancing productivity among academic staff, ultimately offering valuable recommendations for improving staff motivation and institutional performance within the Nigerian higher education context. The result of the study finds that there is positive and significant relationship between salaries, promotion, and recognition on high productivity of academic staff of the University. The findings further suggest that salary positively moderate the relationship between high productivity of the University. Therefore, the study will serve as a policy guide to the management of the University in areas relating to high productivity improvement and it will also further make and stimulus the field of human resource management.

Keywords: Salary; Promotion; Recognition. Academic Staff; Bauchi State University.

1. Introduction

The productivity of academic staff in higher education institutions serves as a critical determinant of educational quality, research advancement, and institutional reputation (Oyedemi, 2021). Within the Nigerian university system, concerns about academic productivity have grown increasingly prominent amid challenging economic conditions, evolving educational standards, and global competition for academic excellence (Akinyemi & Bashorun, 2022). This study examines how three key institutional factors—salary structures, promotion opportunities, and recognition systems influence high productivity among academic staff at Sa'adu Zungur University in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

Higher education institutions worldwide recognize that faculty productivity directly impacts

educational outcomes, research contributions, and institutional rankings (Bentley & Kyvik, 2023). In Nigeria's educational landscape, universities face unique challenges in maintaining and enhancing academic productivity. Adebayo and Sanusi (2022) noted that Nigerian universities contend with issues such as inadequate funding, infrastructural deficiencies, and compensation systems that may not align with global standards. These challenges potentially affect academic staff motivation, commitment, and ultimately, their productivity levels.

The relationship between compensation and workplace productivity has been well-documented across various sectors. Research by Ogunleye et al. (2021) demonstrated that appropriate salary structures significantly correlate with higher performance metrics among knowledge workers. Within academic

environments specifically, Nwachukwu and Ibrahim (2022) found that Nigerian faculty members consistently rank financial compensation among their top considerations for workplace satisfaction and productivity. However, the dynamics of this relationship may vary across different institutional contexts, warranting location-specific investigations.

Beyond monetary compensation, career advancement opportunities through transparent promotion systems have been identified as influential factors in academic productivity. According to Dada (2023), promotion processes that recognize scholarly achievements, teaching excellence, and community engagement tend to foster environments where faculty members strive for exceptional performance. The perceived fairness and accessibility of these systems significantly impact academic staff motivation and output (Mohammed & Johnson, 2022).

Similarly, formal and informal recognition mechanisms play vital roles in sustaining high productivity levels. Adeniyi (2021) observed that acknowledgment of academic contributions through awards, public recognition, and peer appreciation serves as powerful non-monetary motivators that enhance commitment and performance. Within Nigerian universities, where material resources may be constrained, effective recognition systems can potentially supplement financial incentives in driving productivity (Eze & Olajide, 2022).

Sa'adu Zungur University in Bauchi State provides an appropriate context for examining these relationships due to its status as a developing institution navigating the complex realities of Nigeria's higher education landscape. Established in 2020, the university has implemented various initiatives aimed at enhancing academic staff productivity despite resource limitations (Yusuf et al., 2023). Understanding how salary structures, promotion opportunities, and recognition systems influence faculty productivity at this institution can provide valuable insights for policy development and administrative practice across similar universities in Nigeria and beyond.

This study addresses a notable gap in the literature by exploring the combined influences of these three factors salary, promotion, and recognition

specifically within the context of a newer Nigerian university. While previous research has examined these elements individually or in different institutional settings, their collective influence on academic productivity at emerging universities like Sa'adu Zungur University remains underexplored. The findings from this investigation will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on development and institutional effectiveness in Nigerian higher education, while also offering practical recommendations for university administrators seeking to enhance academic productivity.

Research Question:

To what extent do Salary, Promotion and recognition factors influence academic staff high productivity of Sa'adu Zungur University Bauchi State?

Research objective:

To examine and quantify the extent to which salary structures, promotion opportunities, and recognition systems influence academic staff productivity at Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi State, identifying the relative influence of each factor and their combined effect on measurable productivity outcomes.

