
**EXAMINING FACTORS AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF ACADEMIC STAFF
OF SELECTED FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The persistent challenges of knowledge management within the workforce of public universities, which have resulted in a lack of essential skills, necessitated research into the core area of educational development. This study is aimed at enhancing academic performance in Nigeria. This study examined the factors affecting the performance of academic staff in universities across Southwest Nigeria. A survey research design was utilized, with data gathered from 1,263 respondents through a structured questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied in the analysis. The findings indicated that tools and equipment had the highest mean score (4.260), making it the most significant organizational factor affecting staff performance, whereas employee engagement ranked lowest among the factors, with a mean score of 4.101. The study further showed that personal factors occupying a leadership position with a mean of 4.310 ultimately affects academic performance, while motivation with a mean of 4.165 ranked the least among the factors. The study concluded that factor affecting academic performance in southwest universities is both positive and negative significant which involved organizational and personal factors. The study therefore recommended that institution management should provide necessary tools to apply knowledge and ensure to give room for specialists and experienced persons to integrate their knowledge. Also, they should provide adequate facilities needed to work with as this is more important to academic staff than the rewards and compensation when the two are compared.

Keywords: knowledge, Management, Academic Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management practices play significant roles in managing organisations, educational institutions inclusive, and it helps bridge the skill gap among employees. Because knowledge management is wide-ranging and inherently interdisciplinary, it attracts attention across traditional functional and professional domains, including IT specialists, accountants, marketers, and experts in organizational development and change management. Despite this diversity, a shared focus persists on workplace knowledge, employees' expertise, and the character of knowledge within institutions. This common emphasis likely explains why knowledge management has emerged as a central concern in both the business/industrial sector and educational environments (Brewer & Brewer, 2010). Importantly, knowledge management practices enable knowledge and skills exchange in academic communities and is the key for making continuous improvement for any its units (Hani & Zouhour, 2020). Majorly in public

sector, knowledge management practice has become a main strategy for sustaining growth and development of the organisation (Hani & Zouhour, 2020).

Contemporary educational institutions function within increasingly complex and rapidly changing environments, where competition continues to intensify. Under such conditions, conventional sources of competitive advantage are no longer sufficient to ensure institutional survival, making the ability to adapt quickly essential (Sanchez, Marin & Morales, 2015). Extensive research has explored ways organizations can enhance competitiveness and profitability, with findings suggesting that successful organizations often share key attributes such as high employee job satisfaction and strong performance levels (Shmailan, 2016). Employee performance remains a critical driver of organizational success, including within the public sector. Over time, studies have also shown that performance efficiency is influenced by a limited number of key factors, which employees themselves are typically able to identify (Armstrong, 2006; Clawson & Newburg, 2005). Based on such insight, many developed economies such as United State of America (USA), China, Russia, and United Kingdom have embarked on national researches and policies to enhance employees' performances in their respective nations. For instance, as early as 2005, the government of the USA aimed to enhance employee's performances. As a result, researched into factors that influences the performances of over five million workers working with the state governments. The outcomes of the study were considered very helpful in drafting policies that stimulated their workers toward effective commitment (State Government Employment Data, 2005).

There is evidence that the productivity of Nigeria government workers across institutions is not impressive in the past and even in recent times (Ozigbo, 2012). The incident of unproductivity among government workers has been a long-embattled challenge since mid-1963. According to Manpower Board on Productivity in Nigeria, it was opined that Nigerian labour was not as productive as it should be on average particularly, when compared with counterpart workers in Europe, due to a series of peculiar behavioural characteristics (Yesufu, 2000). Efforts to improve efficiency in Nigeria can be traced back to 1963, when the Morgan Commission proposed the establishment of a National Wages Advisory Council. Since then, concern for productivity, particularly within public sector organizations including higher education institutions, has grown considerably. This momentum eventually led to the creation of the National Productivity Centre through Decree No. 7 of 1987, which was primarily intended to enhance workers' efficiency in carrying out their assigned responsibilities.