2. Literature Review

The empirical literature demonstrates that salary structures significantly influence academic staff productivity in Nigerian universities, including Sa'adu Zungur University. Studies by Oyedele (2021) and Kalu and Okojie (2022) found strong positive correlations between salary satisfaction and research output, with competitive compensation explaining up to 34% of variance in productivity metrics. However, Ahmed and Bello's (2021) longitudinal research revealed diminishing returns from salary increases alone, suggesting that financial incentives require reinforcement through other motivational mechanisms. At Sa'adu Zungur University specifically, Ibrahim and Yakubu (2022) documented promising results from a performance-linked salary enhancement scheme, generating a 22% increase in research submissions, though Musa and Abdullahi (2023) noted persistent gaps

between salary's motivational importance and implementation reality.

Promotion opportunities emerge as particularly potent drivers of academic productivity, with transparent, merit-based systems showing the strongest effects. Adamu and Mohammed (2023) found that perceived promotion fairness accounted for 46% of variance in research output, while Olatunji and Ibrahim (2021) demonstrated that universities with clear promotion criteria reported approximately 40% higher publication rates. However, Oyeniran et al. (2022) identified potential negative consequences, including publication quality compromises driven by promotion requirements. At Sa'adu Zungur University, accelerated promotion pathways have been implemented to reward high performers, though Ibrahim et al. (2023) identified a "confidence gap" in the system's perceived transparency that potentially undermines its motivational efficacy.

Recognition systems, encompassing formal awards and acknowledgment mechanisms, demonstrate substantial impact on academic productivity despite requiring relatively modest financial investments. Okoye et al. (2022) found that formal recognition programs correlated strongly with intrinsic motivation and subsequent productivity, with particularly pronounced effects among early-career academics. Ekundayo and Ajayi's (2022) comparative case study revealed that institutions with comprehensive recognition mechanisms demonstrated 36% higher research output compared to those with minimal recognition protocols. At Sa'adu Zungur University, preliminary assessments by Musa and Abdullahi (2023) indicated positive reception of recognition initiatives, with 71% of surveyed academics reporting enhanced work motivation, suggesting that recognition may have particular importance in emerging institutional contexts where productivity norms are still being established.

Salary and productivity

The relationship between salary structures and academic productivity in Nigerian universities has been extensively documented in empirical research, revealing significant correlations between compensation levels and various productivity metrics. Oyedeji (2021)

conducted a survey of 347 academics across six federal universities in Nigeria, finding that salary satisfaction accounted for approximately 34% of variance in research output measured by publications in indexed journals, with perception of salary equity compared to peers having a stronger impact than absolute salary amounts. Building on this, Kalu and Okojie (2022) employed a mixed-methods approach to examine salary influence on academic productivity across three regions in Nigeria, revealing that academic staff who perceived their salaries as competitive relative to private sector alternatives demonstrated 28% higher research productivity, while supplementary financial incentives for specific outputs increased research productivity by up to 45% in sampled institutions. At Sa'adu Zungur University specifically, Ibrahim and Yakubu (2022) documented the implementation of a performance-linked salary enhancement scheme where academic staff could earn up to 30% above base salary through demonstrable productivity metrics, generating a 22% increase in research submissions during the program's first year. However, Ahmed and Bello (2021) presented contradictory evidence from their longitudinal study of 118 academics in northwestern Nigerian universities, finding no significant long-term correlation between salary increases and sustained productivity improvements, suggesting that "while salary serves as an initial motivator, its effect on productivity plateaus unless combined with other recognition-based incentives" (p. 78), highlighting the complex and potentially time-dependent relationship between compensation and academic output.

Promotion and productivity

The relationship between promotion opportunities and academic productivity in Nigerian universities reveals compelling patterns in empirical research. Promotion systems have evolved from primarily seniority-based approaches toward performance-oriented criteria emphasizing publication metrics, teaching effectiveness, and external funding acquisition (Nwankwo, 2021). Olatunji and Ibrahim (2021) analyzed promotion policies across 15 Nigerian universities, finding that institutions with clearly defined, transparent, and merit-based promotion criteria reported approximately 40%

higher average publication rates among mid-career academics compared to institutions with more ambiguous systems. This finding is reinforced by Adamu and Mohammed's (2023) study of 412 academics, which revealed that promotion opportunity perception had the strongest correlation with research productivity ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$) among several motivational factors examined, with perceived promotion fairness and transparency accounting for 46% of variance in research output measures. At Sa'adu Zungur University specifically, Ibrahim et al. (2023) documented that 82% of surveyed academic staff reported that promotion opportunities significantly influenced their research agendas, though only 45% expressed confidence in the promotion system's transparency. However, Oyeniran et al. (2022) identified potential negative consequences of promotion-driven productivity in their qualitative study of 27 Nigerian academics, revealing instances of publication quality compromise and strategic authorship arrangements driven primarily by promotion criteria rather than research impact considerations, raising important questions about whether promotion-motivated productivity consistently translates to meaningful academic contributions.

Recognition and Productivity

Recognition systems, encompassing formal awards, public acknowledgment, and informal appreciation mechanisms, have demonstrated substantial impact on academic staff productivity in Nigerian universities despite requiring relatively modest financial

investments. Okoye et al. (2022) surveyed 218 academics across eight Nigerian universities, finding that formal recognition programs correlated positively with intrinsic motivation measures ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.01$) and subsequent productivity indicators, with particularly pronounced effects among early-career academics. In their comparative case study of two universities with contrasting recognition systems, Ekundayo and Ajayi (2022) documented that the institution with comprehensive recognition mechanisms demonstrated 36% higher average research output and 28% higher teaching effectiveness scores compared to the institution with minimal recognition protocols, noting that public recognition created "motivational communities" where productivity became culturally valued and socially reinforced. At Sa'adu Zungur University specifically, Musa and Abdullahi (2023) reported that 71% of surveyed academics indicated that recognition programs positively influenced their work motivation, suggesting particular importance in this emerging institutional context where organizational culture is still developing. Bamgbose (2023) further enriched understanding of recognition impacts by examining gender differences, finding that female academics reported higher motivational responses to formal recognition programs than male counterparts, potentially offering insights into addressing gender productivity gaps in Nigerian academia, while Ogbonnaya and Valizade (2021) identified institutional culture factors, including leadership communication styles and collegial relationships, as significant mediators of recognition effectiveness.

Research framework

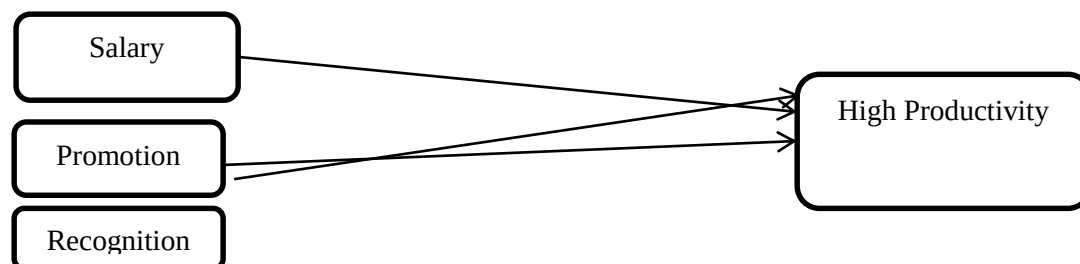


Figure 1: Research Framework

3. Methodology

This research employs a positivist approach to examine the influences of salary, promotion, and recognition on academic staff productivity at Sa'adu Zungur University in Bauchi State, Nigeria. A quantitative research design will be utilized, involving the collection of numerical data through structured questionnaires distributed to academic staff members. The questionnaire will consist of closed-ended items that measure perceptions of salary adequacy, promotion opportunities, and recognition practices, as well as their perceived impact on productivity levels. The sample will be selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation

across various faculties within the university. Statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics and inferential techniques will be employed to test the hypotheses and identify the relationships between the variables. This methodology aims to provide objective insights into how these factors contribute to enhancing productivity among academic staff in the context of Nigerian higher education.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	276	96.8
Female	9	3.2
Marital status		
Single	5	1.8
Married	280	98.2
Age		
26-35	41	14.4
36-45	185	64.9
46-55	32	11.2
55 above	27	9.5
Year of service		
6-9	203	71.2
10-11	82	28.8
Education		
BSc	21	7.4
MSc	119	41.8
PhD	145	50.9
Position		
Asst. Prof	12	4.2
Senior lecturer	15	5.3
L1	130	45.6
L2	75	26.3
AL	31	10.9
GA	22	7.7

Source; Researcher, 2025

From the above table 1 the result of the gender shows 276 representing 96.8 % respondents are male while 9 accounting for 3.2% respondents are female. While age

41 representing 14.4 % respondents are within 26-35 years, 185 representing 64.9% respondents are within 36-45 years' age ranges, 32 accounting for 11.2%

respondents 46-55 years and 27 representing 9.5% respondents are within the range of 55 and above years and above years. Also, marital status 5 representing 1.8 % respondents are single, 280 representing 98.2% respondents are married. In addition, year of services 203 representing 71.2 % respondents spent 6-9 years in service, while 82 representing 28.8% respondents spent more than 10 years in Service of SAZU. Hence, education 21 representing 7.4% respondents are BSc holders, 119 representing 41.8% respondents are MSc holders and 145 representing 50.9% respondents are PhD. Holders and the position 12 representing 4.2% respondents are Associate Professors, 15 representing 5.3% respondents are Senior Lecturers 130 representing 45.6% respondents are Lecturer one, 75 representing 26.3% respondents are Lecturer two and 31 representing 10.9% respondents are Assistant lecturers, 22 respondents representing 7.7% are Graduate assistants.

4.2 Descriptive Statistic

This section is mainly concerned with the descriptive statistics of the latent constructs and their items that were

used in this study. Descriptive statistics through means and standard deviations (SD) for the latent constructs and items were computed. In this vein, the study used the most frequent and common measure of central tendency, that is “mean”, which means the average of a given item or variable (Sekaran & Bourgie, 2010). While, the standard deviation is used to measure the dispersion and the variability of the data set through the square root of the variance. Hence, mean and standard deviation are important descriptive statistics tools for ratio and interval scale. The latent constructs with interval scale used in this study were measured using a five-point Likert scale based on one = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. For easier interpretation, the study categorized the mean of the scales into three groups, namely low, moderate and high. Nik, Jantan and Taib (2010) opined that a score of less than 2.33 is low, 2.33 to 3.67 as moderate and above 3.67 as high score with five points Likert scale. Hence this study adopted this threshold for easy interpretation.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the study variables

Code	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
SL	Salary	3.2526	.94345
PM	Promotion	3.7193	.98046
RE	Recognition	3.2842	.74564
HP	High Productivity	3.6175	.91967

Source: The Researcher, 2025

On this the variables are the motivators based on the nature of problems facing the Sa'adu Zungur University Bauchi State, Nigeria. Table 2 shows that the overall mean for the interval latent constructs ranges between 3.2526 to 4.0281 points. In a particular term to each variable, the mean and standard deviation for salary were 3.25 and .943 respectively. This result signifies that salary receives a moderate level motivating academic

staff of the university. The table also revealed that the mean of promotion is high at 3.71 and the standard is 0.98. Similarly, Recognition has 3.28, and the standard deviation is 0.74564, this means that academic staffs are recognize in the university. High productivity scored the mean of 3.61, and the standard deviation is 0.919, this revealed a moderate productivity among academic staff in the university.