The ongoing decline in employee performance across many organizations has intensified these concerns. Issues surrounding the quality of education are closely associated with the effectiveness of institutions. In public organizations such as universities, challenges in accurately assessing inputs and outputs, together with the need to enhance staff performance, have become key areas of focus, particularly in Nigerian federal universities. Within this framework, effective knowledge management has been identified as an important determinant of institutional productivity (Mohammad & Jose, 2016). Employee performance can be evaluated using indicators such as productivity, absenteeism, and job satisfaction (Osunde, 2015), which often reflect how favorable certain workplace conditions are. Key influencing factors include working conditions, employee motivation, job satisfaction, leadership style, and broader human resource practices. It is commonly assumed that employees who are satisfied with their jobs or work environment tend

to perform better than those who are dissatisfied (Osunde, 2015). However, findings from studies focusing specifically on factors affecting employee performance within the university system have been inconsistent. Previous studies have explored different factors influencing employee outcomes across sectors. For instance, Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2015) analyzed the link between leadership style and job satisfaction in higher education institutions. Similarly, Hee and Jing (2018) investigated how human resource management practices affect employee performance in the manufacturing sector, while Ismail, Romle, and Azmar (2015) focused on the role of organizational culture in shaping job satisfaction within higher education. Other related studies include research on employee motivation and work performance (Kuranchie-Mensah & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2015), as well as the effects of job embeddedness on organizational cynicism and employee performance (Nafei & Nafei, 2015).

Despite these contributions, it remains unclear whether specific factors can be distinctly associated with the performance of university academic staff. Consequently, this study aims to evaluate the factors influencing the performance of academic staff in Nigerian federal universities, with a view to fostering a positive orientation toward knowledge management practices. In particular, the study focuses on academic staff in federal universities located in Southwest Nigeria.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Employees' Performance

Enhancing productivity has become a major concern for contemporary organizations (Pradhan & Jena, 2016). Employee performance is a critical issue for all organizations, whether profit-oriented or not. However, defining, conceptualizing, and measuring performance remains a complex task (Ismael, Yusof & Davoud, 2010). Performance indicators refer to quantitative or qualitative measures used to assess the extent to which established goals have been achieved. Such indicators must be measurable and serve as a basis for evaluating performance during the planning, implementation, and post-implementation stages of an activity.

In the context of higher education, the attainment of lecturers' performance indicators is closely tied to the processes through which inputs are transformed into outputs, including the execution of academic responsibilities considered essential for achieving institutional goals. These processes are important not only for effective university management but also for supporting knowledge development, making employee performance appraisal a necessary practice. Strong individual performance implies that a lecturer has fulfilled job-related duties to an acceptable or expected standard set by university management (Pawirosumarto, Sarjana & Gunawan, 2017).

Traditionally, universities have been viewed as key institutions responsible for the creation and dissemination of knowledge (Loh, Tang, Menkhoff & Evers, 2010). Although knowledge management practices, including their adoption and development, extend beyond educational settings, universities are often regarded as primary hubs of knowledge generation due to their role in training, research, and active engagement in knowledge-related activities (Mohammad & Jose, 2016).

2.2 Factors Affecting Employee's Performance

Employee performance is a widely studied subject in organizational research. Employees are considered the most valuable asset of any organization, as they have the capacity to enhance or damage its reputation and significantly influence overall profitability (Elnaga & Imran, 2013).

A variety of factors shape employee performance, including organizational policies, working conditions, training and development opportunities, and the quality of relationships between employees and management (Aktar, Sachu & Ali, 2012).

2.2.1 Work environment

A work environment refers to the setting in which employees carry out their duties, and it can have both positive and negative effects on their performance outcomes. A supportive and conducive work environment promotes job continuity and enhances employee effectiveness, whereas an unfavorable environment may negatively affect job stability and performance (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). The organizational environment is a key factor influencing both productivity and employee satisfaction, and its impact can sometimes outweigh the effect of frontline leadership characteristics. There is also evidence of a positive relationship between working conditions and job satisfaction (Ismail et al., 2015). Research examining hotel workers in England explored the relationship between work environment factors and job performance, with particular attention to the role of work motivation. The study found a significant association between working conditions and job performance, and further revealed that work motivation serves as a mediating factor in this relationship.