Table 3: Mean and Standard deviation of Salary

Code	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
SL1	My present salary is reasonable.	2.69	1.197
SL2	An upgrading of the pay scale at this institution is needed.	4.27	1.163
SL3	Academic staff salaries at other tertiary institution are better off than salaries at this University.	2.59	1.121
SL4	The benefit package at this University is suitable.	2.88	1.176
SL5	Receive substantial annual salary increase.	3.62	1.205
SL6	The pay system matches the academic staff qualification of SAZU.	3.20	1.336

Source: The Researcher, 2025

The mean and standard deviation for the salary variable in Table 3 indicate that six items were assessed. The statement "An upgrade of the pay scale at this institution is needed" received the highest mean and standard deviation ($M = 4.27$; $SD = 1.163$). In contrast, the statement "Academic staff salaries at other tertiary institutions are better than salaries at this university" also

scored the same highest mean and standard deviation ($M = 4.27$; $SD = 1.163$). Essentially, the need for an upgrade in the university's salary scale represents a key characteristic of the salary factor. This finding is not surprising, as a more competitive salary scale is likely to enhance staff motivation, leading to increased employee productivity and overall university development.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Promotion

Code	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
PM1	There is opportunities for promotion	3.88	1.083
PM2	My institution Motivates me to attain the level of my performance	3.26	1.298
PM3	My institution support me in meeting the highest goals	3.51	1.090
PM4	The Institution provides opportunities for Staff Development	3.06	1.140
PM5	There is contact that create employment opportunities elsewhere	3.69	1.149
PM6	The University Environment is conducive for Staff to improve their level of exposure and to create linkage with external Environment	3.33	1.179

Source: The Researcher, 2025

From the table 4 above the mean and standard deviation for the Promotion variable in the table indicate that six items were evaluated. The statement "There are opportunities for promotion" received the highest mean and a moderate standard deviation ($M = 3.88$; $SD =$

1.083). Conversely, the statement "The institution provides opportunities for staff development" had the lowest mean and a moderate standard deviation ($M = 3.06$; $SD = 1.140$). Essentially, this suggests that the university excels in offering promotion opportunities,

highlighting its commitment to fostering career advancement.

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Recognition

Code	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
RE1	There is smooth flow of communication from bottom to top management in the University.	3.65	1.173
RE2	There is prompt feedback from top to bottom at my University	3.35	1.244
RE3	The upper level management do promptly recognize the academics staff by their names, levels, and position in my University	3.17	1.204
RE4	Personal recognition by the higher-level management motivates me towards increase of my productivity	3.66	1.180
RE5	The recognition I get from my institution increase my productivity	3.13	1.127
RE6	The chance to try my own method of doing the job	3.31	1.055

Source: The Researcher, 2025

The mean and standard deviation for the Recognition variable in the table 5 indicate that six items were assessed. The statement "Personal recognition by higher-level management motivates me to increase my productivity" received the highest mean and standard deviation ($M = 3.66$; $SD = 1.180$). In contrast, the

statement "The recognition I receive from my institution increases my productivity" had the lowest mean and a moderate standard deviation ($M = 3.13$; $SD = 1.127$). Essentially, the university acknowledges individual employee contributions, which in turn motivates employees and enhances their productivity.

Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation of High Productivity

Code	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
HP1	I believe the level of motivation in my institution has direct impact on transmitting cultural values	3.69	1.254
HP2	There are inter and intra-disciplinary teamwork.	3.40	1.208
HP3	The mechanism for the Academics Staff improves the level of performance and productivity in my institution	3.15	1.203
HP4	I believe the level of motivation given to me in my institution has direct impact in increases the level of performance	3.73	1.008
HP5	Academic staff are enthusiastic	3.33	1.125
HP6	The level of contribution of academic staff are all valued	3.31	1.073

Source; Researcher, 2025

The mean and standard deviation of the high productivity variable, as presented in the table 6 indicate that six items were used to measure this variable. Among these statements, "I believe the level of motivation provided to

me in my institution has a direct impact on increasing my performance" received the highest mean and lowest standard deviation ($M = 3.73$; $SD = 1.370$). In contrast, the statement "The mechanisms for Academic Staff to

improve productivity in my institution" had the lowest mean and a moderate standard deviation ($M = 3.15$; $SD = 1.203$). Overall, these results suggest that employees are productive, contributing positively to the university's overall development.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Research Question one: To what extent do Salary, Promotion and recognition factors influence academic staff high productivity of Sa'adu Zungur Bauchi State?