2.2.2 Leadership style

Leadership style refers to the approach a leader adopts to influence the behavior and actions of others. It represents a consistent pattern of behavior used in guiding, motivating, and directing employees toward achieving organizational goals. Each leader applies different methods to develop and utilize the potential of their staff (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). Iqbal et al. (2015), in their study on leadership style and employee performance, found that autocratic leadership can be effective in the short term, while democratic leadership is beneficial across both short- and long-term periods. They also noted that participative leadership is most effective in the long run and generally produces positive outcomes for employees. Similarly, Pawirosumarto et al. (2017), using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), examined the effects of work environment, leadership style, and organizational culture on job satisfaction and employee performance. Their findings revealed that all three factors positively and significantly influence job satisfaction. However, only leadership style had a direct positive and significant effect on employee performance. In addition, job satisfaction did not significantly influence employee performance and did not serve as a mediating variable.

2.2.3 Organizational culture

Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and symbols that are collectively accepted and upheld by members of an organization (Pawirosumarto et al., 2017). A strong and positive organizational culture can foster a healthy work atmosphere, and organizations must ensure that employees are satisfied with their roles as well as the rewards or recognition they receive (Ismail et al., 2015). Job satisfaction is a key component within organizations and plays an essential role in enhancing overall performance. It also contributes to improving the quality of services delivered by employees. In addition, workers who engage in tasks that offer high skill utilization, autonomy, responsibility, feedback, and meaningfulness tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction compared to those in less enriched roles. Moreover, a greater degree of

expressiveness in the work environment has been found to be positively associated with job satisfaction (Ismail et al., 2015).

2.2.4 Motivation

Motivational strategies such as compensation and promotion opportunities tend to enhance employee satisfaction, which in turn can improve performance levels (Ismail et al., 2015). Work motivation has also been found to have a significant relationship with the job performance of hotel employees. Previous research suggests that the importance of a sector to a country's economic development can influence the degree of motivation among its workforce. For example, Kuranchie-Mensah and Amponsah-Tawiah (2016), in a comparative study of mining companies in Ghana, examined the relationship between employee motivation and performance. They found that, given the high-risk nature of the mining industry, management must ensure adequate employee motivation to reduce industrial unrest that could negatively affect productivity. The study also emphasized the need for employees to adhere to health and safety regulations, especially since the mining sector contributes significantly to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design, which begins with the selection of a research topic and an appropriate methodological approach. Survey research involves collecting data from a sample of respondents using instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, and observation (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). The adoption of this design enabled the researcher to obtain detailed information from a large number of respondents drawn from selected Nigerian universities, as well as to collect data from academic staff across federal universities in Southwest Nigeria. The study area is Southwest Nigeria, which comprises six states: Ondo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, Lagos, and Oyo. Each state in the region hosts at least one federal university. The area was selected due to the concentration of federal universities within the region, including the first university in Nigeria, the University of Ibadan, as well as other highly ranked institutions. The population of the study consists of academic staff from six federal universities in Southwest Nigeria, with a total of 6,312 lecturers. These institutions include the University of Ibadan, Oyo State (2,604 academic staff); University of Lagos, Lagos State (813); Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State (933); Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State (225); Obafemi Awolowo University, Osun State (1,399); and Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State (338). A sample size of 1,533 respondents was drawn from the population of 6,312. The study employed stratified random sampling combined with a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, federal universities were identified across the states in Southwest Nigeria. In the second stage, faculties within each university were stratified, and five faculties were selected from every ten faculties arranged alphabetically. In cases where a university had fewer than ten faculties, five faculties were selected. Subsequently, academic staff who had spent at least five years in their current university were chosen for participation. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, as well as Pearson Product Moment Correlation. In addition, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypotheses and examine the relationships among the study variables. The structural equation model represents the effect of factors affecting academic staff and the academic performance in the Universities as follows:

$$ACADPERF = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 ORGFACT + \gamma_2 PERFECT + e \quad (i)$$

Where; ACADPERF is Academic Performance, γ_0 is constant term, γ_1, γ_2 are parameter coefficient, e is error term, ORGFACT is organizational factor, PERFECT is personal factor.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 MEASUREMENT MODEL FOR FACTORS AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The measurement model procedure followed a similar approach to that outlined in the previous section. Factors influencing academic performance were categorized into two groups: organizational or institutional factors, and individual or personal factors affecting academic staff performance. The study employed a reflective measurement model, which involved assessing construct reliability and validity, as well as discriminant validity through cross-loadings, the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) (Hair et al., 2017). Table 1 presents the results for construct reliability and validity, showing that both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were all above 0.5, indicating acceptable convergent validity. These results confirm that there were no reliability or validity issues in the measurement model.

Regarding discriminant validity, Table 2 shows the cross-loadings, indicating that each indicator loaded more strongly on its respective construct than on other constructs in the model. Table 3 further confirms that the Fornell-Larcker criterion was satisfied, consistent with the recommendations of Hair et al. (2017). Table 4 presents the HTMT results based on the guidelines of Henseler et al. (2015). The HTMT approach was applied to address limitations associated with the AVE method (Hair et al., 2017). A value above 0.90 suggests a lack of discriminant validity, while the confidence interval should not include 1 (Henseler et al., 2015). The results in Table 4 indicate that the HTMT criteria were met in the PLS model. Overall, the HTMT assessment confirms the adequacy of the measurement model and the quality of the indicators in relation to their respective constructs.

Table 1: Construct Reliability and Validity for Factors Affecting Academic Performance

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
ORG_FACT	0.855	0.890	0.888	0.538
PER_FACT	0.761	0.773	0.846	0.579
fAcad_Perf	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

Source: Field Survey, (2026)

Table 2: Cross-Loadings for Factors Affecting Academic Performance

	ORG_FACT	PER_FACT	fAcad_Perf
E1	0.519	0.222	0.185
E10	0.859	0.668	0.319
E11	0.748	0.531	0.323
E2	0.589	0.427	0.138
E6	0.772	0.689	0.311
E8	0.866	0.627	0.365
E9	0.714	0.533	0.199
E3	0.529	0.707	0.187
E4	0.481	0.801	0.275
E5	0.493	0.793	0.218
E7	0.717	0.738	0.306
FSUMpaper	0.380	0.335	1.000

Source: Field Survey, (2026)

Table 3: Fornell-Larcker Criterion for Factors Affecting Academic Performance

	ORG_FACT	PER_FACT	fAcad_Perf
ORG_FACT	0.734		
PER_FACT	0.743	0.761	
fAcad_Perf	0.380	0.335	1.000

Source: Field Survey, (2026)

Table 4: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) for Factors Affecting Academic Performance

	ORG_FACT	PER_FACT	fAcad_Perf
ORG_FACT			
PER_FACT	0.879		
fAcad_Perf	0.389	0.370	

Source: Field Survey, (2026)

4.2 Factor Affecting Academic Staff and the Academic Performance in the universities

The factors affecting the academic staff were divided into two sub-construct organisational and personal factors. For this section the study first presented the univariate descriptive analysis of the factors affecting academic staff of the study area, and thereafter provides the effect of these sub-constructs on the academic performance measure used in this study.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Factors Affecting Academic Staff

The organisational factors encompass a total of seven indicators, including practices for performance approval, university culture, compensation and rewards, training and development, employee engagement, goals and expectations, and provision of tools and equipment. On the other hand, personal factors consist of leadership, conflicts between work and personal life, motivation, and job satisfaction among individual academic staff. Descriptive findings for both local and overall rankings of each indicator are detailed in Table 5. In this context, "local rank" refers to the position of each indicator within its respective sub-construct, while "grand rank" denotes the indicator's position within all factors influencing academic staff performance across the studied universities. Table 5 ranks the factors based on a Likert scale spanning from "very low" (score of 1) to "very high" (score of 5). An analysis of indicator frequency indicated that all factors received considerable frequency counts, with several instances of "very high" rankings, and some instances where respondents expressed uncertainty. Consequently, the average scores ranged from 4.10 to 4.310. Regarding local rankings within the organisational factors, the study found that the availability of tools and equipment emerged as the most influential factor affecting university staff performance. It was closely followed by the goals and expectations established by the organisation for academic staff. Interestingly, the organisational culture, when combined with other institutional factors, emerged as the third factor impeding academic staff performance. Additionally, performance appraisal practices were positioned fourth, often presenting challenges for academic staff due to their bureaucratic and constraining nature. Among the last three factors within the organisational sphere training and development, compensation and rewards, and employee engagement they were ranked fifth, sixth, and seventh, respectively. An intriguing observation was that having the necessary work facilities held greater significance for academic staff than monetary rewards and compensation. This observation aligns with the findings of Kalyanamitra et al. (2020), demonstrating that providing employees with training, tools, and conducive work facilities aids their career growth, contributing to enhanced satisfaction and retention within the organisation.