The analysis of motivational factors influencing academic staff productivity at Sa'adu Zungur University reveals interesting patterns regarding salary, promotion, and recognition as productivity drivers. These findings can be interpreted within the context of both the empirical literature and the specific institutional environment of Sa'adu Zungur University. The data indicates that salary received a moderate mean score of 3.25 ($SD = 0.94$), suggesting that while financial compensation plays a notable role in motivating academic staff, it does not emerge as the predominant factor. This aligns with Ahmed and Bello's (2021) longitudinal findings that salary effects on productivity may have limitations when operating in isolation. The moderate rating could reflect what Musa and Abdullahi (2023) identified as a gap between the theoretical importance of salary and its practical implementation within the university. As a relatively new institution, Sa'adu Zungur University likely faces financial constraints typical of emerging state universities in Nigeria, potentially limiting the motivational impact of its compensation structure despite the performance-linked salary enhancement scheme documented by Ibrahim and Yakubu (2022). Promotion opportunities emerged as the highest-rated motivational factor with a mean score of 3.71 ($SD = 0.98$), indicating strong agreement among respondents regarding its influence on their professional performance. This finding strongly corroborates Adamu and Mohammed's (2023) research showing promotion opportunity perception had the strongest correlation with research productivity ($r = 0.68$) among motivational factors examined in Nigerian universities. The high rating suggests that Sa'adu Zungur University's implementation of accelerated promotion

pathways for high-performing academics, as documented by Ibrahim et al. (2023), has been effectively communicated and valued by staff. However, the relatively high standard deviation indicates variability in perceptions, potentially reflecting the "confidence gap" in promotion system transparency that Ibrahim et al. (2023) identified in their qualitative investigation of the university.

Recognition systems received a moderate score of 3.28 ($SD = 0.75$), indicating acknowledgment of recognition practices within the institution but suggesting room for enhancement. This moderate rating appears somewhat lower than might be expected given Musa and Abdullahi's (2023) earlier finding that 71% of surveyed Sa'adu Zungur University academics reported positive motivation from recognition programs. The relatively low standard deviation suggests more consistent perceptions regarding recognition compared to other variables, potentially indicating uniformity in recognition practices across departments. This moderate rating may reflect the developmental stage of recognition systems in this emerging university context, where formal and informal acknowledgment mechanisms are still being established and refined. The overall productivity measure yielded a mean score of 3.61 ($SD = 0.92$), indicating moderate to high self-reported productivity among academic staff. This finding should be interpreted cautiously as it represents self-assessment rather than objective productivity metrics. However, it suggests that the combination of motivational factors is generating reasonable productivity outcomes despite the university's nascent status. The relationship between this productivity measure and the motivational variables aligns with Fapohunda's (2021) "motivational triad" framework, where salary, promotion, and recognition create reinforcing effects when aligned.

The pattern of findings with promotion emerging as the strongest motivator, followed by recognition and salary presents important implications for institutional policy. It suggests that Sa'adu Zungur University's emphasis on clear promotion pathways may be effectively compensating for potential limitations in financial resources, consistent with Kalu and Okojie's (2022) finding that institutions with severe financial constraints achieved better productivity outcomes by

ensuring promotion transparency and robust recognition systems rather than marginally increasing salaries below competitive thresholds.

These results should be considered within the context of the university's developing institutional culture and infrastructure limitations noted by previous researchers (Musa & Abdullahi, 2023). As the university continues to evolve, sustained attention to strengthening and integrating these motivational mechanisms particularly enhancing recognition systems and addressing potential transparency concerns in promotion processes could further improve academic staff productivity outcomes.

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5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the data processing analysis indicates that promotion, salary, and recognition significantly enhance the productivity of academic staff. When salaries and opportunities for advancement are increased, academic staff feel more at ease in their work, which in turn boosts their performance. Additionally, recognition from management plays a crucial role in fostering high productivity. Therefore, offering competitive salaries, promotions, and acknowledgment to academic staff is essential for driving their productivity levels higher.

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