In terms of the results related to personal factors, holding a leadership position was identified as a significant influencer of academic performance. Following this, work-life conflicts claimed the second position, as personal commitments can interfere with work obligations, leading to challenges in balancing both roles. Job satisfaction and motivation occupied the third and fourth positions, respectively. In the grand ranking that considered all factors, it became evident that assuming leadership roles had a notable negative impact on the expected performance of academic staff. It was followed by the availability of tools and equipment. The last two factors – compensation and rewards, as well as employee engagement – were ranked tenth and eleventh, respectively, representing factors that weaken academic staff performance within a university. The ensuing section presents the results of the multivariate analysis of these factors on academic performance.

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis of Factors Affecting Academic Staff

Code	Description	Very low (1)	Low (2)	Undecided (3)	High (4)	Very High (5)	Mean	STD	Grand Rank	Local Rank
Organisational Factor							4.154	0.770	2	
E1	Performance appraisal practices	10	18	81	496	279	4.149	0.754	8	4
E2	University culture	1	11	101	507	264	4.156	0.670	7	3
E6	Compensation and Rewards	3	27	180	341	333	4.102	0.851	10	6
E8	Training and development	3	12	166	381	322	4.139	0.786	9	5
E9	Employee engagement	3	11	157	436	277	4.101	0.750	11	7
E10	Goals and expectations	4	7	155	388	330	4.169	0.770	5	2
E11	Tools and equipment	6	14	111	366	387	4.260	0.788	2	1
Personal Factor							4.209	0.770	1	
E3	Leadership	0	6	106	380	392	4.310	0.704	1	1
E4	Work-life conflicts	5	12	92	479	296	4.187	0.714	3	2
E5	Motivation	9	14	127	406	328	4.165	0.802	6	4
E7	Job satisfaction	5	30	131	357	361	4.175	0.845	4	3

Source: Field Survey, (2026)

4.4. Structural Model for Factors Affecting Academic Staff and the Academic Performance

Figure 1 and Figure 2 visually depicted the algorithmic and bootstrapping methodologies utilized to evaluate the structural model involving exogenous factors that influence academic staff performance within the university. The consolidated outcomes derived from Figures 1 and 2 were presented in table 6. As previously indicated, the structural analysis encompassed various components, including Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) results, the significance and relevance of path coefficients, effect sizes, and the coefficient of determination. The VIF results for each sub-construct concerning factors affecting academic staff performance were found to be 2.234, comfortably below the threshold of 5.0, indicating an absence of collinearity concerns. Both the coefficients of organisational factors ($\beta = 0.292$, $t = 5.743$) and personal factors ($\beta = 0.118$, $t = 1.983$) were determined to be significant and meaningful at a 95% confidence level. It is noteworthy that organisational factors exhibited a more substantial influence compared to personal factors.

Furthermore, table 6 provided f-square values of 0.045 for organisational factors and 0.007 for personal factors. According to Tehseen et al. (2019), the former can be categorized as a small

effect, while the latter could be considered as negligible. The coefficient of determination, reflected by an adjusted R-square value of 0.147, indicates a moderate level of explanatory power in line with the benchmark suggested by Tehseen et al. (2019). Overall, the results show that both organizational and personal factors influencing academic staff performance have a positive and statistically significant effect within the context of this study. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. These findings are consistent with Hwang (2016), who reported that leadership-related factors exert the strongest positive influence on research productivity among institutional variables. In a similar vein, Yang (2017) found that leadership support fosters a conducive research environment, often described as a “Departmental Research Atmosphere.” The results also support the work of Yucel and Demir (2018), who observed that the introduction of a compensation-based scoring system encourages academics to prioritize quantity over quality in research outputs. However, the present findings differ from Yang (2017), who emphasized multiple resource-related factors such as research funding, infrastructure, human capital, and access to library and publication resources. In contrast, this study shows that research funding has the most dominant influence, followed by human resources, journals and library resources, and finally facilities and equipment. Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Tunio et al. (2021), who examined determinants of academic job performance in Pakistan and found that personality traits positively influence job performance, with job satisfaction acting as a mediating factor. This study also aligns with broader literature emphasizing the combined importance of personal and environmental factors in enhancing employee performance. Ongwae et al. (2018) linked leadership, training, organizational culture, and structure to employee performance outcomes. Similarly, Ghabban et al. (2019) reported that both individual and organizational factors, including ICT usage and job satisfaction, significantly affect research productivity among academic staff in Saudi universities. In addition, Ab Aziz et al. (2012) highlighted the influence of government policies, institutional goals, researcher preferences, and university-related conditions on research productivity. Haliso (2011) identified organizational factors as key drivers of ICT adoption in Nigerian libraries. Bentley (2015) demonstrated that both personal and organizational factors influence publication rates across countries, while Shahbazi-Moghadam et al. (2015) emphasized the role of personal, behavioral, and institutional factors in improving publication output and citation performance in universities.

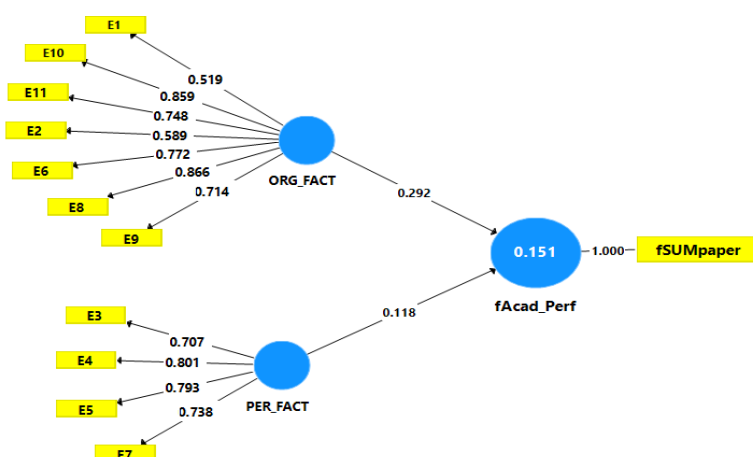


Figure 1: Algorithm Model for Factors Affecting Academic Staff and the Academic Performance

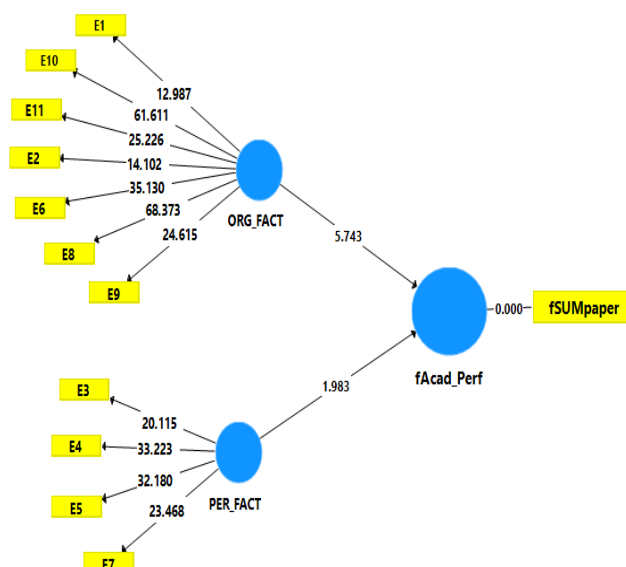


Figure 2: Bootstrapping Model for Factors Affecting Academic Staff and the Academic Performance

Table 6: Structural Model for Factors Affecting Academic Staff and Academic Performance

	Beta	VIF	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	2.5%	97.5%	f Square
ORG_FACT	- 0.292	2.234	0.051	5.743	0.000	0.195	0.397	0.045
>fAcad_Perf								
PER_FACT	- 0.118	2.234	0.059	1.983	0.047	0.006	0.236	0.007
>fAcad_Perf								
R Square	0.151							
R Square Adjusted	0.147							

Source: Field Report, (2026)

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study identified key factors influencing academic performance and examined their effects on the performance of academic staff in universities. It concludes that tools and equipment represent the most significant organizational factor affecting staff performance, while holding a leadership position emerged as the most influential personal factor shaping academic performance. Findings further indicate that both organizational and personal factors have a positive and statistically significant impact on academic staff performance within the study area, although organizational factors exert a stronger influence than personal factors. Based on these results, the study recommends that university management should ensure the provision of adequate tools and

resources necessary for effective knowledge application. In addition, opportunities should be created for specialists and experienced personnel to fully utilize and integrate their expertise. Furthermore, sufficient working facilities should be made available, as these are considered more important to academic staff performance than rewards and compensation when both are compared.

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